

Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 6 December 2022

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CABINET

You are summoned to a meeting of the Cabinet which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 14 December 2022 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Dan Levy, Mathew Parkinson, Andrew Prosser, Carl Rylett and Geoff Saul

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 16)**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations from Members of Cabinet on any items to be considered at the meeting
4. **Participation of the Public**
Members of the public may ask a question at a meeting of Cabinet for up to three minutes on any item of business for decision at the meeting or on any issue that affects the district or its people. Members of the public wishing to speak at a Cabinet meeting must notify democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk, including their name and the agenda item or topic they wish to speak on, by 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting (e.g. for a Wednesday meeting, the deadline would be 2.00pm on the Friday before). If the topic of the question is not within the remit of the Council, advice will be provided on where best to direct the question. The relevant Cabinet Member will either respond verbally at the meeting or provide a written response which will be included in the minutes of the meeting.
5. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council or Members of the Cabinet.
6. **Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter Two (Pages 17 - 32)**
Purpose:
To review Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter Two

Recommendations:
That Cabinet resolves to:
 - a) Note the report.
 - b) Approve the allocations for the New Initiatives fund.
 - c) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and, where relevant to portfolios, other Cabinet Members, to approve further allocations from the New Initiatives fund.
7. **Service Performance Report Quarter Two (Pages 33 - 46)**
Purpose:
This report provides details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2022-23 Quarter Two (Q2)

Recommendation:
That the 2022/23 Q2 service performance be noted
8. **Update of 2023/24 Budget (Pages 47 - 68)**
Purpose:

To provide an update on the developing budget for 2023/24

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to note the report alongside comments any comments from Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. **Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy (Pages 69 - 88)**

Purpose:

To present Cabinet with an updated Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy for approval. The Policy has been reviewed to ensure the content reflects current legislation and the Council's Policies and Procedures. The Policy will replace the existing Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Approve and adopt the Policy attached to this report and;
- b) Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to approve future minor amendments to the Policy in consultation with the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, Legal Services and the Leader of the Council.

10. **Pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge Area (Pages 89 - 92)**

Purpose:

To consider whether the Council should be a participant in the proposed pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Recommend to Council that West Oxfordshire be a participant in the proposed pan-regional partnership for the Oxfords to Cambridge area
- b) Approve a contribution of £4,000 towards the pan-regional partnership.

11. **Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021 - 2022 (Pages 93 - 112)**

Purpose:

To consider the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2021/22.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Note the content of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A with a view to it being published on the Council's website by 31 December 2022 in accordance with legislative requirements.

12. **Pavement License Fee Reimbursement (Pages 113 - 116)**

Purpose:

To consider the proposal to reimburse licence fees in respect of Pavement Licences

Recommendations:

That Cabinet resolves to:

- a) Approve the reimbursement of the pavement licence application fee to those eligible businesses; and,
- b) Approve the setting up of a process for an internal adjustment of funds for future applications rather than continuing to take payment and then reimburse; and,
- c) Approve the payments for reimbursement from the Cabinet Priorities Fund

(END)

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Held in the Chipping Norton Town Hall, Lower Room. at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 16
November 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Joy Aitman (Cabinet Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities), Lidia Arciszewska (Cabinet Member for Environment), Dan Levy (Cabinet Member for Finance), Mathew Parkinson (Cabinet Member for Customer Delivery), Carl Rylett (Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainable Development) and Andrew Prosser (Cabinet Member for Climate Change),

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica) and Susan Sale (Monitoring Officer), Andrew Turner (Business Manager), Michelle Ouzman (Democratic Services Officer), and Anne Learmonth (Democratic Service Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Colin Dingwall, Michele Mead and Rizvana Poole.

81 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 October 2022 were approved by the Cabinet and signed by the Leader, Councillor Andy Graham.

82 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Geoff Saul the Cabinet Member for Housing & Social Welfare.

83 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

84 Participation of the Public

The Leader of the Council Councillor Andy Graham welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked the members of the public for attending, he explained that during the meeting Cabinet would be answering those questions that had already been received, the public were welcome to stay behind once the meeting had concluded to ask any members of the Cabinet questions. If the answers were unknown at that time Cabinet members would take them away and find out the answers and come back to them in due course.

The Leader reported that several questions had been received from the public, and invited those that were present to address the committee with their questions. In turn the Cabinet provided the following answers:

QI Asked by David Heyes

In the Local Plan reference is made to an “agreed Masterplan” for the East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area. Which bodies are required to agree to the plan and what are the criteria to be used?

AI Answered by Councillor Carl Rylett Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development

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Policy CNI relates to the East Chipping Norton SDA and stipulates that there should be 'comprehensive development for the whole site including land north and south of London Road to be led by an agreed masterplan'.

Neither the policy nor the supporting text refer to which bodies are required to agree the plan or any criteria that are to be used.

However, in keeping with progress being made on the other SDAs, the expectation is that any such masterplan will be landowner/developer led and then put to the Council for consideration, either as part of a planning application or (as has been the case at West Eynsham) separately.

Earlier this year, the two main landowners for the East Chipping Norton SDA agreed to jointly commission a masterplan to support any future planning applications. A steering group was formed with an initial inception meeting held at the end of March. However, no further meeting has taken place since then as the two main landowners have been undertaking further survey and analysis the outcome of which is still awaited.

Q2 Asked by Sandra Coleman

The residents of Chipping Norton have noticed problems with the structure of Chipping Norton Leisure Centre's building. Some of these are longstanding and have never been properly addressed. What processes are in place to address this - and any arising health and safety concerns? The Leisure Centre is a fantastic facility but is being compromised by the standard of upkeep of the building.

A2 Answered by Councillor Joy Aitman the Cabinet Member for Stronger Healthy Communities.

Chipping Norton Leisure centre was built in 2002. The council has obtained four quotes to carry out internal repairs to the centre and it is anticipated that this work will be started in the coming weeks.

A national roofing contractor has also been appointed to conduct an invasive investigation of the roof and prepare a report detailing recommended works, including any temporary solutions. The invasive investigation is due to take place in the first few weeks of December, with the final report due by the end of January 2023.

Q3 Asked by Keith Ruddle

I am very pleased to see WODC Cabinet visiting Chipping Norton for this meeting. I would request a possible 3 minute slot to ask some or all of following

Overall Question – Can WODC Cabinet tell Chipping Norton's community exactly what commitment they have, and what proactive actions they are taking, to ensuring that the growth of Chipping Norton is sustainable and appropriate for a working town – and that there is sufficient investment in infrastructure to support this after years of relative neglect.?

A3 Answered by Councillor Carl Rylett Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development

Chipping Norton is identified in the Local Plan 2031 as a main service centre on the basis that it is the District's third largest town and has a good range of services and facilities to support future growth. The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which seeks to identify what infrastructure is needed to support future growth to 2031 across the

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District including at Chipping Norton. The Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2016 also identifies a number of locally identified infrastructure projects. Earlier this year, in support of planned strategic development to the east of the town, the two main landowners agreed to commission a masterplan which will help to provide an up to date and comprehensive assessment of the new and improved infrastructure which is needed to support the development. Subject to the relevant legal tests, any such improvements would be secured through appropriate planning obligations or in some instances through planning conditions.

Specific issues – In answering the above, please can you address specifically the questions below:

Q3a Asked by Keith Ruddle

Zero carbon East Chippy plan – WODC, with housing targets in mind, collaborated with lead landowner OCC to allocate 1200 new homes in the 2018 Local Plan at East Chipping Norton. There's still no Masterplan, no commitment to Zero Carbon by OCC as landowner, and WODC cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply. Exactly how are WODC Cabinet working proactively with OCC's Leader and Cabinet to sort this for the benefit of West Oxfordshire?

A3a Answered by Councillor Carl Rylett Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development

Earlier this year, the two main landowners of the East Chipping Norton SDA (CALA Homes and Oxfordshire County Council) agreed to jointly commission a masterplan to support any future planning applications. A steering group was formed with an initial inception meeting held at the end of March. However, no further meeting has taken place since then as the two main landowners have been undertaking further survey and analysis the outcome of which is still awaited.

The District Council will continue to work closely with both landowners to further progress the masterplan and enable any subsequent planning applications to come forward for determination.

The extent to which the landowners commit to net zero carbon is currently a matter for them as there is no specific policy requirement to achieve this in either the adopted Local Plan or the Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chief Executive Giles Hughes added that The Council had a proactive vision and would engage with County Council, Town Councils and other partners to share issues and have a holistic approach.

Q3b Asked by Keith Ruddle

Getting HGVs off the A44 – WODC declared illegal pollution and an AQMA in Chippy in 2008. They were meant to ensure action. Depriming the A44 was the then solution. It hasn't happened. Are WODC still responsible for monitoring pollution, are they still doing so (the Black Box was removed 5 years ago) and how are they lobbying OCC and the Government to act faster after 15 years of no action?

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A3b Answered by Councillor Andrew Prosser the Cabinet Member for Climate Change.

- We are in the process of appointing an air quality consultant to review the Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) for both Chipping Norton and Witney. We are currently ironing out the Ts & Cs, so hope the work on this will be commencing shortly. As part of this process, a steering group will need to be established to review and decide on actions to reduce air pollution going forward. I would welcome a representatives of WODC and Chipping Norton Town Council to be included in this group.
- We are currently monitoring NO₂ at 5 locations in Chipping Norton as shown on the attached plan (please note sample points S18-20 are no longer in use). So far unadjusted concentrations are below the national objective of 40ug/m³ for all locations except S22. This location currently has an unadjusted average value of 45.9ug/m³.
- Oxfordshire County Council have recently issued a Freight & Logistics Strategy (attached), which states: 'The county council will consider environmental weight restrictions across the County, particularly areas which are subject to significant levels of HGV traffic, prioritising the towns of Burford, Chipping Norton and Henley-on-Thames'. The AQAP process will provide WODC and the Town Council an opportunity to put pressure on OCC to deliver this proposal for Chipping Norton.
- I have looked back into correspondence saved on our system, and it seems some progress was made in with regards to depriming the A44, however Gloucestershire County Council had concerns that the consequence of this action would worsen air quality in Stow on the Wold. As far as I can tell this has not been resolved. Returning to my first point, I suggest this issue is revisited as part of the AQAP process, engaging GCC as early as possible.

Q3c Asked by Keith Ruddle

£££ for Town infrastructure – WODC's official list of Chippy's 'infrastructure' needs, is over 5 years out of date, was largely unfunded, and ignores 1200 extra East Chippy homes. WODC are now consulting on 'what we want' for infrastructure – but exactly how do they propose to avoid just another 'wish list', and fund it adequately, with any proper long-shelved plans for any Community Infrastructure Levy.

A3c Answered by Councillor Duncan Enright the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which seeks to identify what infrastructure is needed to support future growth to 2031 across the District including at Chipping Norton. The Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2016 also identifies a number of locally identified infrastructure projects. Earlier this year, in support of planned strategic development to the east of the town, the two main landowners agreed to commission a masterplan which will help to provide an up to date and comprehensive assessment of the new and improved infrastructure which is needed to support the development. Subject to the relevant legal tests, any such improvements would be secured through appropriate planning obligations or in some instances through planning conditions.

Q3d Asked by Keith Ruddle

Public sports pitch provision – This is a major shortcoming in Chipping Norton – eg no full size football pitch for either public or private use. There was nothing in the Local Plan to

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require sports pitches for the 1200 new homes or make up the existing shortfall. This was a failure by WODC to meet their own Open Space policy. What's the response and action?

A3d Answered by Councillor Joy Aitman the Cabinet Member for for Stronger Healthy Communities.

Question answered as part of question 2 - The Cabinet will be considering a new Playing Field Strategy when it meets on the 16th November in Chipping Norton, a copy of the strategy has been published on the West Oxfordshire District Council website here - <https://meetings.westoxon.gov.uk/documents/s6422/Item%208%20-%202%20West%20Oxfordshire%20Playing%20Pitch%20Strategy%20-%20Final%20Strategy%20Action%20Plan%20Report.pdf>

The masterplan process referred to in previous answers will help to provide an up to date assessment of current infrastructure needs including in relation to formal and informal open space provision.

Q3e Asked by Keith Ruddle

No affordable housing – How much, if any, new social rented or affordable housing for young Chippy working people has WODC supported in the last 10 years? What is planned for the next 3 years, given the huge delay at East Chipping Norton?

A3e Answered by Councillor Andy Graham, The Leader.

There have been 253 affordable homes constructed over the last ten years in Chipping Norton and its sub area. There are a further 78 under construction or within the planning application process.. A breakdown by site is attached for information.

Development - Chipping Norton town	Status	Total affordable homes	Rental	LCHO
Land South East of Walterbush Rd	complete	91	66	25
Vernon House	complete	19	19	
Cornish Rd	complete	5	5	
The Pillars, Banbury Rd	complete	40	27	13
Willow Gardens extra care	complete	80	60	20

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Walterbush Rd (WODC partnership development)	under consideration	8		8
Hailey Avenue (Cottsway regen site)	in design	12	8	4
Total		255	185	70

Development - Chipping Norton Sub Area	Status	Total affordable homes	Rental	LCHO
Quarry Place Enstone	complete	5	5	
North Street, Middle Barton	complete	8	8	
Dashwood Terrace, Middle Barton	complete	5	4	1
Choice Hill Road, Over Norton	application under construction	9	6	3
Oxford Road, Enstone	application under construction	29	15	14
Total		56	38	18

Other pipeline - Chipping Norton Sub Area	Status	Total affordable homes
Land East Of Worton Road Middle Barton	application under consideration	14
Land North And South Of The Lane Great Tew	application under consideration	6

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Total **20**

Other Chipping Norton schemes predating 10 year request for info **Total affordable homes**

Parker Knoll, Chipping Norton Complete 47 affordable

Edward Stone Rise, Chipping Norton Complete 15 affordable

Coopers Square/Close, Chipping Norton Complete 13 affordable

Total **75**

Q3f Asked by Keith Ruddle

Lack of Town parking – Did WODC’s cabinet and officers come here by public transport or by car – we hope they parked easily. Most visitors can’t on weekdays and holidays. WODC’s last parking study for Chippy was 2016 – concluding that more than 100 new town centre parking spaces were needed. What action are WODC proactively planning to help this?

A3f Answered by Councillor Lidia Arciszewska the Cabinet Member for Environment.

The Parking Team will be providing a revised parking strategy for the district, which is planned for completion 2023.

The revision will take into consideration current and future needs of each area including Chipping Norton.

Q3g Asked by Keith Ruddle

A welcome for visitors – WODC long ago closed our tourist centre and one stop shop. Our visitor signposting is years out of date or absent, and our street name signs need major refurbishment. WODC know all this = what plans for action are there?

A3g Answered by Councillor Duncan Enright the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

There has been no formal request to replace the signs in Chipping Norton. There is a process in place, which is outlined on our website - <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/street-naming-and-numbering/>

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The Economic Development team is commissioning a study as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund looking to identify potential projects to support market towns. One strand will be looking to review signage and wayfinding tools from the perspective of a visitor and to identify any issues and areas for improvement.

Q3h Asked by Keith Ruddle

Chippy's ageing Leisure Centre – This was a welcome facility over 20 years ago but when are WODC going to invest in upgrade, maintenance (those leaks!) or even replacement?

A3h Answered by Councillor Joy Aitman the Cabinet Member for for Stronger Healthy Communities.

Chipping Norton Leisure centre was built in 2002. The Council has obtained four quotes to carry out internal repairs to the centre and it is anticipated that this work will be started in the coming weeks.

A national roofing contractor has also been appointed to conduct an invasive investigation of the roof and prepare a report detailing recommended works, including any temporary solutions. The invasive investigation is due to take place in the first few weeks of December, with the final report due by the end of January 2023.

85

Receipt of Announcements

The Leader announced that he was very saddened to hear about the unexpected news of the death of Sue Pangbourne the Publica Executive Director. Many worked with Sue at some point, and the Leader said he found her incredibly dedicated and caring, the Council's thoughts would be with her family at this saddest of times. The Leader then requested a moments silence out of respect for Sue.

Councillor Joy Aitman the Cabinet Member for Stronger Healthy Communities announced the Council's Cost of Living Crisis to tackle health, isolation and wellbeing. The Council would be working with local volunteer groups, and if you know of a warm space available the Council would like to hear about it. All Councillors had received a briefing and an information pack on the Cost of Living Crisis.

Councillor Andrew Prosser the Cabinet Member for Climate Change announced that the Council had extended criteria for grants for help for the homeless, benefits, housing and with energy bills, a total fund of £200,00.00

The Leader announced the Waterways Day would be held at the West Oxfordshire District Council offices at Woodgreen, Witney on Friday 18 November 2022, arrivals from 9.30am for a 10am start, finishing at 5.30pm.

Waterways Day has been organised to give local residents the opportunity to learn about the current status of our watercourses and to engage with the organisations that are responsible for their management. Residents will also have a chance to meet experts from local charities and community groups who are concerned about issues of river pollution and flood management and to voice their concerns and ask questions.

The event will consist of a series of talks along with a drop-in area with stands held by the participating organisations to allow residents to discuss the matters of their concern.

Throughout the day, there will be talks from these organisations to discuss their role in the prevention of pollution and flooding, the protection of wildlife and management of sewage

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around local waterways. These will be followed by Q and A sessions to give the public an opportunity to ask further questions

86 Council Tax Support Scheme

Councillor Dan Levy the Cabinet Member for finance introduced the Council Tax Support Scheme, which he said should be read in connection with the hardship scheme.

Councillor Levy proposed that the Cabinet recommends to Council to approve the increase to income bands as detailed within the report. This was seconded by the Leader, Councillor Andy Graham, and agreed by Cabinet.

Resolved that Cabinet recommends to Council That Cabinet resolves to recommend to Council to approve the increase to income bands as detailed within paragraph 2.5 from 1 April 2023.

87 Rural England Prosperity Fund

Councillor Duncan Enright the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development introduced Rural England Prosperity Fund. This informed Cabinet of the Council's indicative allocation of funding under the Rural

England Prosperity Fund, seeking in principle approval of the overall approach to use of that funding and to seek delegated authority to finalise the submission to Government which is due by 30 November 2022.

The Leader thanked the officers for the hard work that had been put into the report.

Councillor Enright proposed that the Cabinet approves the officers recommendation, this was seconded by Councillor Graham.

The Cabinet **Resolved** to:

- a) Note the Council's indicative allocation of £716,216 from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund;
- b) Approve the proposed approach to the use of the fund set out in this report;
- c) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise the submission to Government in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the S151 Officer.

88 Playing Pitch Strategy

Councillor Joy Aitman the Cabinet Member for Stronger Healthy Communities introduced Playing Pitch Strategy seeking the Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations proposed by consultants commissioned to develop a Playing Pitch Strategy for the District and to approve the Strategy.

Pitch conditions became very noticeable after the Lionesses won the European Cup.

The Leader and the Council wanted enough funding to support the number of teams playing within the district, including Chipping Norton. The Council is keen to have a voice for the young people within the district and had recently appointed a Youth Champion who would have a voice and access to the cabinet. The council had reserved £100,000 for youth projects, £50,000 of which for the Playing Pitch Strategy.

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Councillor Joy Aitman proposed that the cabinet approves officers recommendation set out in the report. This was seconded by councillor Andrew Prosser the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, and agreed by Cabinet.

That Cabinet **resolved** to:

- a) Endorse the findings of the consultants and approves the Playing Pitch Strategy, including its key recommendations and site specific action plan;
- b) Authorise officers to work in partnership with other organisations to establish the feasibility and funding sources for the projects identified within the strategy and to prepare business cases, where opportunities arise, and bring them forward for consideration;
- c) Approve the relevant resources including an allocation of £50,000 from the Council's Priority Fund for a fixed term post to support and facilitate the development of partnerships and bring business cases forward for approval.

9. Response to Oxford City Council Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Consultation

89 **Response to Oxford City Council Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Consultation**

Councillor Carl Rylett the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainable Development introduced the Response to Oxford City Council Local Plan 2040 Preferred Options Consultation, which he thought was a well written document, although yet to do an assessment on Housing needs, more clarity required.

There was a short minor disturbance at the meeting from a member of the public, the meeting resumed after five minutes.

The Leader reminded the public of his earlier announcement that if anyone wishes to speak to a member of the Cabinet after the meeting, they were welcome to do so.

Councillor Rylett proposed to agree the District Council's response to Oxford City Council's Preferred Option Local Plan consultation. This was seconded by the Leader and agreed by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- a) Note the contents of the report;
- b) Agree that the draft response attached at Annex A be submitted to Oxford City Council

90 **Community Facilities Grant 2nd Round 2022/23**

Councillor Aitman the Cabinet Member for Stronger Healthy Communities introduced the Community Facilities Grant 2nd Round 2022/23. Cabinet were asked to consider applications for grant aid from the Community Facilities Grant Scheme.

Councillor Colin Dingwall who also attended the meeting, concurred the scheme.

Councillor Aitman proposed approval of officers recommendation, seconded by the Leader and Cabinet agreed.

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That Cabinet **resolved** to agree to award grants in accordance with the recommendations set out in Annex A.

91 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS3b) of Carterton Leisure Centre

Councillor Andrew Prosser the Cabinet Member for Climate Change introduced the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS3b) of Carterton Leisure Centre, for Cabinet to consider and review the PSDS3b (Public Decarbonisation Scheme) grant application process, including the proposed stages, associated costs and risks.

Councillor Prosser proposed approval of officers recommendation, seconded by Councillor Levy and Cabinet agreed.

That Cabinet **resolved** to:

- a) Support the proposed application process;
- b) Approve a pre contract at risk budget of £53,000

92 Exclusion of Public and Press

This item was not referred to at the meeting as item 13 was not discussed at this point in the meeting.

93 Exempt Annex B to item 11: Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS3b) of

Carterton Leisure Centre

Item 13 was not discussed at this point in the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 3.06 pm

CHAIR

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 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>CABINET – WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO 6</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER TWO</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Dan Levy Cabinet Member for Finance Email: dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Elizabeth Griffiths, Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861188 Email: Elizabeth.Griffith@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Detailed Revenue budget comparison Annex B – Capital spend against budget</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p><i>That Cabinet resolves to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Note the report.</i> <i>b) Approve the allocations for the New Initiatives fund.</i> <i>c) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and, where relevant to portfolios, other Cabinet Members, to approve further allocations from the New Initiatives fund.</i>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Council approved its Council Plan 2020-24 in January 2020. The Plan sets out a Council vision that is “to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future through action across a set of priority themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate Action 2. Healthy Towns and Villages 3. A Vibrant District Economy 4. Strong Local Communities 5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population 6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance <p>A new Council Plan is currently in consultation</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - Budget Monitoring

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Quarter 2, 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022

Original Budget 2022/23	Q2 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£	£

Service Area

Democratic and Committee Services	1,058,971	608,062	667,738	59,676
Environmental & Regulatory Services	507,109	221,455	218,582	(2,873)
Environmental Services	7,106,814	2,374,196	2,566,918	192,722
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	922,288	512,587	499,975	(12,612)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,924,570	1,710,966	1,664,857	(46,109)
Land, Legal & Property	903,130	460,660	514,300	53,640
Leisure & Communities	661,071	(308,229)	(312,129)	(3,900)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,528,061	509,283	596,681	87,398
Revenues & Housing Support	1,049,459	580,361	635,776	55,416
Investment Property and Retained Services	(2,218,585)	(1,110,705)	(986,628)	124,076
Total cost of services	13,442,888	5,930,735	6,403,215	507,433

Plus:

Investment income receipts (1,139,501) (569,751) (579,660) (9,909)

Cost of services before financing:	12,303,387	5,360,984	5,823,555	497,524
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Summary

Q2 results are consistent with the position reported in Q1, showing an overall overspend compared to budget. What is apparent is the pressure on some fee generating services i.e. Development Control, Building Control and Land Charges, where there has been a lack of demand in the first half of the year. The forecast for year end is that it is unlikely there will be any real improvement in Building Control or Land Charges, but Development Control may recover due to significant applications that were expected to come forward in Q2 being delayed until later in the year as a reaction to recent economic uncertainty, rather than being shelved.

The impact of inflation on our revenue budget is expected to increase in the second half of the year and that heavy toll on our finances is reflected in the 2023/24 budget being drafted with inflationary increases in salaries and contract costs but also revised expectations on income from not only fees and charges but some of our contractual counterparties. Even though the final position is not yet finalised due to the Local Government Funding Settlement being unknown until December, it shows a significantly worsened position than the forecast done in February. West Oxfordshire District Council has sufficient reserves to see it through the short term, but a prudent approach is more important now than ever to reduce spending and ensure that the Council is able to return to financial sustainability.

Significant Variances

A full list of variances by cost centre is included in Annex A

1.1. Car Parking

The Q2 income shortfall against budget in parking is £83,000 of which £53,000 relates to on street parking. On Street enforcement reverts to the County Council on 1st April 2023 and the 2023/24 budget has been updated to recognise the loss of budgeted income of £169,000. A review of the Parking Service moving forward is ongoing and the hope is that increased focus on off street parking will result in increased revenues.

1.2. Land Charges

As reported in Q1 the service has been heavily impacted by the huge rise in free unofficial Personal Searches which make up 70% of searches in the year. Current economic uncertainty, the rise in interest rates and inflation along with forecasts of a significant drop in house prices into 2023 are likely to lead to a reduced demand for this service. In addition, LLC 1 (statutory) searches will be transferring to HM Land Registry from 1st April with a forecast £14,000 per year loss of income to the Council. Total compensation of £40,000 will be payable to the Council which will be drawn down in equal instalments over the 23/24 - 25/26 financial years. The budget for 2023/24 has been reviewed in this context.

1.3. Development Management

Planning Fee income is £126,000 below target at the end of the quarter, a drop of 30% on the equivalent period last year. The income budget for 2022/23 was increased by £100,000 on the basis that we are expecting large scale applications to be received in the year - which the Head of Development Management is still confident are likely to come through in Q3.

1.4. Trade Waste

Income is £8,000 above target, a £58,000 improvement on the same period last year and tipping charges payable to the County Council are £20,000 underspent. Trade Waste is invoiced twice a year in April & September and our Credit Controller is working proactively to ensure that invoices are settled as they become due. This service is under review as part of the ESIP project, outcomes for which are due to be reported in December 2022.

1.5. Green Waste

The Green Waste service is £55,000 overspent at the end of Q2 which is the forecast position for year end, a £15,000 improvement on Q1 reporting. This is due to additional licence income being received during the late summer period.

Recycling

At the end of Q1 an overspend of £17,000 was reported against the Suez contract, this overspend has risen to £36,000 at the end of Q2. Monthly costs have not accelerated as fast as originally feared and inflationary increases have not yet substantially impacted the revenue budget. There is a lot of volatility in the recycling market in terms of material prices, fuel & labour costs. Our current contract with Suez expires in 2024.

1.6. Bank Charges

We have contracted with an external consultant to undertake a comprehensive review of our card transaction charges with a report expected in November likely to include a recommendation to change our current supplier in order to save at least £50,000 per annum on current costs.

1.7. Building Control

Income is £27,000 below target at the end of Q2, a £15,000 decline on the same period last year. The Service has struggled to recover from Covid, competition from the Private Sector and the general state of the economy.

1.8. Democratic Services

Members Allowances are currently £23,000 overspent, the budget for which is being reviewed for 2023/24.

New Initiatives

Cabinet has been progressing priority projects around their new priorities with the following funds being committed from the £750k allocated earlier in the year and projects underway. Cabinet is recommended to approve the allocations and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with Cabinet Members, to approve further allocations from the New Initiatives fund.

Council Priorities initiatives	Electric Vehicles	Env & Community	Youth Initiatives	Cost of Living	Bus Develop	Residual	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	75,000	100,000	100,000	200,000	100,000	175,000	750,000
Committed:							
WODC Magazine		(17,000)					(17,000)
Water Day		(5,000)					(5,000)
Christmas Market					(4,500)		(4,500)
Playing Field Strategy Delivery			(50,000)				(50,000)
2 x sweepers (ordered)	(75,000)						(75,000)
Market Town Officer					(35,358)	(35,358)	(70,716)
Climate Change Manager		(52,142)				(52,142)	(104,283)
Awareness raising comms				(1,000)			(1,000)
Additional VCS grants				(39,000)			(39,000)
Warm places project worker				(28,000)			(28,000)
Pavement license support					(1,700)		(1,700)
	0	25,858	50,000	132,000	58,442	87,500	353,800

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Q2 budget monitoring – variance to budget

Annex A

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Democratic Services

DRM001-Democratic Representation and Mgmt	97,800	97,734	(66)
DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies	191,298	219,500	28,202
ELE001-Registration of Electors	39,159	73,431	34,272
ELE002-District Elections	52,850	51,827	(1,023)
ELE004-Parliamentary Elections	0	0	0
ELE005-Parish Elections	7,046	7,046	0
ELE006-County Elections	0	0	0
ELE007-European Elections	0	0	0
ELE008-Police & Crime Commissioner Elections	0	0	0
SUP001-Administration	219,909	218,200	(1,709)

Total - Democratic Services

608,062	667,738	59,676
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DRM002 - Members allowances are currently £23k overspent against budget. This budget will be reviewed in the 23/24 budget setting process.

ELE001 - £32k overspend on postage relating to the annual canvass.

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Environmental & Regulatory Services

BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work	(43,549)	(17,332)	26,216
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning Work	1,566	1,566	0
EMP001-Emergency Planning	6,755	3,255	(3,500)
ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt & Supp Serv	47,824	47,824	0
PSH002-Private Sector Housing-Condition of Dwellings	1,500	0	(1,500)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	0	0
REG002-Licensing	(16,361)	(32,010)	(15,649)
REG009-Environmental Protection	86,804	87,273	469
REG010-Noise Control	0	0	0
REG011-Authorised Process	(12,000)	(9,331)	2,669
REG016-Food Safety	66,970	63,812	(3,158)
REG021-Statutory Burials	2,500	1,805	(695)
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	4,800	9,185	4,385

Total - Environmental & Regulatory Services

221,455	218,582	(2,873)
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BUC001 - Fee income is £27k below target in Q2 which represents a decline of £30k when compared to the same period in 2021/22, this budget will be reviewed in the 23/24 budget setting process.

REG002 - Licensing income is ahead of the forecast budget position for FY22/23 e.g. Taxi Licensing (£6k), Street Trading (£3k) and Premises/Events (£3k).

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Finance, Human Resources & Procurement

SUP003-Human Resources	80,887	76,505	(4,382)
HLD302-Miscellaneous Cash	0	(616)	(616)
HLD305 - Temporary Staff			
HLD308-Vehicle Tracking	0	0	0
HLD313-Lease Cars	0	0	0
SUP009-Accountancy	164,544	162,179	(2,364)
SUP010-Internal Audit	138,293	144,054	5,761
SUP011-Creditors	20,378	18,306	(2,071)
SUP012-Debtors	28,383	21,643	(6,740)
SUP013-Payroll	27,293	25,093	(2,200)
SUP019-Health & Safety	16,011	16,011	0
SUP020-Training & Development	13,911	13,911	0
SUP033-Central Purchasing	18,216	18,216	0
SUP035-Insurances	4,672	4,672	0

Total - Finance, Human Resources & Procurement

512,587 499,975 (12,612)

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

ICT, Change & Customer Services

SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research	76,535	75,460	(1,074)
HLD301-ICT Purchases	371,034	370,211	(822)
SUP005-ICT	889,829	865,717	(24,112)
SUP006-Telephones	13,500	4,658	(8,842)
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	235,068	232,554	(2,514)
SUP014-Cashiers	0	(457)	(457)
SUP041-Business Solutions	5,634	5,634	0
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(7,343)	(8,966)	(1,623)
TOU002-Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	58,442	52,348	(6,094)

Total - ICT, Change & Customer Services

1,642,699 1,597,161 (45,538)

SUP005 - £24k underspend for support & maintenance costs. It is forecast that there will be no underspend at year end due to anticipated inflationary increases.

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Land, Legal & Property

ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	14,771	15,130	359
ADB302-Guildhall	6,314	10,058	3,744
ADB303-Woodgreen	127,561	133,384	5,823
ADB304-Elmfield	103,767	108,782	5,015
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	202,469	197,952	(4,516)
ADB306-Depot	(26,235)	(21,825)	4,410
LLC001-Local Land Charges	(78,015)	(44,731)	33,283
SUP004-Legal	124,646	129,365	4,719
TAC303-Swain Court & Newman Court Ind Est Witney	(14,618)	(13,815)	802

Total - Land, Legal & Property

460,660	514,300	53,640
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LLC001 - There has been a steady rise in Personal Searches (unpaid non-official searches) over the last three years, causing the underachievement of income (currently 72% of budget at the end of Q2). There have been 444 Official searches and 1,059 Personal searches in the year to date.

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Leisure & Communities

CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	45,174	48,255	3,081
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	(1,843)	3,245	5,088
CCT001-CCTV	43,225	54,422	11,197
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	41,152	41,657	506
CUL001-Arts Development	27,211	20,595	(6,616)
ECD001-Economic Development	43,610	40,224	(3,386)
OPS003-Countryside	0	0	0
REC001-Sports Development	(38,153)	(35,593)	2,560
REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	25,981	25,881	(100)
REC003-Play	45,579	35,347	(10,233)
REC301-Village Halls	6,929	6,929	0
REC302-Contract Management	(837,035)	(849,919)	(12,884)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	51,814	51,814	0
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	83,847	90,733	6,886

Total - Leisure & Communities

(462,511)	(466,412)	(3,901)
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CCT001 - £11k unbudgeted professional fees expenditure camera reviews and surveys

REC003 - there is an ongoing programme of works throughout this financial year to repair a number of Play Areas in the District. An additional £50k was included in the 22/23 budget for this exercise and any ongoing requirement will be reviewed in the 23/24 budget setting process.

REC302 - £13k underspend against Equipment Purchase

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Environmental Services

CCC001-Climate Change	85,693	88,045	2,352
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	10,815	10,868	54
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	101,439	129,791	28,352
CPK011-On Street Civil Parking Enforcement	1,030	50,066	49,036
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	203,935	216,046	12,111
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	37,687	44,965	7,279
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage	65,483	63,762	(1,721)
REG004-Dog Warden	27,660	37,573	9,913
REG005-Public Health Sewerage	(13)	(13)	0
REG018-Pest Control	9,464	6,470	(2,994)
REG019-Public Conveniences	60,248	54,905	(5,343)
REG023-Environmental Strategy	39,930	37,953	(1,977)
RYC001-Recycling	1,476,290	1,559,435	83,145
RYC002-Green Waste	(859,684)	(804,365)	55,318
STC011 - Abandoned Vehicles	0	(138)	(138)
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	542,076	544,818	2,743
TRW001-Trade Waste	(343,282)	(373,856)	(30,574)
TRW002-Clinical Waste	(550)	(190)	360
WST001-Household Waste	915,702	887,763	(27,939)
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	15,275	11,051	(4,223)
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney	(15,000)	1,969	16,969

Total - Environmental Services

2,374,196	2,566,918	192,722
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CPK001 - Excess parking charges income (Off Street) is £30k behind target, consistent with the reported figure for Q1 where actual income is 25% of budget

CPK011 - Income from on street PCNs has shown slight improvement during Q2, but is £49k behind target and represents only 36% of budget.

ENI002 - Parish/town council grounds maintenance invoices are behind budget by £12k.

RYC001 - Suez disposal costs have risen to an average of £82k per month against a budget of £76k resulting in a £36k overspend in Q2. With ongoing inflationary pressures the overspend at year end is expected to be £100k. Bin purchases are £21k over budget and £22k has been spent on the options appraisal for the design phase of the Waste Review

RYC002 - £32k underachievement of income for annual Garden Licences and £23k costs for printing and posting annual licences which historically has been funded through excess licence fees

TRW001 - there is a £20k underspend for tipping charges, and an £8k overachievement of income. Trade Waste is billed twice a year in April & September. Our Credit Controller is continuing to work with customers to prevent outstanding invoices becoming aged debt.

WST001 - there is a £23k underspend against Bin purchases and a £7k underspend on the Ubico contract
WST301 - £17k overspend for reactive maintenance and repairs

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Retained Services

COR002-Chief Executive	144,797	145,029	232
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	34,280	34,280	0
COR004-Public Relations	6,045	5,918	(127)
COR005-Corporate Finance	223,412	214,254	(9,157)
COR006-Treasury Management	2,850	2,500	(350)
COR007-External Audit Fees	30,000	39,000	9,000
COR008-Bank Charges	34,600	111,673	77,073
COR302-Publica Group	446	(2,432)	(2,878)
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(285,578)	(282,636)	2,942
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	(418,460)	(415,169)	3,291
FIE343-Talisman	(573,206)	(531,161)	42,045
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(248,800)	(258,124)	(9,324)
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	(21,558)	(20,350)	1,208
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	309,550	316,077	6,527
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(83,960)	(80,785)	3,175
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	(250,975)	(252,117)	(1,142)
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(10,740)	(13,981)	(3,241)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	(3,406)	1,395	4,802

Total - Retained Services

(1,110,705)	(986,628)	124,076
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Bank Charges - There has been a significant increase in bank charges for credit & debit card transactions over the last 12 months. As reported in Q1 discussions are being undertaken with other suppliers to establish if we need to take this forward to a tendering exercise.

FIE343 - Unit 1 Talisman has been vacant since last year but a new tenancy has now been agreed.

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Revenues & Housing Support

HBP001-Rent Allowances	184,540	188,075	3,536
HBP003-Local Housing Allowance	0	44	44
HBP005-Benefit Fraud Investigation	2,739	2,781	42
HOM001-Homelessness	139,650	132,099	(7,551)
HOM002-Homelessness Grants	5,000	5,876	876
HOM003-Rent In Advance Scheme	0	0	0
HOM004-Refugees	0	6,546	6,546
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accommodation	0	9,593	9,593
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	190,495	216,128	25,633
LTC002-Council Tax Support Administration	3,318	3,624	306
LTC011-NNDR Collection	62,096	55,807	(6,289)
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	23,726	23,948	222
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	(31,202)	(13,956)	17,246

Total - Revenues & Housing Support

580,361	630,564	50,203
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LTC001 - £26k overspend in postage charges relating to the 22/23 annual billing cycle. This overspend will continue to year end.

Q2 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Planning & Strategic Housing

DEV001-Development Control - Applications	(173,120)	(52,627)	120,493
DEV002-Development Control - Appeals	39,635	43,635	4,000
DEV003-Development Control - Enforcement	81,002	81,002	0
ECD301-WOSP - West Oxon Strategic Partnership	4,500	0	(4,500)
ENA001-Housing Enabling	56,134	51,034	(5,100)
ENI301-Landscape Initiatives	26,406	26,406	0
HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning)	70,317	65,923	(4,394)
PLP001-Planning Policy	289,596	281,890	(7,705)
PLP003-Implementation	(480)	(480)	0
PLP004-Conservation	50,430	50,455	25
PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv	64,865	49,444	(15,421)

Total - Planning & Strategic Housing

509,283	596,681	87,398
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DEV001 - Planning Application income has proven volatile during Q1 & Q2 from a high of £113k in May to a low of £57k in July. At the end of Q2 application income is £126k below target but it is hoped that major planning applications will come forward before year end to bring income back into line with budget.

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Project	2022/23 Budget	2022/23 Q2 spend	Funded By	
In-cab technology		5,633	Borrowing*	
Replacement dog and litter bins	25,000	16,258	Borrowing*	
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	1,080,000	147,681	Borrowing*	a
Welch Way building renovation project	51,197	927	Borrowing*	
Electric vehicle recharging points	200,000	0	Borrowing*	
Investment Strategy for Recovery	22,599,538	0	Borrowing*	
CCTV - Upgrading	300,000	0	Capital Receipts	
Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000	0	Capital Receipts	
Cottsway - Blenheim Court Growth Deal	170,500	0	External Contribution	b
Cottsway - Lavender Place Growth Deal	99,000	99,000	External Contribution	
Affordable Housing in Witney	1,761,875	0	External Contribution/S106	
Improvement Grants (DFG)	807,750	387,364	Grant	
Carterton Leisure Centre PSDS Project	1,300,000	0	Grant	
Deployment of High Speed Broadband	1,230,366	2,170	Reserves	c
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	100,000	31,386	Revenue Contribution	
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	200,000	0	Revenue Contribution	
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000	9,069	Revenue Contribution	
Community Grants Fund	200,000	76,646	Revenue Contribution	
Madley Park playing Fields Project	6,165	682	S106	
Play Parks	100,000	0	S106	
EVCP Woolgate	167,000	0	S106	
Chipping Norton Creative	28,297	12,354	S106	
Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106)	44,500		S106	
Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000		S106	
Developer Capital Contributions		514,890	S106	
Total	30,596,188	1,304,060		

*Borrowing may refer to Internal or External borrowing

a. £347,000 of replacement vehicles have not yet been delivered but are expected by the end of the financial year. In light of the longer lead time, Ubico are reviewing timescales for vehicle replacement.

b. The final payment for this scheme was made to Cottsway in October 2022

c. The final payment to Gigaclear for this scheme was paid in October 2022

Agenda Item 7

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>CABINET – WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO 7</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23 QUARTER TWO</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance Email: dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861658 Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk Elizabeth Griffiths, Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer Tel: (01993) 861188 Email: elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>This report provides details of the Council’s operational performance at the end of 2022-23 Quarter Two (Q2)</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Service Dashboards</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the 2022/23 Q2 service performance be noted</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Climate Action: Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity Healthy Towns and Villages: Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone A Vibrant District Economy: Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Local Industrial Strategy Strong Local Communities: Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population: Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for a wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. The Council monitors service performance each quarter and a report on progress towards achieving the aim and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan is produced at the end of Q2 and Q4. On 13 July 2022, Cabinet agreed to revise the Council Plan and develop an Action Plan that will set out how the priorities in the Council Plan will be delivered. Following consultation with stakeholders, a final draft will be presented to Cabinet on 11 January 2023 before adoption at Full Council on 18 January 2023.
- I.2. A high level Commissioning Framework was approved by Cabinet in October 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica must ensure that it provides the necessary information, including a range of performance indicators, to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard. The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.
- I.3. The Council's Chief Executive has received a report on service performance and has assessed it in line with the high level Commissioning Statement. Particular attention has been drawn to the following:
 - i. The rising energy prices and higher cost of living is affecting householders, in particular those on low incomes. At the end of Q2, the Council Tax collection rate was similar to previous levels (except 2020-21) but could be impacted as we move through the year. The Council has completed the roll out of the mandatory £150 Council Tax rebate, and the window for applying for the discretionary scheme closed on 2 October 2022. The discretionary scheme is aimed at those who need help most, including people on benefits, people living in shared accommodation and people on a low income that were not eligible for the mandatory scheme. At the end of September 2022, the Council had paid out £4,720,800 to 31,472 households. Looking further ahead, the Council has reviewed and consulted on the Council Tax Support scheme for the next financial year so that more households can be helped to pay their council tax. The proposals were presented to Cabinet in November 2022, and approved for recommendation to Council;
 - ii. The Business Rates collection rate has improved on the previous two years but has not returned to pre-Covid levels. The collection rate was depressed over the previous two years due to the impact of Covid-19. The Government is continuing to support certain businesses with extended retail relief of 50% during this financial year. As part of the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF), the Council distributed a total of £1,720,503 to 834 businesses that were not eligible for the extended retail relief but have been affected by Covid-19. These businesses have had their accounts credited which will help to reduce the debt owed
 - iii. In addition to supporting the Syrian and Afghan Resettlement programmes, the Council is supporting the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme in which people in the UK are sponsoring/hosting a Ukrainian individual or family. At 30 September 2022 there were 164 sponsor properties registered. The number of new sponsors and guests signing up for the Homes for Ukraine scheme remains relatively low. However, the need to re-match guests to new sponsors continues to rise as relationships break down or the sponsor does not wish to continue in the Homes for Ukraine scheme after six months. A dedicated Ukraine

Housing Support Officer has been recruited and started in October to help with the re-matching, emergency accommodation and move-on advice.

- iv. Affordable housing completions are ahead of the year to date target. The 63 affordable homes completed during the quarter included the completion of Blenheim Court, Carterton scheme that received Growth Deal funding and will offer residents homes at social rent. We understand that developers are still facing challenges in the procurement and supply chain, however there have been no reported adverse effects on the programmed delivery of affordable housing.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 2.1. Cabinet agreed on 13 July 2022 to revise the Council Plan and develop an Action Plan that will set out how the priorities in the Council Plan will be delivered. Following on from the Your Voice Counts consultation which comprised a consultation using the CommonPlace digital platform (running from 24 August to 20 October 2022), a Summit for Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings and a Stakeholder Event, five strategic priorities have been identified which will form the emerging West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2023 – 2027:
 - Putting Residents First
 - A Good Quality of Life for All
 - A Better Environment for People and Wildlife
 - Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency
 - Working Together for West Oxfordshire
- 2.2. The emerging West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2023 – 27 is due to be received by the three Council Scrutiny Committees on 24 November 2022, 7 and 8 December 2022. A final draft will be presented to Cabinet on 11 January 2023 before adoption at Full Council on 18 January 2023.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 3.1. Overall, performance at the end of Q2 appears mixed. The improvements in benefits performance have been maintained, and the council tax collection rate is where we would expect it to be. Business rates collection rate has improved compared to the previous year but is not back to pre-Covid levels. A shortage of staff in customer services and the waste crew has affected some areas of service delivery such as longer average wait times and missed bins.
- 3.2. During 2021-22, workloads were high in some services due to the impact of Covid-19 and a shortage of staff. As the nation emerged from the pandemic, the employment market became buoyant with increased competition for some staff in particular for qualified professional staff such as planners. The retention of staff in some services such as customer services, planning and the waste crew is expected to remain a challenge.
- 3.3. As we progress through the year, some services including revenues and benefits, and housing support are anticipating that the cost of living crisis could impact on workloads and performance. The Council has reviewed the Council Tax Support scheme in preparation for the next financial year, and the potential options for supporting more households on low income.

- 3.4. There are a number of improvement programmes in progress across services including Planning and Revenues and Benefits, and the Waste service, as well as specific actions to return performance to previous levels. Much of the work is focussed on improving the way services communicate with customers, increasing automation and self-serve options for customers, and improving the monitoring of workflows using case management tools to help services to actively manage resources.

Key points by service area themes

3.5. Customer services

- The average call wait time in Q2 was relatively high at two minutes and 51 seconds, however, performance remains within the three minute standard considered good for local authorities (GovMetric). There was a shortage of staff for the whole of the quarter which included vacant posts and staff on phased return as well as staff undertaking User Acceptance Testing (UAT) in preparation for Salesforce 2.0 'go live' in September 2022, and training. Initial feedback from the advisors on Salesforce 2.0 was positive and should lead to some process efficiency gains.
- Throughout the quarter, advisors supported the roll out of the mandatory and discretionary council tax rebate schemes which also increased footfall into Council offices at Welch Way, as well as responding to waste container delivery queries. Calls relating to council tax bills, the annual electoral canvass (to ensure the electoral register is accurate) and the opening of the expanded council tax rebate scheme in mid-August 2022 combined with some staff sickness and planned annual leave increased the average call wait times during parts of August.
- Advisors continued to support the annual electoral canvass over a 4 week period into September 2022. There was a second spike in call wait times following the mail out of further annual canvass letters.

Resolution: Recruitment to three vacant posts is progressing and improvements in capacity is expected by Q4. However, turnover of staff results in the loss of experience which increases the overall impact on capacity and service delivery.

The service is focusing on managing demand through improved engagement with other services and fully assessing and understanding the impact of other services' communications with customers/residents on resources in the customer services team throughout the year. This will help to ensure that customer services staff are fully briefed and resources are better managed to meet potential demand. The next step is to promote the process at the next Publica senior managers meeting.

As part of the Channel Choice project, the Customer Experience Improvement programme, and the Revenues and Benefits project, processes in services are being streamlined, and the availability of online services is being increased with further integration of forms to the back office systems which is expected to reduce call length time and the need for customer contact.

3.6. Development Management

- A due diligence check of both the Planning dash and PS2 government return identified a system error in the Council's Uniform system which has been corrected. This error has resulted in the determination date [of planning applications] being set incorrectly to add on

extra days for Bank holidays. As Planning officers work to the determination date/target date, some applications have been assessed as 'determined out of time' although officers have actually performed to the standard set.

- The Q2 Planning dash shows two charts to demonstrate the extent of the error. Without the error, planning determination times for 'Minor' and 'Other' applications exceeded 90% during the whole of the quarter. The other chart shows the PS2 return statistics to central government which is created through the Uniform system which includes the error. The error will affect some cases still awaiting determination but is expected to work its way through the system by November 2022 so that the dash and PS2 data will be consistent going forwards.
- The team reached full capacity at the end of 2021/22 including the two additional posts which has had a positive impact on planning determination times, and caseloads have become more manageable. However, the planning team is comprised of some less experienced officers. These officers are receiving training as well as support from the more experienced officers.
- Staff retention remains a challenge due to the national shortage of qualified planners and more employment choice. Two planning officers left the organisation during the latter part of Q2, adding to the two existing vacant enforcement posts. Some enforcement work is being covered by the planning officers as additional work and is not included in the average caseload metrics.
- The average caseload targets were set when the number of applications coming into the service was increasing in line with the national trend which impacted on work allocations and the team structure. These targets need to be reviewed as the number of applications has begun to slow, and the team has reverted back to the intended structure. The proposal is that the caseload targets should be replaced with a range (recommended minimum and maximum) which would reflect current workloads which flex over time. A benchmarking study is underway to inform what these ranges might be.
- There is an improvement programme and roadmap in place. A new Planning Checklist is at the final stages of consultation and revisions. The aim is to improve the quality of the applications submitted and reduce the impact of invalid applications on the validation team. Other improvement projects include the rollout of the next phase of the Enterprise software to improve case management. End to end communication with the customer will be defined in terms of customer touch points i.e. the points at which customers should be contacted during the planning process.

3.7. Housing

- The number of people contacting the Housing Team continues to rise in the wake of the current cost of living crisis, the evolving Homes for Ukraine situation and the approaching cold weather during the Autumn/ Winter period, therefore the pressures on Housing services, systems and pathways remain high.

The Housing Team has refocused more resources on the Prevention approach with the recruitment of specialist Complex Needs officers and also moving people on from emergency accommodation as quickly as possible. The availability of social housing stock however remains low across the District due partially to prevention measures being put in place to assist those affected by the financial implications of the increasing cost of living.

These measures are aimed at working with households to enable them to remain in their own home, with reducing rent arrears or covering the costs of increased bills. Accessing the private rented sector in West Oxfordshire District remains difficult due to affordability.

The use of specialist Temporary Accommodation officers is proving invaluable in this task as they are able to offer dedicated support and bespoke solutions for helping clients move on successfully from emergency accommodation.

Particular attention is now also being paid to the Homes for Ukraine scheme and providing advice and assistance to Ukrainian families who will need to source their own accommodation as the scheme moves through the initial 12 month period. At the end of September 2022, there were 164 sponsors. The Housing Team has been successful in securing funds from our County partner to recruit a specialist Housing Officer to focus solely on this cohort. The specialist Ukraine Housing Officer will work with families and hosts to prevent homelessness wherever possible and assist families to secure their own accommodation in the private sector. Where this is not possible, the Officer will source either rematches to different Hosts through the Homes for Ukraine scheme or source emergency accommodation when needed until a longer term solution can be found.

The Housing Team has also provided targeted provision for rough sleepers as part of its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol response throughout the recent heatwave and will continue to do so during the Autumn/ Winter period. The Housing Team will continue to work with anyone who is new to rough sleeping, regardless of season or weather, to ensure that this is either preventable in the first instance, or where it does occur, that it is brief and non-recurring.

- Through the Council's policies and partnership working, 63 affordable homes (17 affordable rent, 32 social rent and 14 shared ownership) reached practical completion in Q2. Completions in Q2 were slightly lower than anticipated, however, overall, a total of 158 for the year have been completed against a target of 138.

The majority of the homes completed in Q2 were delivered by Cottsway including the completion of Blenheim Court, Carterton scheme that received Growth Deal funding and will offer residents homes at social rent. Further Council funding was used to ensure that the bathrooms were more accessible. Developers have reported material supply problems and recruitment and retention of staff and contractors. The year-end forecasted total is unaffected at this point.

The annual target is based on the current 2018 local plan, which was informed by the 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment and more recent evidence. It identifies a need for 274 affordable homes per year.

3.8. Revenues and Benefits

- Business rates collection rate at the end of Q2 improved by around seven percentage points compared to the same period of the previous year but has not yet returned to pre-Covid levels. The collection rate was depressed over the previous two years due to the impact of Covid-19. The Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) may have contributed to the improved collection rate as the businesses in receipt of the fund have had their business rates accounts credited. Although the grant relates to 2021-22, the timing of the receipt has meant that some businesses will have used it to offset the current year's account. As

we move through the year, the cost of living crisis is expected to impact on businesses as the economy slows down.

- At the end of Q2, the Benefits service has maintained the significant improvements it made since the end of 2021-22 in processing Council Tax Support new claims and changes. The number of CTS new claims is rising due to the cost of living crisis which will also lead to an increase in CTS changes, and therefore, higher workloads.
- The average processing time for Housing Benefit changes has begun to return to more normal levels (Actual: 7.4 days, Target: 4 days) but has not improved as much as Council Tax Scheme processing times. In general, HB is more complex to process than CTS although some changes can be auto-processed contributing to shorter average processing times. However, the number of HB new claims and changes have fallen as claimants transfer to Universal Credit and the opportunity to make gains through auto processing has reduced.

Resolution: The reduction in HB changes some of which used to be auto processed such as the tax credits around August time, is making it harder to achieve the target. The next sets of expected changes to HB claims are pension credit up ratings and new year rent increases from landlords which will be applied during Q4 and should help to bring the average processing days closer to target.

The administration of Housing Benefit is just one aspect of the service and this indicator is part of a larger suite of indicators for the service. Targets for both Council Tax new claims and changes, and % of HB overpayments due to LA error or delay have been achieved or exceeded this quarter. Currently the service is focussing on new CTS claims as the number is rising due to the cost of living crisis.

3.9. Waste and environment

- Households produced 12.5% less household waste in the first six months of 2022-23 than the same period of the previous year. Since emerging from the pandemic, all household waste streams (tonnages) have fallen, although residual waste tonnages have generally not reduced as much as other waste streams. However, taking into account the increase in households in the District, residual waste per household has fallen back to pre-Covid levels.
- Between April and September 2022, the combined recycling rate was 58.21% compared to 60.4% in the previous year. The lower combined recycling rate was due primarily to a three percentage point drop in the composting rate as a result of a prolonged period of hot weather and lack of rainfall during the summer months.
- The number of missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections has improved over the last 12 months. Performance continues to be affected by a shortage of staff caused by illness/absence and challenges securing agency staff in a buoyant employment market, and more frequent vehicle breakdowns as the vehicles move towards end of life. Although staffing returned to full capacity during Q2, the service is focussing efforts on increasing resilience as well as implementing actions to improve delivery of the service.

Resolution: A range of improvement work continues including staff restructure, the transfer of the garden waste team to the depot at Downs Road to improve service

resilience, and 1-2-1 In-Cab support and training to ensure that the capabilities of the new technology are maximised.

There are plans in place to set up a recruitment pool of agency staff who are multi-skilled to both improve resilience and address any potential shortage of staff in the future and the move of the garden waste team to Downs Road will help support this mitigation.

- The Council was having difficulties with obtaining some recycling containers due to delays in the supply chain, which are outside of the Authorities control. These containers have now arrived and deliveries to new builds are being prioritised.
- Fly tips increased during lock down and 'stay at home' messages. Although there was a decline as the nation emerged from the lock down, fly tips may start to increase again as a result of the cost of living crisis and an inability or reluctance to pay for the disposal of both household and business waste.

Cabinet agreed to additional resources in the budget 2022-23 to increase enforcement activities around fly tipping and improving its response to issues raised. The new post holder commenced in mid-September and will undertake a range of reactive and proactive work.

3.10. The service dashboards are attached at **Annex A**.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. None

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1. None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

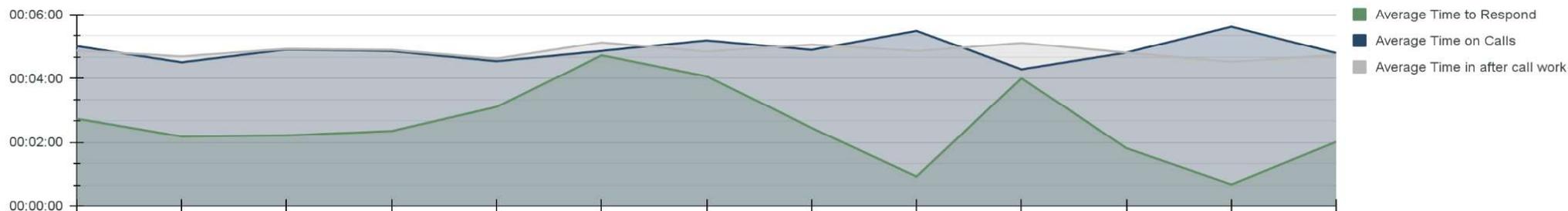
7.1. None



Satisfied

Customer Services Quarter 2

Average time to respond, call and CSA's in after call work in Qtr 2 2022



Number of calls over time in Qtr 2 2022



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- Support CT rebate mandatory & discretionary scheme
- Support CT rebate mandatory & discretionary scheme
- 1200 CT first reminders
- Two staff dedicated to UAT of Salesforce 2.0.
- Two staff dedicated to UAT of Salesforce 2.0.
- 3093 letters sent re £150 energy rebate
- Annual Electoral Canvass 37000 letters and CT reminders 2500 & CT rebate expanded discretionary rebate scheme opens
- Continuation of previous week
- Bank holiday Monday - 4 day week. 14000 Annual canvass letters sent out mid-week
- Support the Annual Electoral Canvass
- Salesforce 2.0 training for all
- Day of morning - 4 day week; Salesforce 2.0 training for all
- Cisco upgrade issues

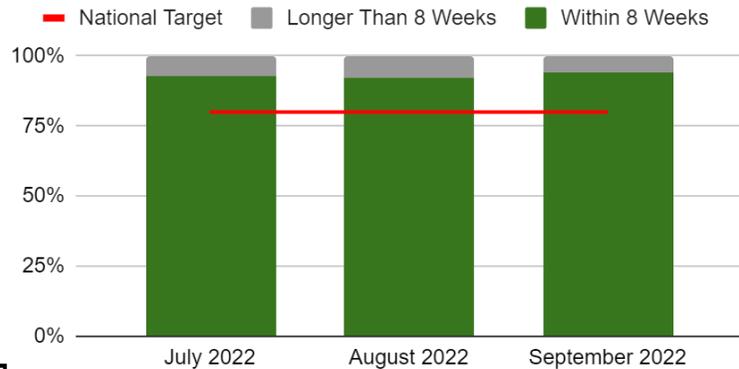
Service delivery can be affected by a range of factors both within the service and in other services. For example, shortage of staff, new systems, how the Council communicates with residents/clients. Call volumes are usually lower during Q2, and were around 14% lower than Q1. However, there were lower levels of staffing throughout the quarter due to a combination of reasons including vacant posts. Two advisors were allocated solely to do UAT for 2 weeks, and all advisors received training in preparation for the implementation of Salesforce 2.0. Further reductions in capacity due to sickness and planned annual leave combined with higher workloads related to CT bills, CT rebate expanded discretionary scheme and the annual electoral canvass

contributed to longer average wait time during parts of August. Advisors continued to support queries on the annual electoral canvass over 4 weeks culminating in a second spike in average call wait time in the week beginning 5 September following the despatch of additional letters. The service is in the process of recruiting to 3 vacant posts and expects to return to full capacity during Q4. However, the new recruits will require training up by the more experienced staff. Over the next few weeks, the service is focusing on managing demand through improved engagement with other services; and better understanding the impact of other services' communications

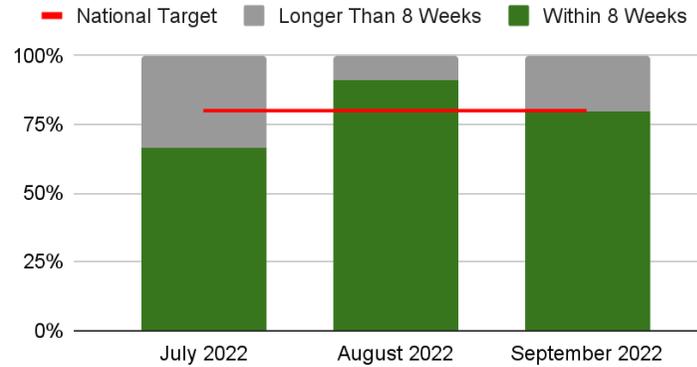
with customers/residents on resources in the customer services team throughout the year. As part of the Channel Choice project, the Customer Experience Improvement programme, and the Revenues and Benefits project, processes in services are being streamlined, and the availability of online services is being increased with further integration of forms to the back office systems which is expected to reduce call length time and the need for customer contact. Note: The response time, on call time, and after call time data include data for West Oxfordshire specific staff and share staff, based on a 60%-40% split respectively. The arrangement helps to improve resilience in the service.

Development Management Quarter 2

Planning Decisions (PS1/PS2) made within 8 weeks or agreed time (Excludes applications for discharge of conditions, pre application advice and general enquiries)



PS2 Data submission - Minor & Other App Decisions made within 8 weeks or agreed time (as per Uniform with Bank Holiday bug)



Avg Planner Caseload	33 TARGET 50	Avg Cases closed per Planner in Qtr	60 TARGET 50
Avg Senior Planner Caseload	15 TARGET 35	Avg Cases closed per Senior Planner in Qtr	22 TARGET 40
Avg Principal Planner Caseload	9 TARGET 20	Avg Cases closed per Principal Planner in Qtr	9 TARGET 25
Avg days receipt to validation	7 TARGET 7	Customer Satisfaction	 n/a

Insufficient customer satisfaction surveys were completed this quarter due to customer service advisors prioritising customer queries.

A due diligence check of both the Planning dashboard and PS2 government return identified a previously unknown system error in the Council's Uniform system affecting determination dates when a bank holiday occurs. This error has now been fixed. The error meant that the performance reported within the Planning dashboard differed from the national government returns. It is important to note the percentages within the planning dashboard accurately reflect the planning officer performance for application decisions based on the dates calculated in the system, whereas the government return percentages were unfortunately affected by the system error. We anticipate that from November 2022 the government PS2 data will match the planning dashboard, and will reflect the above target performance of the service.

The team reached full capacity at the end of 2021/22 which has had a positive impact on planning determination times as well as reducing the average caseload per officer. However, two planning posts became vacant during Q2, in addition to the two planning enforcement post vacancies. Some enforcement work is being covered by the planning case officers as additional work. Staff retention is expected to remain a challenge due to the national shortage of qualified planners and more employment choice.

The average caseload targets were set when the number of applications coming into the service was increasing in line with the national trend which impacted on work allocations and the team structure. These targets need to be reviewed as the number of applications has begun to slow, and the team has reverted back to the intended structure. The proposal is that the caseload targets should be replaced with a range (recommended minimum and maximum). A benchmarking study is underway to verify what this range should be.

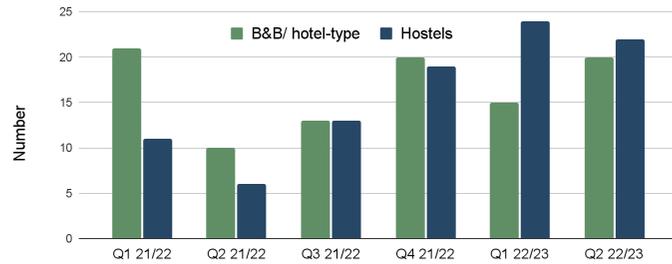
Note: the average planner caseload has been set to 'Amber' to reflect the high number of cases closed in the quarter



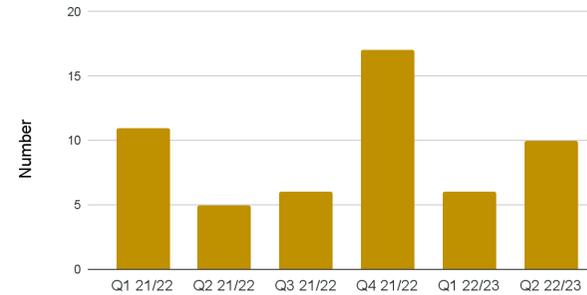
Housing Quarter 2

The Number of households in Emergency Accommodation (B&B/hotel type; and hostels owned and managed by the Council) at the end of each quarter

** 22 bed spaces available in hostels

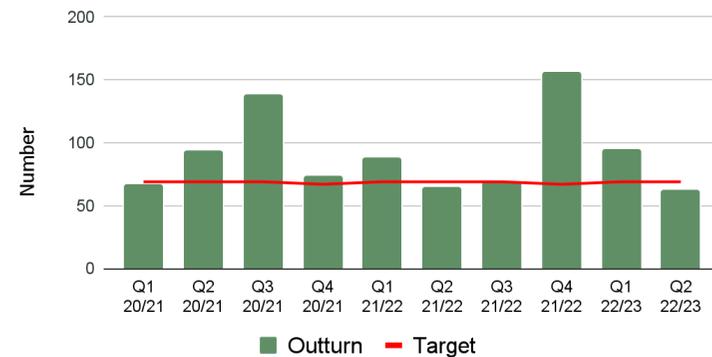


The number of successful 'move ons' from Emergency Accommodation to long term accommodation



The number of affordable homes reaching practical completion

*practical completion is when the property is ready for occupation; Target is from Local Plan



The numbers of people contacting the Housing Team continues to rise in the wake of the current cost of living crisis, the evolving Homes for Ukraine situation and the approaching cold weather during the Autumn/ Winter period.

The Housing Team has refocused more resources on the Prevention approach with the recruitment of specialist Complex Needs officers, as well as Specialist Temporary Accommodation officers who offer dedicated support for helping clients move on successfully from emergency accommodation.

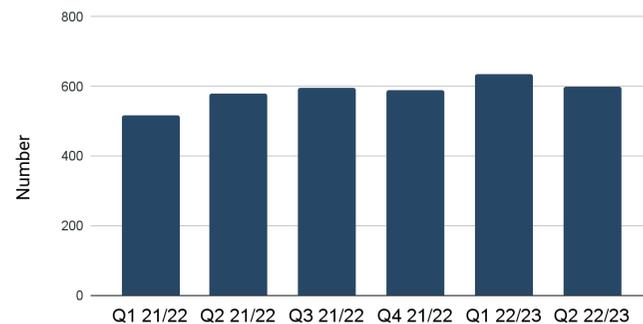
The availability of social housing stock remains low, partially due to prevention measures in place to assist those affected by the financial implications of Covid and the increasing cost of living. Private Rented Sector is less accessible due to affordability.

Particular attention is now also being paid to the Homes for Ukraine scheme and providing advice and assistance to Ukrainian families who will need to source their own accommodation as the scheme moves through the initial 12 month period. Funding has been secured from County to recruit a specialist Housing Officer to focus solely on this cohort.

Sixty-three affordable homes (17 affordable rent, 32 social rent and 14 shared ownership) reached practical completion in Q2. Some completions expected in Q2 have been re-forecast for Q3. Overall, a total of 158 for the year have been completed against a target of 138. Delivery in recent years has been strong, however it has fluctuated in previous years and is anticipated to do so in the future. Although developers are reporting some material supply issues, it is not expected to affect the annual forecast at this point.

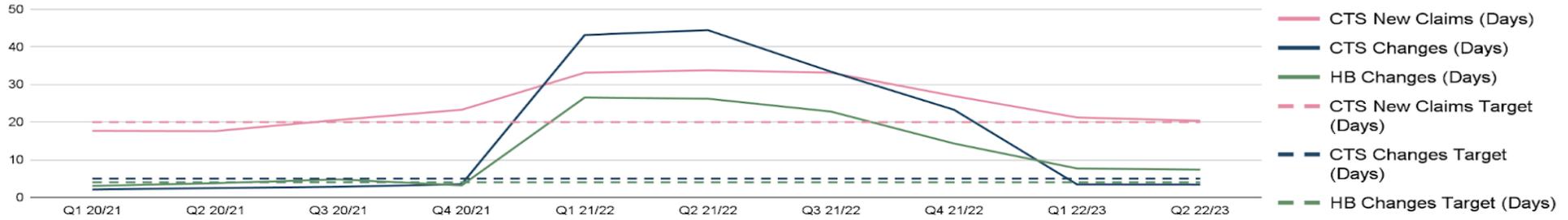
In addition, a range of proactive work is being undertaken to reduce the number of LTE properties in the District. During Q2, 142 properties were removed from the LTE list, although 107 were added. Improved reporting is helping to better target properties. A three month rolling action plan is in place to reduce the number of LTE properties. The current focus is on contacting householders whose properties are about to slip into LTE status or a higher levy

The number of Long Term Empty Properties (6 months plus) in the District

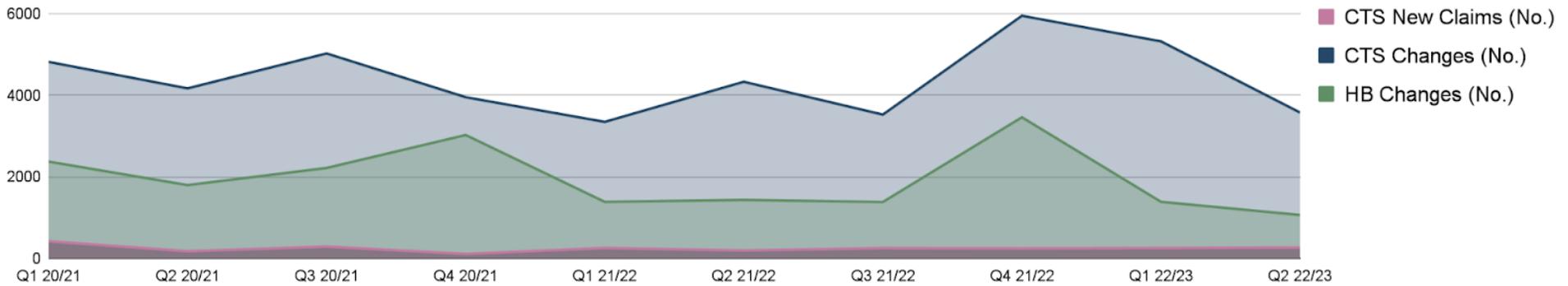


Revenues and Benefits Quarter 2

Average Processing Times For Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes



Number of Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes Assessed

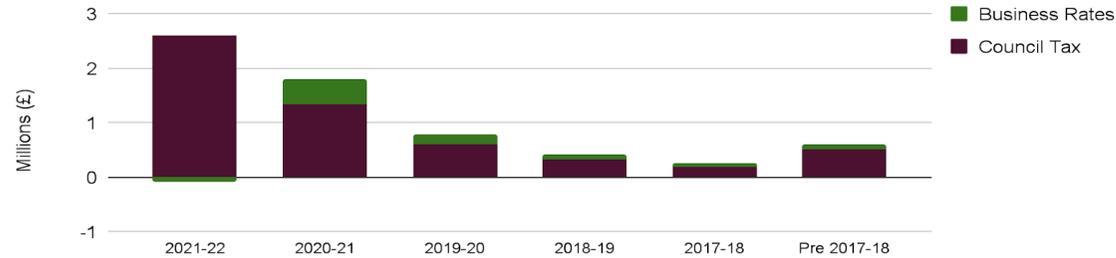


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22/23 Collection Rates

	Council Tax		Business Rates	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
QTR	26.2%	30%	23.2%	32%
YTD	58.9%	53%	59.0%	57%

Council Tax & Business Rates Aged Debt



Qtrly Aged Debt

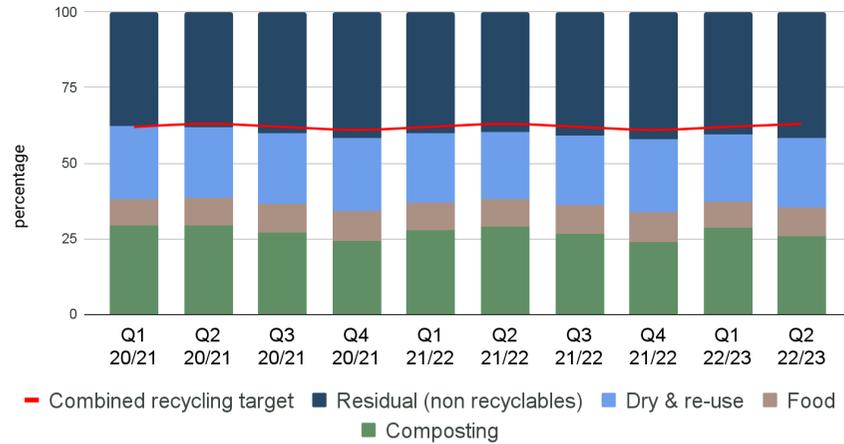
% Change Council Tax	-8.3%
% Change Bus. Rates	-34.8%

Significant improvements have been made in benefit processing times since the end of 2021-22. The number of CTS new claims has started to increase due to a rise in Universal Credit claims as the cost of living crisis takes hold. The small backlog of claims created due to year end processing has been cleared. At the end of Q2, both council tax and business rates collection rates appear healthy, although business rates collection rate is not back to pre-Covid levels. Both collection rates are likely to have been helped by the CT rebate and the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF). CARF payments have now ended; the Council distributed £1,720,503 to 834 businesses that were not eligible for extended retail relief but had been affected by Covid. These businesses had their business rates accounts for 2021-22 credited. The timing of the receipt has meant that some 2021-22 accounts are in credit and are therefore due a refund or the credit may be transferred to 2022-23. Business rates outstanding debt for 2021-22 is expected to fluctuate until the end of 2022-23 due to the impact of CARF. There is a dedicated team in place for the recovery of rates who are up to date on cases; and reduced previous years' council tax debt by around £509,000 and business rates by around £425,000 since the previous quarter. Note: The quarterly collection rates targets were adjusted during Covid (not the annual target) and now require reprofiling.

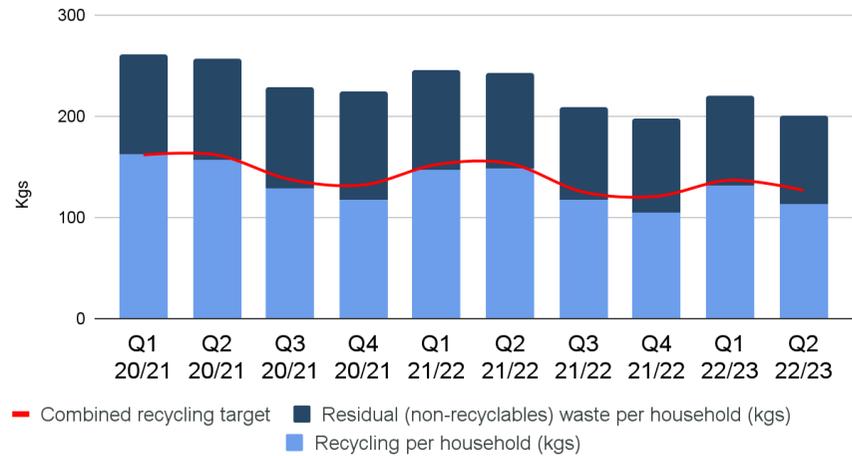


Waste and Environment Quarter 2

(Cumulative) Household waste collected composition



Household waste collected per household

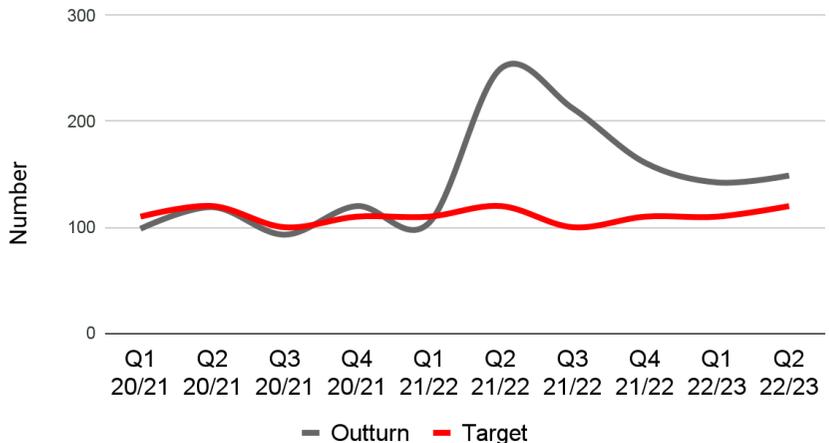


Since emerging from Covid-19, households are producing less household waste, although residual waste tonnages have generally not reduced as much as other waste streams. Taking into account the increase in households in the District, residual waste per household has fallen back to pre-Covid levels. The combined recycling rate was lower than expected at the end of Q2 due to the prolonged period of hot weather and lack of rainfall in the summer months.

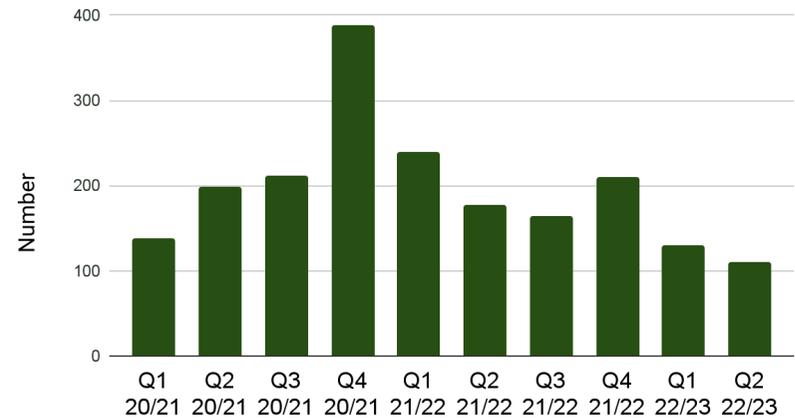
The number of missed bins remains relatively high. A range of improvement work continues including staff restructure, the transfer of the garden waste team to the depot at Down's Road to improve service resilience, and 1-2-1 In-Cab support and training to ensure that the capabilities of the new technology are maximised.

The number of fly tips peaked during the final national lockdown and have decreased which may reflect the lifting of restrictions. There are concerns that fly tips may increase due to the cost of living crisis and a reluctance to pay for the disposal of household and business waste. Following agreement by Cabinet to fund additional resources to increase enforcement activities around fly tipping, the post was taken up in September

Missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections



Number of flytips collected



WODC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY



Service Area	£k			Variance (under) / over
	Original Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp.	
Democratic and Committee Services	1,058	608	667	59
Environmental & Regulatory Services	507	221	219	(3)
Environmental Services	7,106	2,374	2,567	193
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	922	513	500	(13)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,924	1,711	1,665	(46)
Land, Legal & Property	903	461	514	54
Leisure & Communities	661	(308)	(312)	(4)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,528	509	597	87
Revenues & Housing Support	1,049	580	636	55
Investment Property and Retained Services	(2,218)	(1,111)	(987)	124
Total cost of services	13,440	5,559	6,065	507
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(1,140)	(569)	(579)	(10)
Cost of services before financing:	12,300	4,990	5,486	497

AGED DEBT SUMMARY

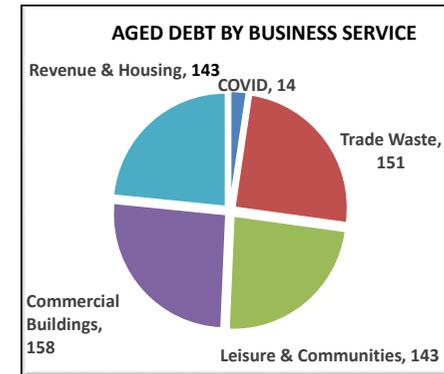
	Sep-22	Jun-22	Mar-22	Movement vs. prior period		
Invoices	1,180	1,140	1,241	-40	4%	↑
£k	609	625	718	16	-3%	↓

Aged Debt Summary:

- There has been a small increase in the number of overdue invoices compared to the previous quarter. However, the total outstanding balances have reduced and both figures are positive in comparison with the same period in 2021/22.

- There are £1.5m of invoices not included in this report as they fall due at the beginning of Q3. The twice yearly and quarterly billing cycles for services such as Trade Waste and Investment Property cause an inevitable spike in outstanding invoices in Q3. To mitigate the impact of this spike the Accounts Receivable Team along with the Credit Controller have been proactively trying to move customers to direct debit.

- The process for identifying potentially irrecoverable debts is currently under review and will be updated with a best practice approach, once defined.

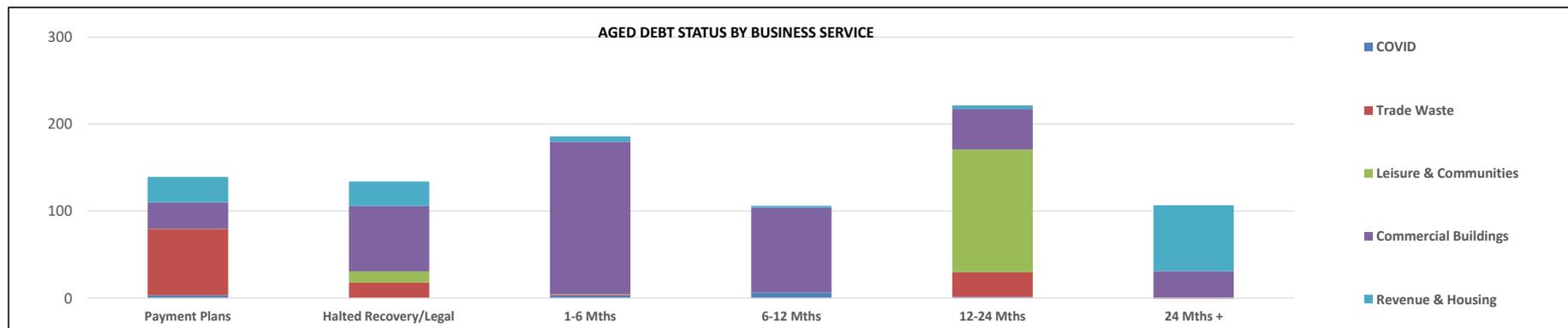


Overall Summary:

Q2 results are consistent with the position reported in Q1, showing an overall overspend compared to budget. What is apparent is the pressure on fee generating services i.e. Development Control, Building Control and Land Charges, where there has been a lack of demand in the first half of the year.

The forecast for year end is that it is unlikely there will be any significant improvement in Building Control or Land Charge. Development Control may recover due to significant applications that were expected to come forward in Q2 being delayed until later in the year due to recent economic activity rather than being shelved. Revised expectations on income from fees and charges is part of the 2023/24 budget setting process currently underway, as well as the impact of inflation on our revenue budget which is expected to increase in the second half of the year.

The MTFs has been updated to incorporate inflationary increase in salaries and contract costs and revised expectations on income, not only in fees and charges but also from some of our contractual



Agenda Item 8

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>CABINET – WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO 8</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>UPDATE OF 2023/24 BUDGET</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Dan Levy Cabinet Member for Finance Email: dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Elizabeth Griffiths, Section 151 Officer Email: elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>This report provides an update on the developing budget for 2023/24</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Detail of base budget changes by service area Annex B – Prior year comparison Annex C – Growth requests Annex D – Draft Capital Programme Annex E – Draft MTFS – v1 & 2 Annex F – MTFS Graphs</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the report be noted alongside comments as appropriate from FMOS</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Each year the Council prepares its budget for the following year. The Council's funding from the government finance settlement will not be known until mid to late December 2022 so this first draft of the budget for 2023/24 is an early indication of our financial position and is subject to change.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. For several years now we have been forecasting an expected drop in funding. This has meant that each year we tend to forecast that while funding is sufficient for the current year, a reduction in future year's funding will cause us to have a budget deficit. Predicting Govt funding ahead of the late December settlement confirmation has always been a speculative exercise but the last few years have created even more uncertainty. Cycles of funding changes, such as baselines being reset on rates, were broken by the onset of the pandemic which saw huge amounts of central Govt cash being distributed through furlough schemes and business support grants. This has been followed by political turmoil and uncertainty and global economic upheaval. It is unclear how much funding the Govt will give to Councils this year and the expectation is that it is likely to be constrained by the huge costs suffered through the pandemic.
- 2.2. While we have operated for several years now under the threat of funding cuts, what we did not foresee was the huge rise in inflation in 2022. Even without any actual growth, in the same way that residents have seen their household bills increase exponentially, the Council is experiencing huge rises in the cost of external contracts, consumables, utility costs, borrowing costs and project expenditure. This of course aligns to a large increase in wage costs which, while less than inflation, is still a significant increase to our budget.
- 2.3. While we wait for confirmation of our funding, it's clear that the double impact of a steep rise in costs, coupled with an expected reduction in funding, leaves us with a gap that can only be filled in the short term by utilising our reserves. These protects us next year but this is clearly an unsustainable position and we must quickly pull our budget back within our funding envelope.
- 2.4. As part of our forward planning, and in line with our expectation of funding cuts, we have kept our costs very tightly controlled over the past few years and taken surpluses to reserves where possible. This has the double benefit that our current baseline budget is quite tightly controlled and we do have sufficient reserves to cover next year's deficit. As above though, this can only be temporary. It allows us time to take remedial action but we will have to identify and take those actions or we will relatively quickly drain those reserves.
- 2.5. The Council had already put in place an investment strategy to generate additional income and had initiated efficiency projects in areas like Waste. While we have been quick to seize potential opportunities for investment, they have proved to be few and far between and the current economic climate has put further pressure on these not only in terms of future returns but also on the cost of borrowing. As the unexpected surge in inflation has widened the budget gap it's clear that while we will press on with these plans they remain helpful and important but are no longer sufficient to address the extent of the problem.

2.6. The table below shows the key changes to the budget and expected funding that have changed a £1.6m surplus in 2021/23 into an expected £1.85m deficit in 2022/23, a swing of almost £3.5m.

2022/23 budget surplus		(1,609,731)
Budget Movements	£	£
<u>Changes in expenditure</u>		
Pay Inflation & Councillors Allowances	845,485	
Electricity & Gas Inflation	253,171	
Leisure Income Contingency	558,613	
Recycling sorting cost increase	80,000	
Loss of on street parking income	169,390	
One off growth reversal	(772,000)	
Ubico Contract cost increase	754,099	
Other adjustments identified in budget meetings	(133,912)	
Interest on external borrowing	539,518	
		2,294,363
<u>Changes in income</u>		
Waste Collection fees to Parish Councils	(50,000)	
Proposed Garden Waste licence increase by £5	(124,635)	
Other fees & charges increases	(90,621)	
Income expected from Investment Recovery Strategy	(1,142,396)	
Other adjustments identified in budget meetings	23,940	
Additional property rental income	(114,325)	
		(1,498,037)
<u>Changes in funding</u>		
MRP	431,339	
Business Rates	102,000	
Council Tax	(339,072)	
Council Tax surplus	75,000	
Use of Earmarked Reserves	293,987	
New Homes Bonus	2,378,105	
2022/23 Service Grant	148,000	
Revenue Support Grant	79,268	
Potential Replacement Government Funding	(500,000)	
		2,668,627
2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET SHORTFALL		1,855,222

2.7. Through the pandemic, large amounts of additional grant funding was given to the Council to provide additional support to the community and much of this was used to fund multiple fixed term posts. This funding, as expected, is finite and the term of these posts is coming to an end.

Many of the service areas have asked for these roles to be made permanent but in the absence of the temporary additional funding that has paid for them for the last couple of years, these would be permanent additional strains on the budget.

- 2.8. Publica officers were asked to bring forward efficiency requests for inclusion in the budget. This resulted in several initiatives being proposed. While the detail of them is still being reviewed, any that made it through the initial review by CExs, and are currently being investigated, have been included in the list of potential growth at Annex C. Some are shared posts or shared teams working across more than once Council. Where they are expected to generate compensating income or reduced costs, this has been noted. Where they require the agreement of all Councils to fund them this has been clarified. If WODC could choose to fund a smaller amount of additional resource on their own, this has also been noted on the table.
- 2.9. A short summary of growth requests not included in the budget draft is shown below with fuller detail included in Annex C.

Growth Requests	£	£
Climate Change Manager	53,030	
Market Towns Officer	35,960	
Democratic Services Assistant	12,033	
Biodiversity Land Management Post	46,859	
Climate Change Post	39,137	
Healthy Community Post (Voluntary Sector)	13,035	
Healthy Place Shaping Post	48,641	
Families First Project Post	34,979	
Domestic Abuse & Rough Sleeping Specialist	40,325	
Woodgreen Reception/Executive Assistant	41,275	
Finance Business Partner	19,114	
HR Specialists x 3	25,000	
Waste Partnership Manager	10,250	
Empty Homes Co-Ordinator	8,060	
Head of Commercial	95,100	
Environment and Regulatory Services additional resource	32,000	
Flooding/Land Drainage Post	45,000	
Asset Management Post	63,000	
Cyber Security Post	53,390	
Planning Policy Post - additional support for Local Plan	35,185	
		751,373
Additional contribution for Local Plan review	250,000	
Capital expenditure on new Planning software	166,000	
		416,000

- 2.10. Three of the posts above have already been converted to permanent posts during the year based on reports brought forward for consideration, namely the Climate Change Manager, the Market Towns Officer and the Cyber Security Post. They will inevitably be added to the

baseline budget at some point because they are now permanent but for the coming year there is the option to carry on funding them from the earmarked reserves that have been used to fund them in 2021/22.

- 2.11. The key changes to our budget from 21/22 to 22/23 are as follows:
- Increases in salaries driven by inflation.
 - Sharp increases in utility costs and fuel – this has of course had a disproportionate impact on Ubico’s budget whose costs include the waste vehicle fleet
 - Uncertainty around the future income from the Leisure centres. GLL, our leisure operator, hold the utility risk in the contract and the huge increase in costs coupled with reduced usage is pushing the centres into a loss making situation.
 - Additional investment income – although this expectation is slightly offset, at least in the short term, by higher than anticipated borrowing costs
 - Proposed £5 increase in Council Tax
 - Expected loss of New Homes Bonus and uncertainty around other grant funding
 - The reversal of one off growth items, for example, last year we included an additional £650k budget for the Local Plan review. Unspent funds from this year will be rolled to next but there is a request in the growth items for an additional £250k which has not yet been included in the budget
- 2.12. Council Tax is proposed to increase by £5 on a band D property. Tax base has increased by 1.96% and we have forecast that business rates won’t have their baseline reset till 2025.
- 2.13. The draft Capital Programme in Annex D lists all potential capital expenditure in 2023/24. Some current projects may not be completed in 2022 and be included as “slippage” in the final review of the current financial year with the recommendation that they are carried forward to 2023/24. As always, inclusion in the Capital Programme at this stage is so that we ensure that we capture potential borrowing requirements and give visibility to potential programmes. It does not mean that spend is authorised – in most cases a business case will need to be brought forward for review – and it does not mean that the cash or budget is available and can therefore be spent elsewhere if plans change.
- 2.14. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at Annex E shows an increasing budget gap in future years. This is because we expect the baseline reset of business rates that has been deferred for several years now to happen in the medium term at the latest. While it should be noted that, for obvious reasons, the further into the future we project, the less certainty there is around the numbers, it’s of paramount importance that we realise that this is where the danger lies. The Council has sufficient reserves to cover any shortfall arising in 2023/24 but if we increase base budget we widen the funding gap not only next year but in every subsequent year, meaning that permanent increases in base budget have an exponential effect on our future financial stability.
- 2.15. 2 versions of the MTFS have been appended. One including the growth requests, one without. This shows the impact of additional growth on our budget. Even if we add none of it, without further intervention we will deplete reserves in 2026/27. With the additional growth to the budget we deplete them just beyond the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The graphs in Annex F show the impact ongoing of not reducing our budget. If we choose to spend next year funding

shortfalls from reserves then we must make alterations during the year that bring the budget back into balance in order to prevent the outcomes shown in the current forecast.

3. KEY RISKS AND NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. As part of our contract with our Leisure provider, GLL, the rapidly rising costs of utilities in our Leisure Centres falls to them, but while contractually this is the position, this increase, which is outside of our budget but expected to be an additional £620k in 2023, jeopardises the income from our Leisure Centres to the Council - which should be rising to almost £1.8m per year and is a contractual income that the Council is heavily reliant on to fund other core services.
- 3.2. The pandemic changed the way that many people viewed Leisure Centres. With their mandated closure, customers were forced to find alternative ways to exercise, either investing in home equipment or using DVDs or apps. There has been a huge uptake of new products that allow users to connect to classes or training programmes from their own homes. Between this change in consumer habits and the current cost of living crisis, usage of the leisure centres has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- 3.3. Many of the facilities on offer around the district have always been loss making and disproportionately expensive to run but were supplemented by some of the more profitable elements. With those now also making a loss and utility costs rising exponentially, our Leisure service is the single highest financial risk we currently face. Swimming pools can account for up to 80% of the utility cost of a leisure centre so these issues have a much higher impact in Council owned facilities where typically the desire is to provide a large pool to give sufficient space for swim classes.
- 3.4. There is currently one shared resource between the three Publica Councils who looks after the contracts operationally. Included in the growth requests is a “Head of Commercial” post. There is an urgent requirement, at least over the next couple of years, to work on behalf of the Council to turn the centres around. This needs to cover everything from the much needed repairs in Chipping Norton to improving the marketing reach, bringing forward new activities to meet the changing demands of our residents, thereby encouraging increased usage of the centres, and designing and delivering a strategic response to the current situation.
- 3.5. We have already taken the short term decision to amend pool opening hours, allowing them to be closed and covered to retain heat at times of the day when they are currently very underused. This will help, but the savings over winter will be in the tens of thousands set against losses which are in the hundreds of thousands. It’s entirely possible that we could have to close some facilities in order to reduce our losses and keep the main centres open. This will of course require careful and close management but what’s at stake is not only millions of pounds of contractual income, but the ongoing viability of our Leisure provision in the district.
- 3.6. The costs of delivering our Waste service have also risen year on year for the last few years with unavoidable pressures this year pushing the budget up by three quarters of a million. A project was already underway to bring in external consultants to identify any efficiency savings that could be implemented. This has identified an improved method of recycling which not only increases the levels of recycling but potentially saves a million pounds per year that we currently pay in processing costs. There is a cost of change associated with this and that is currently being assessed and reviewed. This possibility to lower costs is obviously very

welcome but again, will need to be supported at a strategic level over the next few years to see it successfully implemented. If appointed, the Head of Commercial would be expected to be accountable for both areas.

- 3.7. As the Council pursues its Agile Working strategy, we expect to see our Elmfield offices freed up during 2023 and therefore able to be rented out to generate an additional income to the Council.
- 3.8. 2022/23 looks set to be a good year in terms of our ambitions to invest with two potential projects currently in due diligence. It should be remembered though that last year only a fraction of the expected budget was spent and while the MTFS carries an expectation of high levels of investment over the next few years, these are our ambitions but appropriate opportunities may not present themselves.
- 3.9. The list of growth requests is long. It's a mixture of new posts and existing posts where the fixed term contract is coming to an end. Clearly with a huge budget deficit before these posts are taken into consideration, we cannot afford to simply add them in. Requests should be evaluated on the basis of whether they support a core service, whether they are either income generating or loss preventing, and if we have no option but to have that post, the question should be asked as to whether that requirement is temporary or permanent. More clarity on what we can afford will be available by Christmas when we know our funding settlement but the argument remains, growth to base budget, even if temporarily funded this year would be an additional strain in future years widening the expected gap – and would negate the benefit of some of the savings programmes we are trying so hard to implement.
- 3.10. In our forecast we have assumed that the rebasing of business rates, which was anticipated several years ago and is expected to reduce the Council's business rates income by around £1.5m, will not happen till 2025. This is unconfirmed and this change could happen sooner.
- 3.11. We await the outcome of the Government settlement in a few weeks' time which will clarify our funding position. A speculative £500k of additional funding has been added to the budget in the hope that if the Govt does remove a large proportion of our funding next year, something will be given to offset that.

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Detail of base budget changes by cost centre

Annex A

	2022/23 budget	Pay inflation	Reverse one offs	Budget change	2023/24 budget	2021/2022 Actual	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Estimate
Assets	(2,757,694)	60,279		90,084	(2,607,331)	(3,012,728)	(2,757,694)	(2,607,331)
Waste & Environmental	6,485,483	24,571		584,203	7,094,256	6,157,860	6,485,483	7,094,256
Comms & Marketing	165,158	11,539		90	176,787	125,464	165,158	176,787
Contracts	(255,532)	13,780		556,699	314,947	1,229,105	(255,532)	314,947
Corporate Finance	1,744,832	88,627		(284,725)	1,548,734	3,098,291	1,744,832	1,548,734
Corporate Responsibility	1,482,436	45,795	(97,000)	141,962	1,573,193	1,305,438	1,482,436	1,573,193
Customer Experience	1,010,417	88,945		36,879	1,136,241	762,652	1,010,417	1,136,241
Development Management	494,210	146,094		(15,143)	625,162	344,540	494,210	625,162
Env'l & Regulatory Services	95,748	7,174		10	102,932	91,563	95,748	102,932
Finance	750,015	43,282		6,982	800,279	733,264	750,015	800,279
Insight & Intelligence	1,171,647	35,478	(650,000)	(8,730)	548,395	529,498	1,171,647	548,395
Localities	642,402	23,208		(24,389)	641,221	540,972	642,402	641,221
Operational Services	1,241,235	124,683	(25,000)	110,137	1,451,056	1,327,612	1,241,235	1,451,056
People	276,205	19,725			295,931	266,156	276,205	295,931
Technology	1,180,850	93,103		75,628	1,349,581	1,042,561	1,180,850	1,349,581
	13,727,413	826,285	(772,000)	1,269,687	15,051,385	14,542,247	13,727,413	15,051,385

Assets:

This budget covers our operational buildings, commercial properties and our climate change programme. The impact of rising utility costs in 2023/24 is estimated at £227,000 for our operational buildings which is in part offset by anticipated additional rental income of £112,000 (not full year) for our Elmfield offices from Q2 next year. Most of the payment plans for our Investment Property income, put into place during the pandemic have now come to an end with the staff in this department successfully recovering a significant amount of the deferred rent from 2020/21 & 2021/22 and now working with our credit controller to manage ongoing.

The Climate Change programme has benefited from significant investment in additional fixed term resource in the last two financial years in order to help deliver on the Council's Priorities. There is over £100,000 in earmarked reserves which will fund initiatives going forward.

Waste & Environmental:

This budget covers grounds maintenance and waste and contains large parts of the Ubico budget. Work is being carried out to develop a range of options to deliver long term revenue savings from the Waste Service to offset the unsustainable annual increases seen in the last 3 financial years. The income budget for Green Waste has been increased by £124,000 reflecting a proposed uplift of £5 in license fees for 2023/24.

The Ubico budget has yet to be finalised but an initial increase of £754,000 has been included in this draft of the budget for 2023/24. This figure reflects the general uplift in pay inflation in response to the cost of living crisis, the significant increase in fuel costs and other inflationary pressures around goods and services.

Communications and Marketing:

Individual Business Managers have input into their marketing spend but work directly with the specialists in the Comms team who bring their expertise to each task and find the most effective and cost efficient way to reach the largest number of people. It is a priority to increase our engagement with residents via Social Media as well as more traditional channels. There are no material changes to the 2023/24 budget.

Contracts:

The main item in this budget is the Leisure contract. The expected growth in budget comes from an income contingency offsetting 50% of the contracted Management Fee due for the year, shown in the table above. GLL, who have the contract to operate the Leisure Centres are doing their best to return to a profitable operation and the Council are contractually entitled to receive the full Management Fee, however the substantial rise in utility costs, estimated to be an increase of £620k since 2019 coupled with a huge drop in facility usage since the pandemic, is delaying that return to profitability which in turn jeopardises the viability of our leisure offering. Steps are being taken to reduce losses in the short to medium term while we work with GLL to try to stabilise and improve the situation. Leisure contract income forms a huge part of the Council's revenue and is a crucial source of income which underwrites other core activities. The current situation in this service area represents one of the largest ongoing threats to

Corporate Finance:

This section covers centralised services like Legal and Treasury. The large reduction in expenditure reflects the culmination of Fixed Term posts funded by grants or specific earmarked reserves and brought in to support the Council's Covid response which expire at the end of the 2022/23 financial year. There are no other significant changes in the 2023/24 budget.

Corporate Responsibility:

These are central governance costs, members costs, election costs etc. The one off adjustment in the table reflects the reversal of the interim Monitoring Officer post in the 2022/23 budget and the one off additional contribution to the CAB for their continued Covid response. The recurring growth in the table includes the creation of a new Strategic Director of Governance which will encompass the responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer on a permanent basis.

Customer Experience:

There are a variety of services contained in this area from Customer Services and Front of House to Homelessness.

Development Management:

Planning application, appeals, conservation and flood defence are covered by this budget which has seen a modest increase in both income and costs. There is a risk around Planning income in 2023/24 that the high cost of borrowing and level of inflation could delay both major and domestic applications coming forward until the economic situation is more certain. At this stage, the income budget has been retained at the same level as 2022/23 but this may change in the final version of the budget as more intelligence is gathered.

Environmental and Regulatory Services:

There are no significant changes to highlight in this budget although a growth request has been put forward for additional resource.

Finance:

There are no significant changes to highlight in this budget although a growth request has been put forward for additional resource.

Insight and Intelligence:

The main focus of this budget is planning policy. The review of the Local Plan is underway and will finish in 2023/24. £650,000 was included in the base budget in 2022/23 to fund this extensive piece of work plus an additional £100,000 put into earmarked reserves from the General Fund surplus last financial year. While the £650k is no longer part of the base budget and the reversal of the one off growth item can be seen in the table. Unspent funds from the 2022/23 allocation will be available to spend on this next year and an additional request for funding forms part of the growth requests. The increased estimated cost to complete the work is mainly driven by the breakdown of the joint Oxfordshire plan which means that more work will have to be done by individual Councils.

Localities:

These are the budgets for communities, arts and tourism. There is a fixed term contract post that is coming to an end at the beginning of 2023/24 but there are no other material changes to this budget.

Operational Services:

This department covers all aspects of benefit payments and revenue collection, including fraud investigation. It also covers Car Parking, Pollution Control, Food Safety and Markets. There are a number of modest revenue savings that have been identified and removed from legacy budget lines. There is material growth in this budget from the transfer of On Street Parking Enforcement to Oxfordshire County Council on 1st April 2023 with a loss of budgeted income to this Council of £169,000. We would expect to see a saving in the Publica resource budget to partially offset this as fewer wardens will be required going forward.

People:

People covers human resources and training. There are no significant changes to highlight in this budget although a growth request for additional funding has been received.

Technology:

This budget predominantly covers ICT. There are increases in software licence support & maintenance to reflect the current market rate increases, which are linked to inflation. These rises have been deferred and negotiated down where possible and, as much as we can, we've found or generated savings to offset them. Additional cyber security protection is required to increase the Council's resilience and is included in the base budget as part of the software licence support costs.

2023/24 Proposed Revenue Budget comparison to prior year

Annex B

2021/2022 Actual £	Expenditure by Service Area	2022/2023 Budget £	2023/2024 Estimate £
(3,012,728)	Assets	(2,757,694)	(2,607,331)
6,157,860	Waste & Environmental	6,485,483	7,094,256
125,464	Communications & Marketing	165,158	176,787
1,229,105	Contracts	(255,532)	314,947
3,098,291	Corporate Finance	1,744,832	1,548,734
1,305,438	Corporate Responsibility	1,482,436	1,573,193
762,652	Customer Experience	1,010,417	1,136,241
344,540	Development Management	494,210	625,162
91,563	Environmental & Regulatory Services	95,748	102,932
733,264	Finance	750,015	800,279
529,498	Insight & Intelligence	1,171,647	548,395
540,972	Localities	642,402	641,221
1,327,612	Operational Services	1,241,235	1,451,056
266,156	People	276,205	295,931
1,042,561	Technology	1,180,850	1,349,581
14,542,248	Total Cost of Services	13,727,413	15,051,385
2021/2022 Actual £	Expenditure by Type	2022/2023 Budget £	2023/2024 Estimate £
1,632,693	Employees	1,029,844	1,201,486
1,494,279	Premises Related Expenditure	1,283,494	1,560,865
12,595	Transport Related Expenditure	16,500	16,310
6,170,304	Supplies & Services	5,523,807	4,857,628
17,681,346	Third Party Payments	18,569,718	19,804,649
18,481,453	Transfer Payments	15,112,480	15,112,480
1,723,465	Capital Charges	1,769,650	1,731,690
47,196,135	Total Cost	43,305,493	44,285,108
(32,655,391)	Income	(29,578,080)	(29,233,723)
14,540,744	Total Cost of Services	13,727,413	15,051,385

2023/24 Proposed Revenue Budget comparison to prior year

Annex B

	2022/2023 Budget £	2023/2024 Estimate £
Total Cost of Services	13,727,413	15,051,385
Capital Expenditure funded through revenue	540,100	540,100
Minimum Revenue Provision	454,902	886,241
Temporary loans interest	0	0
Interest on Long Term Borrowing	102,857	642,375
Capital charges - depreciation and amortisation	(1,769,650)	(1,731,690)
Net Operating Expenditure	13,055,622	15,388,411
Treasury and Investment Income	(1,139,501)	(2,244,624)
Net Expenditure	11,916,121	13,143,787
<u>Contributions to / (from):</u>		
General Fund Balance	1,609,731	(1,855,223)
Net contribution to / (from) Earmarked Reserves	(826,239)	(532,252)
Balance to be met from Government Grants & Council Tax	12,699,613	10,756,312
Transfers to / (from) Collection Fund	(210,394)	(135,394)
Revenue Support Grant	(79,268)	0
New Homes Bonus	(2,378,105)	(500,000)
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(133,225)	(133,225)
22/23 Services Grant	(148,000)	0
Lower Tier Grant	(96,000)	(96,000)
Renewable Energy Schemes	(211,745)	(209,745)
Retained Business Rates (NNDR)	(4,161,675)	(4,061,675)
Net Requirement	5,281,201	5,620,273
Taxbase	46,172.42	47,078.85
Council Tax (at Band D)	£114.38	£119.38

Post	Details	Cost	FTE	Additional comments
Democratic Services Asst	Currently there are 2.2 FTE permanent staff in the team which is not sufficient to support 49 Councillors and a busy meeting schedule. This 22hr post supports the production of committee agendas, Forward Plan and Members Allowances.	12,033	0.59	WODC specific
Biodiversity Land Management Officer	This post has delivered Land Management Plans, established the Windrush in Witney Partnership and is contributing to the Biodiversity projects under the Prosperity Fund. The benefits of making the post permanent are being able to deliver key priorities of the Climate Change Strategy, be the lead delivery officer for Biodiversity net gain, project manage the Biodiversity Toolkit and support volunteer & community projects	46,859	1.00	WODC specific
Climate Change Officer	This post had implemented the Council's Carbon Action Plan, developed a PSDS bid for Carterton Leisure Centre and designed the Impact Assessment Tool to evaluate the sustainability of Council Priorities and projects. The benefits of the post being permanent are the management and development of the Impact Assessment Tool, assist in decarbonisation projects and provide recommendations on recycling and waste opportunities	39,137	1.00	WODC specific
Healthy Community Officer (Voluntary Sector)	Request to extend the current 0.5 FTE to 1 FTE, post fell vacant in September 2022	13,035	0.50	WODC specific
Healthy Place Shaping Officer	To embed healthy place shaping approach into the policies and practices of the Council. Was a FT project focused 2 year post. Project timespan is coming to an end.	48,641	1.00	WODC specific
Families First Project Officer	The post was created in 2017 and currently manages a caseload of 30 families who have complex issues and have some sort of threat to their accommodation. The post actively intervenes at an early stage to provide a full package of support to include liaising with Landlords, arranging debt advice, provision of equipment to prevent domestic abuse and dealing with multi agency referrals. Benefits of the post becoming permanent are the ongoing intensive support of vulnerable families, supporting them to stay in their own homes which provides benefits across health, social care and education. If a family has to be housed in temporary emergency accommodation, the irrecoverable cost to the Council is in the region of £1,000 per week.	34,979	1.00	WODC specific
Domestic Abuse & Rough Sleeping Specialist	The post was created in response to the significant rise in Domestic Abuse cases needing a housing solution coming to the Council. The post supports a number of Domestic Abuse victims and entrenched Rough Sleepers who require intensive support and is a specialist area outside of the Housing Team's Prevention activities.	40,325	1.00	WODC specific
HR Specialists x 3	HR is the beating heart of an organisation, ensuring that the most important asset, it's people, operate to the optimum level. Investment in this department will increase its capacity through hiring 3 specialists. This in turn will increase HR's capability and elevate the service, partnering strategically hand in glove with the wider businesses. Ultimately it is to enable the HR function to effectively support the drive for increased productivity and efficiencies through our people and processes from ever limited resources. The HR functionality is the key to unlocking the organisational potential, and that of its people. It is imperative we develop our culture and diversity, whilst communicating our broader offering, break down the silos, to not only attract best-in-class talent, but also to support the development of in-house talent, that we retain and grow over a longer time. This will reduce spend on agency fees by further developing the recruitment and talent team, create succession planning and targeted career pathways.	25,000	3.00	Shared posts. Would either require the other Councils to agree or would cost more for West to fund alone.
Waste Partnership Manager	WODC contributes 10k p.a. towards the total cost of £80,477 this year. The contributions are based on £50k from county, £10k x 5 WCAs to cover salary, on costs, and give a little bit of budget for conferences, projects etc as they arise. In addition to being responsible for coordinating county-wide waste and recycling organising the meetings and agenda content, supporting the chair etc. The postholder has a wealth of industry knowledge and contacts, which has proved immensely valuable in our responding to the Government consultations surrounding the Environment Bill and the implications for local authorities. With 2024 and the new waste service coming, translation of the new legislation policies is going to be the next big issue faced and with no guidance coming from Government on how Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) or Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is going to operate, there's going to need to be work done to support the implementation and protect the Oxfordshire Partner Councils interests. If the Partnership Manager post is removed, then the partnership will simply fold as there isn't the necessary resource available at any of the Oxfordshire authorities to take this on.	10,250	1.00	Shared post across County
Woodgreen Reception/Executive Asst	The change of administration at WODC has had a significant impact on the current Executive Assistant. The demands on her time, when coupled with her role providing support to the Management Team and the return to civic events (which are currently exceptionally high) means that she is struggling to meet the requirements of the role. Some temporary support is being provided via an agency at a cost of £600 per week. In addition Reception cover has been requested at the Woodgreen office as the decision was previously made to focus customer interaction on the Town Centre location.	41,275	1.00	WODC specific Hopefully if the new flexible chamber and committee rooms can be rented out this post could coordinate that and set rooms up and this additional income would offset some of the cost.

Post	Details	Cost	FTE	Additional comments
Finance Business Partner	The demands on the Finance team with increased audit requirements and a requirement for more support being given to other areas of the business has meant that additional resource is needed. More work required to determine exactly where the best place to add this in the structure is.	19,114	1.00	Shared post. Forest potentially supportive dependent on where this sits in the structure.
Empty Homes Co-Ordinator	Dealing with empty properties can have social, regenerative, financial and strategic benefits. To support this a Long Term Empty Strategy 2019-2024 was implemented across all 3 Districts and an Empty Home Coordinator post created. The post has contributed to 1,574 properties being removed from the long term empty database across the 3 partnership Councils since April 2021. The post is directly responsible for investigating properties reported to be empty, working with individual owners encouraging property sales. People purchasing empty homes increase local economic activity by providing for new expenditure on the houses themselves. The effect on the local economy goes beyond the immediate spend by the homeowner and each £1 spent will generate further economic activity that would not have existed without it. Empty homes are prone to anti-social behavior and can lock communities into a spiral of decline. The cost of dealing with this can fall to the emergency services with the cost of a single fire service callout being £1,970 and the police around £1,000.	8,060	0.81	Shared post
Head of Commercial	Recruitment of a post to manage the strategic management of waste and leisure. If we can't turn Leisure around we risk reputational damage, the loss of services and circa £1.5m income per year. The waste service will have multiple challenges over the next few years with the implementation of the revised service design to unlock financial savings. Once in post, additional resource may be required to support the waste and leisure services (marketing, financial management of customer payments etc) but the post holder should determine and present a case for these.	95,100	1.00	WODC specific This post is aimed at turning around the Leisure service on a strategic level and the amount of income at stake far outweighs the cost.
Environment and Regulatory Services	To cover regulatory duties and include the expansion of HMO licensing, dealing with poor housing conditions in the private rented sector, the better regulation of caravan and campsites and traveller sites and the processing of new fit and proper person applications, the capacity to enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations, to engage with housing work targeted at energy efficiency and fuel property, to meet our air quality management responsibilities, ensuring the monitoring and delivery of the new action plans and meeting the new requirements of the Environment Act 2021, and to be able to respond effectively to an increasing number of private water supply investigations as a result of tightening regulations.	32,000	3.00	3 shared posts. If not supported by the other Councils then a WODC specific officer aimed at Housing inspections could be recruited.
Flooding/Land Drainage	Additional capacity to be shared with one other Council in the partnership	45,000	0.50	Shared post
Asset Management	Replacement for current consultancy spend. Should generate equivalent savings if not more. WODC has a large estate portfolio and an appetite to invest over the coming years. This post would support that.	63,000	1.00	WODC specific - should generate at least equivalent savings
Cyber Security	This is the additional Cyber resource already approved by Cabinet. Council approval as a growth item is required to add it to budget.	53,390	1.00	WODC specific
Climate Change Manager	Fixed term post made permanent. Post already approved by cabinet, currently funded from priorities reserve. This can either continue being funded from there for 23/24 or be added to the budget as growth.	53,030	1.00	WODC specific
Market Towns Officer	Post was a Covid funded post ref regeneration of high streets. Now moving on to rural prosperity fund. Post already approved by cabinet, currently funded from priorities reserve. This can either continue being funded from there for 23/24 or be added to the budget as growth.	35,960	1.00	WODC specific
Planning Policy Officer	This post was backfilling for resource seconded to the FOP but a continuation is requested to support the work on the Local Plan. May be able to extend the fixed term rather than making permanent. May be able to find grant funding.	35,185	1.00	WODC specific
Total		751,373	22	

Digital Transformation of Development Management	This is a shared cost across three Publica Councils to facilitate Planning moving to a better software platform that allows on site access to the system bringing increased efficiency to the service.	166,000		One off capital spend
Revenue	Additional funding for the Local Plan review. Original budget was set before the breakdown of the Oxfordshire Plan	<u>250,000</u>		One off additional budget
		416,000		

Scheme	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	Total £
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	1,000,000
Deployment of High Speed Broadband	1,230,366										1,230,366
Update Financial Management System (Agresso)		25,000									25,000
Idox System Upgrade (Planning)		150,000									150,000
Play Parks	100,000										100,000
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	2,000,000
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	400,000
Improvement Grants/Disabled Facilities Grants	807,750	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	8,007,750
Community Grants Fund	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	2,000,000
EVCP Woolgate	167,000										167,000
Affordable Housing	1,761,875										1,761,875
Electric vehicle recharging points	200,000										200,000
Replacement dog and litter bins	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	172,000
Weighbridge at Bulking Station			25,000					25,000			50,000
Replacement Street Sweepers					200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000		1,000,000
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	1,080,000		1,080,000								2,160,000
In-cab technology			40,000								40,000
Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000				10,000				10,000		30,000
CCTV upgrading	300,000										300,000
Carterton Swinbrook Public Art (S106)	44,500										44,500
Chipping Norton Creative Project	28,297										28,297
Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000										75,000
Chipping Norton LC roof replacement		1,000,000									1,000,000
Madley Park Playing Field project	6,165										6,165
Cottsway - Lavendar Place Affordable Housing	99,000										99,000
Cottsway - Blenheim Court Growth Deal	170,500										170,500
Carterton Leisure Centre Upgrade PSDS	1,300,000										1,300,000
Replacement waste and recycling fleet		2,000,000	4,500,000								6,500,000
Town Centre Shop building renovation project	51,197										51,197
Investment Strategy for Recovery	22,599,538	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	9,000,462					71,600,000
	30,596,188	14,540,000	17,010,000	11,365,000	11,562,000	10,552,462	1,552,000	1,577,000	1,562,000	1,352,000	101,668,650

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Medium Term Financial Strategy Updated November 2022

Annex E (I)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Inflation			5%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Taxbase	1.0279	1.0196	1.018	1.016	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020
Base	13,518,681	13,055,622	14,246,015	14,912,332	15,801,818	16,023,219	15,972,195	15,840,761	15,937,992	16,106,908
Inflationary uplift			712,301	447,370	316,036	320,464	319,444	316,815	318,760	322,138
Inflation - Publica	502,649	517,121								
Inflation - Electricity & Gas		253,171								
Inflation - Ubico	(39,335)	754,099								
Leisure contract contingency		575,813								
MRP movement	332,431	431,339	252,500	260,500	252,500		(96,430)	29,000	(60,429)	
Interest on External Borrowing	(75,193)	539,518	470,464	228,188	264,134	239,392	251,552	87,402	(89,415)	(79,129)
One-off growth - reversal of prior year	(32,500)	(772,000)								
Recurring growth	355,922	33,728								
Budget growth items pending approval	263,072									
Covid income reduction	(1,770,104)									
Investment Strategy income		(1,142,396)	(768,948)	(46,571)	(611,269)	(610,880)	(606,000)	(335,986)		
Target Budget (NOE)	13,055,622	14,246,015	14,912,332	15,801,818	16,023,219	15,972,195	15,840,761	15,937,992	16,106,908	16,349,917
Financed by:										
Revenue Support Grant	79,268									
Business Rates Share & Renewables	4,373,420	4,271,420	4,271,420							
Baseline Funding Level post 2022				2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375
New Homes Bonus	2,378,105									
Potential Government replacement funding		500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Rural & Lower Tier grants	229,225	229,225								
Investment Income - Pooled Funds	1,139,501	1,102,228	1,137,499	1,173,899	1,211,464	1,250,231	1,290,238	1,331,526	1,374,135	1,418,107
Use of earmarked reserves	826,239	532,252	418,669	392,410	354,314					
Collection Fund	210,394	135,394	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Council Tax	5,281,201	5,620,273	5,960,944	6,299,780	6,674,105	7,060,883	7,460,463	7,873,201	8,299,465	8,739,630
Use of GF reserves	(1,609,731)	1,855,223	2,523,799	4,874,354	4,721,962	4,599,706	4,028,685	3,671,890	3,371,933	3,130,805
TaxBase	46,172	47,078	47,925	48,692	49,666	50,659	51,672	52,706	53,760	54,835
Band D	114.38	119.38	124.38	129.38	134.38	139.38	144.38	149.38	154.38	159.38
Tax increase	4.57%	4.37%	4.19%	4.02%	3.86%	3.72%	3.59%	3.46%	3.35%	3.24%
General fund balance	13,328,681	11,473,458	8,949,660	4,075,305	(646,656)	(5,246,363)	(9,275,048)	(12,946,938)	(16,318,871)	(19,449,676)

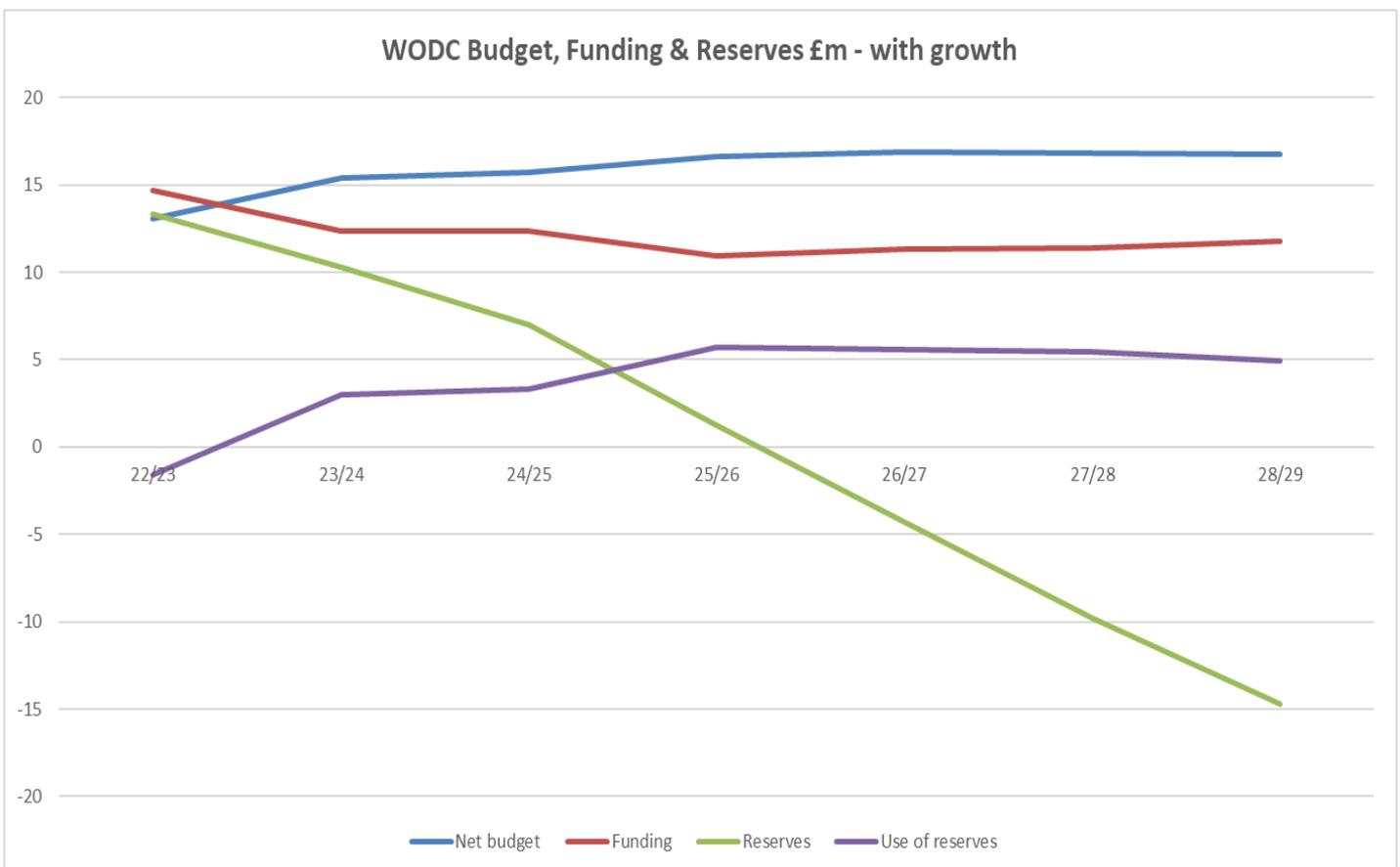
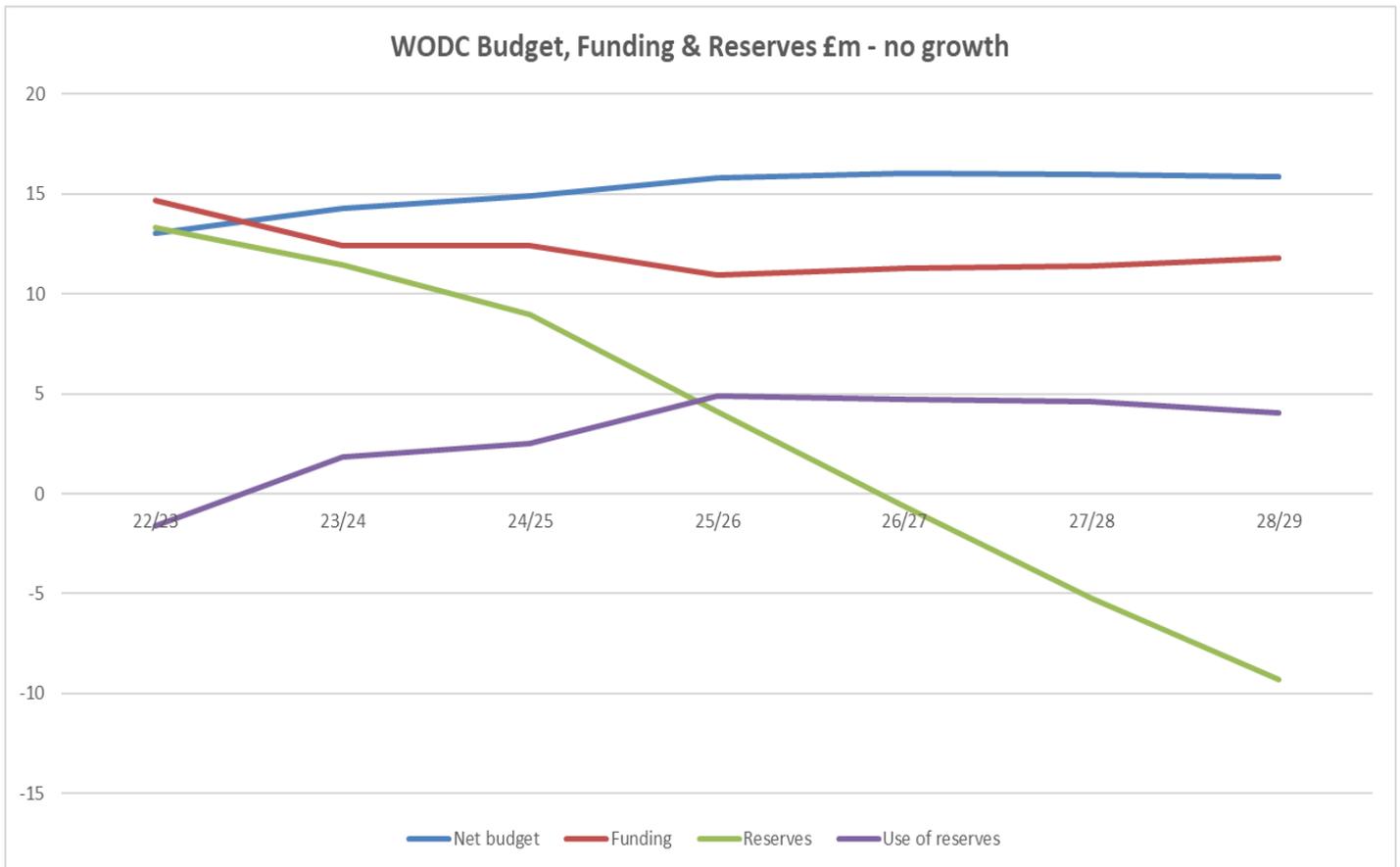
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Medium Term Financial Strategy Updated November 2022 - including growth requests

Annex E (2)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
Inflation			5%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Taxbase	1.0279	1.0196	1.018	1.016	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020	1.020
Base	13,518,681	13,055,622	15,413,388	15,722,073	16,635,852	16,873,934	16,839,924	16,725,845	16,840,777	17,027,749
Inflationary uplift			770,669	471,662	332,717	337,479	336,798	334,517	336,816	340,555
Inflation - Publica	502,649	517,121								
Inflation - Electricity & Gas		253,171								
Inflation - Ubico	(39,335)	754,099								
Leisure contract contingency		575,813								
MRP movement	332,431	431,339	252,500	260,500	252,500		(96,430)	29,000	(60,429)	
Interest on External Borrowing	(75,193)	539,518	470,464	228,188	264,134	239,392	251,552	87,402	(89,415)	(79,129)
One-off growth - reversal of prior year	(32,500)	(356,000)	(416,000)							
Recurring growth	355,922	33,728								
Budget growth items pending approval	263,072	751,373								
Covid income reduction	(1,770,104)									
Investment Strategy income		(1,142,396)	(768,948)	(46,571)	(611,269)	(610,880)	(606,000)	(335,986)		
Target Budget (NOE)	13,055,622	15,413,388	15,722,073	16,635,852	16,873,934	16,839,924	16,725,845	16,840,777	17,027,749	17,289,175
Financed by:										
Revenue Support Grant	79,268									
Business Rates Share & Renewables	4,373,420	4,271,420	4,271,420							
Baseline Funding Level post 2022				2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375	2,461,375
New Homes Bonus	2,378,105									
Potential Government replacement funding		500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Rural & Lower Tier grants	229,225	229,225								
Investment Income - Pooled Funds	1,139,501	1,102,228	1,137,499	1,173,899	1,211,464	1,250,231	1,290,238	1,331,526	1,374,135	1,418,107
Use of earmarked reserves	826,239	532,252	418,669	392,410	354,314					
Collection Fund	210,394	135,394	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Council Tax	5,281,201	5,620,273	5,960,944	6,299,780	6,674,105	7,060,883	7,460,463	7,873,201	8,299,465	8,739,630
Use of GF reserves	(1,609,731)	3,022,596	3,333,540	5,708,388	5,572,676	5,467,435	4,913,769	4,574,675	4,292,774	4,070,062
TaxBase	46,172	47,078	47,925	48,692	49,666	50,659	51,672	52,706	53,760	54,835
Band D	114.38	119.38	124.38	129.38	134.38	139.38	144.38	149.38	154.38	159.38
Tax increase	4.57%	4.37%	4.19%	4.02%	3.86%	3.72%	3.59%	3.46%	3.35%	3.24%
General fund balance	13,328,681	10,306,085	6,972,545	1,264,157	(4,308,519)	(9,775,955)	(14,689,723)	(19,264,398)	(23,557,173)	(27,627,235)

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 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>CABINET – WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO 9</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>COUNTER FRAUD AND ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All indirectly</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: Andy.Graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Emma Cathcart, Head of Service, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Email: Emma.Cathcart@cotswold.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To present Cabinet with an updated Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy for approval.</p> <p>The Policy has been reviewed to ensure the content reflects current legislation and the Council’s Policies and Procedures. The Policy will replace the existing Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p><i>That Cabinet resolves to:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Approves and adopts the Policy attached to this report and;</i></p> <p><i>(b) Authorises the Deputy Chief Executive to approve future minor amendments to the Policy in consultation with the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, Legal Services and the Leader of the Council.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Any Policies drafted or revised by the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit have been reviewed by Legal Services and have been issued to the relevant Senior Officers, Governance Group and Corporate Management for comment.</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit is tasked with reviewing the Council's Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy. It is recommended good practice that the Policy is updated and reviewed at least every few years in line with any legislative changes.
- 1.2. In administering its responsibilities; this Council has a duty to prevent fraud and corruption, whether it is attempted by someone outside or within the Council such as another organisation, a resident, an employee or Councillor.
- 1.3. The Council is committed to an effective counter fraud and corruption culture, by promoting high ethical standards and encouraging the prevention and detection of fraudulent activities, thus supporting corporate and community plans.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The Policy, attached at Annex A, has been updated in accordance with the review period. Review frequency is as required by legislative changes or every three years. This has been slightly delayed due to events over the last two years.
- 2.2. The Council's existing Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy was developed to reflect (i) latest legislation and (ii) the changes from the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Services (operated by the Department for Work and Pensions) which subsumed the Council's responsibilities for investigating Housing Benefit Fraud.
- 2.3. The Policy was last reviewed following the changes brought about by data protection legislation / regulations.
- 2.4. The Policy highlights the key legislation and roles and responsibilities of Members, Officers and other parties.
- 2.5. The changes are relatively minor and can be seen as red text within the Policy at Annex A.
- 2.6. A section has been inserted relating to Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime and relating to Modern Slavery, detailing the Council's responsibilities.
- 2.7. The Policy has also been refreshed to reflect the growth of the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit work streams and responsibilities relating to risk.
- 2.8. As part of the consultation process, the Policy has been reviewed by Legal Services and the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 2.9. Cabinet last considered the Policy in March 2017 when it replaced the existing Policy.
- 2.10. The Audit and Governance Committee considered and endorsed the Policy in November 2022.
- 2.11. Awareness will be raised with all staff following the approval of the Policy. Online refresher training will be issued to staff following approval of the Policy.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

- 3.2. The support of the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy will help to support the prevention and detection of misuse of public funds and fraud therefore reducing potential financial loss to the Council.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. In general terms, the existence and application of an effective fraud risk management regime assists the Council in effective financial governance which is less susceptible to legal challenge.
- 4.2. The legislation utilised by the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit and other service areas within the Council is identified within the Policy and the Council must comply with all legislative requirements.
- 4.3. The Council must also ensure that authorisations obtained under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 or the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 are appropriately logged, maintained and updated on the central register.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The Council is required to proactively tackle fraudulent activity in relation to the abuse of public funds.
- 5.2. Failure to undertake such activity would accordingly not be compliant and expose the authority to greater risk of fraud and/or corruption. If the Council does not have effective counter fraud and corruption controls it risks both assets and reputation.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. The promotion of effective counter fraud controls and a zero tolerance approach to internal misconduct promotes a positive work environment.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. None.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:
- Cabinet Report March 2017 – Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.
- 8.2. These documents will be available for inspection at the Council Offices at Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB during normal office hours for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting. Please contact the author of the report.

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Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy



Version Control:	
Document Name:	Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
Version:	2
Responsible Officer:	Emma Cathcart, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit
Approved by:	Executive / Cabinet
Next Review Date	May 2025
Retention Period:	N/A

Revision History

Revision date	Version	Description
August 2019	1.1	Update following changes to data protection legislation
May 2022	2	Review and Update

Consultees

Internal	External
CFEU Lead	
One Legal / Legal Services	

Distribution

Name	
All Staff	

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

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Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 1.1. In administering its responsibilities; this Council has a duty to prevent fraud and corruption, whether it is attempted by someone outside or within the Council such as another organisation, a resident, an employee or Member. The Council is committed to an effective Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption culture, by promoting high ethical standards and encouraging the prevention, detection and investigation of fraudulent activities.
- 1.2. The Section 151 Officer has a statutory responsibility under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure the proper arrangements for the Council's financial affairs to include the development of financial codes of practice and accounting instructions. Through delegation of duties, the Officer ensures appropriate controls are in place.
- 1.3. The Monitoring Officer has a statutory responsibility to advise the Council on the legality of its decisions and to ensure that the Council's actions do not give rise to illegality or maladministration. It is therefore essential for employees to follow the Council's policies and procedures to demonstrate that the Council is acting in an open and transparent manner.
- 1.4. The Council has a statutory duty to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and its system of internal controls. The Council's Financial Rules state that 'whenever a matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve irregularities concerning cash, stores or other property of the Council, or any suspected irregularity in the exercise of the functions of the Council, the Director, Head of Service or equivalent Senior Officer has a duty to immediately notify the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, who shall take steps as they consider necessary by way of investigation and report'. Furthermore the Financial Rules also state that each Director, Head of Service or equivalent Senior Officer is responsible for 'notifying the Section 151 Officer and the Chief Internal Audit Officer immediately of any suspected fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of the Council's property or resources.
- 1.5. The Council has a zero tolerance approach to fraud committed or attempted by any person against the organisation or any of its partner agencies. The Council will thoroughly investigate all suggestions of fraud, corruption or theft, from within the Council and from external sources which it recognises can:
 - Undermine the standards of public service that the Council is attempting to achieve by diverting resources from legitimate activities.
 - Reduce the level of resources and services available for the residents of the borough, district or county as a whole.
 - Result in consequences which damage public confidence in the Council and / or adversely affect staff morale.
- 1.6. Any proven fraud will be dealt with in a consistent and proportionate manner. Appropriate sanctions and redress for losses will be pursued, to include criminal proceedings against anyone perpetrating, or seeking to perpetrate, fraud, corruption or theft against the Council.
- 1.7. The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity, honesty, integrity and accountability. The Council expects all Officers, Members and partner organisations to observe these standards and values, which are defined within the Code of Conduct for Employees and the Members Code of Conduct, to help achieve the Council's over-arching priority for the continued delivery of outcomes and value for money for local tax-payers.

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. FRAUD

The term “fraud” is usually used to describe depriving someone of something by deceit, which might either be misuse of funds or other resources, or more complicated crimes like false accounting or the supply of false information. In legal terms, all of these activities are the same crime, theft, examples of which include deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, corruption, theft, conspiracy, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion.

2.2 Fraud was introduced as a general offence and is defined within The Fraud Act 2006. The Act details that a person is guilty of fraud if he commits any of the following:

- Fraud by false representation; that is if a person:
 - (a) dishonestly makes a false representation, and
 - (b) intends, by making the representation:
 - (i) to make a gain for himself or another, or
 - (ii) to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss.
- Fraud by failing to disclose information; that is if a person:
 - (a) dishonestly fails to disclose to another person information which he is under a legal duty to disclose, and
 - (b) intends, by failing to disclose the information:
 - (i) to make a gain for himself or another, or
 - (ii) to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss.
- Fraud by abuse of position; that is if a person:
 - (a) occupies a position in which he is expected to safeguard, or not to act against, the financial interests of another person,
 - (b) dishonestly abuses that position, and
 - (c) intends, by means of the abuse of that position:
 - (i) to make a gain for himself or another, or
 - (ii) to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss.

2.3 In addition the Act introduced new offences in relation to obtaining services dishonestly, possessing, making, and supplying articles for the use in frauds and fraudulent trading applicable to non-corporate traders.

2.4. CORRUPTION

Is the deliberate use of one’s position for direct or indirect personal gain. “Corruption” covers the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward, which may influence the action of any person to act inappropriately and against the interests of the organisation.

2.5. THEFT

Is the physical misappropriation of cash or other tangible assets. A person is guilty of “theft” if he or she dishonestly appropriates property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.

2.6. MONEY LAUNDERING

Money laundering is the process by which criminals attempt to 'recycle' the proceeds of their criminal activities in order to conceal its origins and ownership whilst retaining use of the funds.

2.7 The burden of identifying and reporting acts of money laundering rests within the organisation. Any service that receives money from an external person or body is

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

potentially vulnerable to a money laundering operation. The need for vigilance is vital and any suspicion concerning the appropriateness of a transaction should be reported and advice sought from the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer or Chief Internal Audit Officer. A failure to report a suspicion could compromise an individual and they could be caught by the money laundering provisions. All employees are therefore instructed to be aware of the increasing possibility of receiving requests that are not genuine and are in fact for the purpose of money laundering.

2.8 **The Council recognises its responsibilities under Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime Legislation. These responsibilities are adhered to in line with the Council's Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Policy and the related Procedures. The Council is required to have a designated Officer for money laundering reporting purposes.** The officer nominated to receive disclosures about money laundering activity is the Officer appointed under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.9 Both Financial and Legal Officers working for the Council also have their own professional guidance in relation to money laundering which places a duty on them to report any suspicions. These suspicions may override their legal professional privilege and confidentiality.

2.10 **BRIBERY**

The Bribery Act 2010 introduced four main offences, simplified below. Please note, a 'financial' or 'other advantage' may include money, assets, gifts or services within the following:

- Bribing another person: a person is guilty of an offence if he offers, promises or gives a financial or other advantage to another person. Further if he intends the advantage to induce a person to perform improperly a function or activity or if he knows or believes the acceptance of the advantage offered constitutes improper activity.
- Offences relating to being bribed: a person is guilty of an offence if he requests, agrees to receive, or accepts a financial or other advantage intending that as a consequence an improper activity or function will be performed improperly or if he knows or believes the acceptance of the advantage offered constitutes improper activity. Where a person agrees to receive or accepts an advantage as a reward for improper activity or function that has been performed. It does not matter whether the recipient of the bribe receives it directly or through a third party, or whether it is for the recipient's ultimate advantage or not.
- Bribery of a foreign public official: a person who bribes a foreign public official is guilty of an offence if the person's intention is to influence the foreign public official in their capacity, duty or role as a foreign public official. A person must also intend to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business and must offer, promise or give any financial or other advantage.
- Failure of commercial organisations to prevent bribery: organisations, which include the Council, must have adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery in relation to the obtaining or retaining of business associated with the business itself.

2.11 The Council is committed to ensuring the prevention of corruption and bribery and sets out its policy in relation to the acceptance of gifts and hospitality by Officers and Members within the Codes of Conduct for Employees / Members (or equivalent) and the Constitution. **Offers of or the receipt of any gifts or hospitality** should be recorded by Officers and Members in the appropriate register whether accepted or refused. Officers and Members are also required to declare any outside interests that they have

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which may result in a conflict of interest in respect of transactions and dealings with the Council. Again, any such interests will be recorded in an appropriate register.

2.12 Prior to entering into any business arrangements, all Council Officers and/or business units should ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to identify any potential areas of risk relating to bribery or corruption. If an Officer has any concerns they must raise them with The Chief Internal Audit Officer.

2.13. MODERN SLAVERY

Modern Slavery takes a number of forms but all relate to the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. The Council recognises its responsibilities as outlined within the legislation and is committed to promoting transparency in supply chains to prevent modern slavery and to take appropriate action to identify and address those risks.

3. SCOPE

3.1 In relation to any of the above mentioned offences, this policy applies to:

- All employees, including shared service employees, casual workers and agency staff.
- Members.
- Committee Members of Council funded voluntary organisations.
- Partner organisations, where the Council has a financial or statutory responsibility.
- Council Suppliers, Contractors and Consultants.
- The general public.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The aims and objectives of the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy are to:

- Ensure that the Council has measures in place to guard against fraud and loss and that the Council maximises revenue recovery.
- Safeguard the Council's valuable resources by ensuring they are not lost through fraud but are used for providing services to the community as a whole.
- Create a 'counter fraud' culture which highlights the Council's zero tolerance to fraud, corruption, bribery and theft, which defines roles and responsibilities and actively engages everyone (the public, Members, Officers, managers and policy makers).

4.2 The Council aims to:

- Proactively deter, prevent and detect fraud, corruption, bribery and theft.
- Investigate any suspicions of, or detected instances of fraud, corruption, bribery and theft.
- Enable the Council to apply appropriate sanctions, to include prosecution, and recovery of losses.
- Provide recommendations to inform policy, system and control improvements, thereby reducing the Council's exposure to fraudulent activity.

5. PRINCIPLES

5.1 The Council will not tolerate abuse of its services or resources and has high expectations of propriety, integrity and accountability from all parties identified within this policy. Maintaining this policy supports this vision.

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

- 5.2 The Council has a documented Constitution, Scheme of Delegated Powers and Financial Regulations to give Members and Officers clear instructions or guidance for carrying out the Council's functions and responsibilities. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with these documents rests with management with adherence being periodically monitored by Internal Audit Services. Where breaches are identified these will be investigated in accordance with this policy and the Council's Financial Rules.
- 5.3 The Council expects that Members and Officers will lead by example in ensuring adherence to rules, procedures and recommended practices. A culture will be maintained that is conducive to ensuring probity. Members and Officers should adopt the standards in public life as set out by the Nolan Committee, known as the Nolan Principles:
- Selflessness – to take decisions solely in terms of the public interest and not in order to gain for themselves.
 - Integrity – not to place themselves under any obligation to outside individuals or organisations that may influence the undertaking of their official duties.
 - Objectivity – when carrying out any aspect of their public duties, to make decisions and choices on merit.
 - Accountability – to be accountable, to the public, for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the appropriate scrutiny.
 - Openness – to be as open as possible about the decisions and actions they take and the reasons for those decisions and actions. The dissemination of information should only be restricted when the wider public interest clearly demands it.
 - Honesty – to declare any private interests which relate to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a manner which protects the public interest.
 - Leadership – to promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
- 5.4 The Council will ensure that the resources dedicated to counter fraud activity are appropriate and any officers involved in delivering these services are trained to deliver a professional counter fraud service to the correct standards ensuring consistency, fairness and objectivity.
- 5.5 All fraudulent activity is unacceptable, and may result in consideration of legal action being taken against the individual(s) concerned. In addition, the Council has in place disciplinary procedures which must be followed whenever Officers are suspected of committing a fraudulent or corrupt act. These procedures are monitored and managed by the Human Resources Team and may be utilised where the outcome of an investigation indicates fraudulent or corrupt acts have occurred.
- 5.6 The Council may pursue the repayment of any financial gain from individuals involved in fraud, malpractice and wrongdoing. The Council may also pursue compensation for any costs it has incurred when investigating fraudulent or corrupt acts.
- 5.7 This policy encourages those detailed within this document to report any genuine suspicions of fraudulent activity. However, malicious allegations or those motivated by personal gain will not be tolerated and, if proven, disciplinary or legal action may be taken. Reporting arrangements in relation to incidents of fraud or irregularity are detailed below.
- 5.8 The Council will work both internally across different departments and with external organisations such as the Police, HM Revenue and Customs and other Councils to

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

strengthen and continuously improve its arrangements to prevent fraud and corruption. The Council is committed to assisting the Police in fighting Serious and Organised crime and will implement measures and share data to ensure the Council is not engaging with organised crime gangs when procuring goods and services.

5.9 The Council collects and stores data within multiple departments to enable data cleansing, data sharing and data matching. This process can be utilised for the prevention and detection of fraud and the Council will pursue this where appropriate. The Council applies fair processing practices and these are reflected within data collection documents, stationery and other data collection processes such as those required for the National Fraud Initiative.

5.10 The Council will ensure Members and Officers receive the appropriate training relating to the areas covered within this Policy.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

OFFICER / DEPARTMENT	SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES
Head of Paid Service / Chief Executive	Ultimately accountable for the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for countering fraud and corruption.
Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)	To ensure the Council has adopted an appropriate Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy. That there is an effective internal control environment in place and resources to investigate allegations of fraud and corruption.
Monitoring Officer	To advise Members and Officers on ethical issues, conduct and powers to ensure that the Council operates within the law and statutory Codes of Practice.
Audit Committee/ Audit and General Purposes Committee / Audit and Governance Committee	To receive formal assurance from an appropriate representative at meetings and an annual opinion report in relation to the Council's control measures and counter fraud activity. The Audit Committee also receives assurance from external audit on the Council's Annual Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.
Councillors / Members	To comply with the Members Code of Conduct and related Council policies and procedures. To be aware of the possibility of fraud, corruption, bribery and theft and to report any genuine concerns to the Chief Internal Audit Officer.

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OFFICER / DEPARTMENT	SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>External Audit / Internal Audit</p>	<p>Has a duty to ensure that the Council has adequate arrangements in place for the prevention and detection of fraud, corruption, bribery and theft.</p> <p>Has powers to investigate fraud and the Council may invoke this service.</p>
<p>Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit</p>	<p>Responsible for assisting the development and implementation of the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy. The Counter Fraud Unit have a duty to monitor the investigation of any reported issues of irregularity.</p> <p>To ensure that all suspected or reported irregularities are dealt with promptly and in accordance with this policy.</p> <p>That action is identified to improve controls and reduce means, opportunity and the risk of recurrence.</p> <p>Reporting to the appropriate Senior Officer(s) (Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Chief Internal Audit Officer) with regard to the progress and results of investigations.</p> <p>Reporting annually to the Audit Committee on proven frauds.</p>
<p>Counter Fraud Provision / Services</p>	<p>To proactively deter, prevent and detect fraud, corruption, bribery and theft within or against the Council.</p> <p>To work on behalf of charities, Social Housing Providers and other organisations to proactively deter, prevent and detect fraud, bribery, corruption and theft for the benefit of local residents and the public purse.</p> <p>To investigate all suspicions of fraud, corruption, bribery or theft, within or against the Council, in accordance with the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA).</p> <p>To consider reputational damage and the public interest test when investigating any instances of fraud, corruption, bribery or theft.</p> <p>To conduct interviews under caution when appropriate in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).</p> <p>To undertake any surveillance operation or obtaining any communications data, adhering to the</p>

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OFFICER / DEPARTMENT	SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES
	<p>Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 – this is applicable when undertaking criminal investigations only.</p> <p>To comply with Data Protection Legislation (and the General Data Protection Regulations) when obtaining or processing personal data.</p> <p>To report to the appropriate Senior Officer(s) for decisions in relation to further action.</p> <p>To enable the Council to apply appropriate sanctions, to include criminal proceedings, and to assist in the recovery of losses in accordance with the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy. To include prosecutions on behalf of Social Housing Providers, Charities, and other organisations where it is in the public interest and for the benefit of the local residents.</p> <p>To prepare Witness Statements and prosecution paperwork for the Council's Legal Department.</p> <p>To attend and present evidence in the Magistrates Court, the Crown Court and Employment Tribunals.</p> <p>To provide recommendations to inform policy, system and control improvements.</p> <p>To provide fraud awareness training and updates for Members and Officers.</p> <p>To publicise successes where appropriate.</p>
<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>To report any suspicions of fraud, corruption, bribery or theft to the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer or Counter Fraud representative if reported directly to HR or if identified during any disciplinary or internal procedures.</p> <p>To ensure recruitment procedures provide for the obtainment and verification of significant information supplied by applicants in accordance with the HR Vetting and Recruitment Fraud Risk Report.</p>
<p>Strategic Directors, Heads of Service, Service Managers or equivalent Senior Officers</p>	<p>The primary responsibility for maintaining sound arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption rests with management.</p> <p>To promote awareness and ensure that all suspected or reported irregularities are immediately referred to the appropriate Senior Officer.</p> <p>To ensure that there are mechanisms in place within their service areas to assess the risk of fraud, corruption, bribery and theft. To reduce these risks</p>

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OFFICER / DEPARTMENT	SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES
	by implementing internal controls, monitoring of these controls by spot checks and to rectify weaknesses if they occur.
Staff / Employees / Officers	<p>To comply with Council policies and procedures when conducting their public duties.</p> <p>To be aware of the possibility of fraud, corruption, bribery and theft and to report any genuine concerns. Officers may report suspicions as detailed below.</p> <p>Referrals can also be made in confidence in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.</p>
Public, Partners, Suppliers, Contractors and Consultants	To be aware of the possibility of fraud and corruption within or against the Council and to report any genuine concerns or suspicions as detailed below.

7. APPROACH TO COUNTERING FRAUD

7.1 The Council has a responsibility to reduce fraud and protect its resources by enabling counter fraud services to complete work in each of the following key areas:

7.2 DETERRENCE

The best deterrent is the existence of clear procedures and responsibilities making fraud and corruption difficult to perpetrate and easy to detect. As detailed already within this policy, the Council has a number of measures in place to minimise risk:

- Clear codes of conduct for Officers and Members.
- Register for declarations of interest / gifts and hospitality for Members and Officers.
- Clear roles and responsibilities for the prevention and detection of fraud, corruption, bribery and theft including an Audit Committee, an appointed Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and trained Counter Fraud Officers.
- Effective ICT security standards and usage policies.
- The application of appropriate sanctions and fines as detailed below.

7.3 The existence of an effective Counter Fraud Team is a prime deterrent for fraud and corruption. Counter Fraud Officers and the Internal Audit Team analyse and identify potential areas at risk of fraudulent abuse with the assistance of the Council's Corporate Management, efficient and effective audits of principal risk areas can then be conducted.

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7.4 The Council will promote and develop a strong counter fraud culture, raise awareness and provide information on all aspects of its counter fraud work. This may include advice on the intranet, fraud e-learning tools, publicising the results of proactive work, investigating fraud referrals and seeking the recovery of any losses.

7.5 PREVENTION

The Council will strengthen measures to prevent fraud **ensuring consideration of the Fraud Risk Strategy, associated documents and fraud risk register**. Counter Fraud Officers will work with management and policy makers to ensure new and existing systems, procedures and policy initiatives consider any possible fraud risks. Any internal audit conducted will also consider fraud risks as part of each review and ensure that internal controls are in place and maintained to combat this.

7.6 Important preventative measures include effective recruitment to establish the propriety and integrity of all potential employees **as set out within the HR Vetting and Recruitment Fraud Risk Report**. Recruitment is carried out in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and provides for the obtainment and verification of significant information supplied by applicants.

7.7 The Council will undertake any internal remedial measures identified by any investigation to prevent future recurrence at the first opportunity.

7.8 DETECTION

A record of fraud referrals received will be maintained by Counter Fraud Officers (and other departments as applicable). This record helps to establish those areas within the Council most vulnerable to the risk of fraud. In addition, a consistent treatment of information and independent investigation is ensured. A Council wide fraud profile is created which then informs any detailed proactive work.

7.9 The Council is legislatively required to participate in a national data matching exercise; the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). Particular sets of data are provided and matched against other records held by the Council or external organisations. Where a 'match' is found it may indicate an irregularity which requires further investigation to establish whether fraud has been committed or an error made. An officer within the authority is designated as the 'Key Contact' for this process. The initiative also assists in highlighting areas which require more proactive investigation. The Council may engage in other data matching/sharing for the purposes of fraud prevention and detection, and for the recovery of monies owed.

7.10 Safeguarding and deterrent internal controls and monitoring procedures are established for financial and other systems within the Council, for example those set out within the Council's Financial Rules / Contract Rules.

7.11 The Council relies on employees, Members and the public to be alert and to report any suspicions of fraud and corruption which may have been committed or that are allegedly in progress. Managers should be vigilant and refer any matters which may require additional monitoring to a senior representative within the Human Resources Department for guidance and further action.

7.12 INVESTIGATION

The Council will investigate all reported incidents of fraud or irregularity using its counter fraud resources. The Council will ensure the correct gathering and presentation of evidence in accordance with the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996.

7.13 Investigations will make due reference to Employment Law as necessary and be conducted within a reasonable time in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998. Investigations will also adhere to and comply with other applicable legislation such as

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the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Data Protection Legislation and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as appropriate.

- 7.14 Officers may utilise investigative tools and gain intelligence utilising a number of legal gateways and data sharing agreements. This may include membership to third party organisations such as the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN).
- 7.15 When investigating allegations of fraud and corruption, the Council may be required to conduct surveillance. The Council must comply with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 which ensures that investigatory powers are used in accordance with human rights. To ensure compliance the Council has a written procedure detailing who may authorise covert surveillance and the use of covert human intelligence sources. Standard documentation has been adopted which must be used by an Officer when seeking such authorisation.
- 7.16 Officers may also need to acquire communications data when conducting an investigation. This is permissible however; the Council must adhere to the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 when applying for this information and the correct nominated single point of contact must be used. As above, specific details are set out within the written procedures.
- 7.17 **The Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Officers adhere to the appropriate legislation when investigating irregularities and allegations of fraud. This includes the need to:**
- Deal promptly with the matter.
 - Record all evidence received.
 - Ensure that evidence is sound and adequately supported.
 - Conduct interviews under caution when necessary.
 - Ensure security of all evidence collected.
 - Contact other agencies if necessary e.g. Police, Trading Standards, HM Revenue and Customs.
 - Notify the Council's insurers.
 - Implement Council disciplinary procedures where appropriate.
 - Attend court and present evidence.

7.18 **SANCTIONS**

The Council will apply considered sanctions to individuals or organisations where an investigation reveals fraudulent activity. This may include:

- Appropriate disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy.
- Fines and penalties.
- Criminal proceedings.
- Civil proceedings to recover loss.

7.19 **REDRESS**

A crucial element of the Council's response to tackling fraud is seeking financial redress. The recovery of defrauded monies is an important part of the Council's strategy and will be pursued in line with internal debt recovery processes and legal redress i.e. Confiscation Orders and the application of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

7.20 **CONTROL FAILURE RESOLUTION**

In addition to the above, Internal Audit also prepares a risk based annual Audit Plan that details the key objectives and areas of work for the year. Within these work areas indicators for fraud are considered. Internal Audit will also respond to requests from management and Counter Fraud Officers where there may be concerns over the

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy

effectiveness of internal controls. The work plan is agreed and monitored by the Audit Committee and Section 151 Officer.

8. REPORTING, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- 8.1 The Council's expectation is that Members and managers will lead by example and that employees at all levels will comply with the Constitution, Council Policies, Financial Regulations, Procurement Regulations, Financial and Contract Procedure Rules, codes of conduct and directorate procedures.
- 8.2 The Council recognises that the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management. It is essential that employees of the Council report any irregularities, or suspected irregularities to their Line Manager and if this is not appropriate then to a Counter Fraud representative.
- 8.3 The Council must create the right environment so that anyone can raise concerns in respect of irregularities with the knowledge that they will be treated seriously and confidentially. The Council will provide all reasonable protection for those who raise genuine concerns in good faith, as confirmed in the Council's Whistle-Blowing Policy.
- 8.4 If the informant is a member of the public or external contractor, they can contact a Counter Fraud Officer at the Council to report the suspicion. This can be done anonymously. A hotline number for reporting suspicions may also be established and if so, can be found on the Council's website. The Council's complaint procedure may also be utilised but may not be the most appropriate channel.
- 8.5 The above process does not relate to reporting Housing Benefit Fraud allegations (which are now dealt with by the Department for Work and Pensions) or to Council Tax Reduction Scheme offences. The informant should contact the Officer nominated to deal with this; details can be found on the Council's website within the Revenues and Benefit Section information.
- 8.6 The Officer who receives the allegation (whether from a Member or a Council employee) must refer the matter to a Counter Fraud representative within the Council, to determine how the potential irregularity will be investigated and to whom the allegation should be discussed within the Council. This is to ensure correct investigative procedures are adhered to and that any potential fraud enquiry is not compromised.
- 8.7 As appropriate, reports will be issued to the Monitoring Officer, Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer, Senior Officers, and Cabinet Members etc. where the irregularity is material and/or could affect the reputation of the Council. Decisions will then be made with regard to the most appropriate course of action. Communications and publicity will also be managed if the matter is likely to be communicated externally.
- 8.8 If the investigation relates to an employee then Human Resources will be engaged and the Council's Disciplinary Procedure will also be considered however this will be managed carefully to ensure any criminal investigation is not compromised.
- 8.9 The Council will also work in co-operation with the following bodies (and others as appropriate) that will assist in scrutinising our systems and defences against fraud, bribery and corruption:
 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
 - External Audit.
 - The National Fraud Initiative.
 - Central Government Departments.
 - HM Revenue and Customs.
 - The Police.
 - Trading Standards.

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- The Department for Work and Pensions.
- Immigration Services.
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
- The Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV).
- **Social Housing Providers and Charitable Bodies**

8.10 **As detailed within this document and the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy, any concerns or suspicions reported will be treated with discretion and in confidence. Referrals can be made in confidence to the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit at fraud.referrals@cotswold.gov.uk who work on behalf of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils and Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils. Concerns can also be raised via Internal Audit.**

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1 Further information on Council policy can be found in the following documents (or equivalent documentation / codes):

- The Constitution.
- Code of Conduct for Employees (or equivalent) and the Members Code of Conduct which include information in relation to gifts and hospitality and declaring and registering interests.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Corporate Enforcement (Prosecution) Policy.
- **Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Policy.**
- Recruitment and Selection Processes.
- **RIPA / IPA Policies, Procedures and Guidance.**
- Financial Rules.
- Contract Rules or equivalent.
- Fair Processing Statement.
- Disciplinary Procedure.

10. POLICY REVIEW

10.1. The appropriate department will review and amend this policy as necessary to ensure that it continues to remain compliant and meets legislative requirements and the vision of the Council in consultation with the Council's Chief Finance Officer, the Legal Department and Members.

10.2. Review frequency as required by legislative changes / every three years.

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 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date</p>	<p>CABINET – WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM NO 10</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>PAN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE AREA</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham, Leader; Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider whether the Council should be a participant in the proposed pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex I – Letter from Cllr Barry Wood as Chair of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Leadership Group to the Secretary of State</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That Cabinet resolves to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>(a) Recommend to Council that West Oxfordshire be a participant in the proposed pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge area</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>(b) Approve a contribution of £4,000 towards the pan-regional partnership.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Climate Action: Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.</p> <p>A Vibrant District Economy: Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Leader, Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A new pan-regional partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge region is being proposed. This proposition has developed following discussions between local partners and government officials. The pan-regional partnership would bring together around twenty local partners including councils, local enterprise partnerships and the Arc Universities Group. The partnership would provide a vehicle to take forward shared economic and environmental ambitions.
- 1.2 The new pan-regional partnership would sit alongside other regional partnerships such as the Western Gateway, Midlands Engine and Thames Estuary. The Government is willing to help fund the new partnership, to supplement small contributions from local partners.

2 MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 Government policy supports regional partnerships which have a strong interest in collaboration. The basis for an Oxford to Cambridge pan-regional partnership is the shared interest in delivering sustainable economic growth with a higher quality natural environment.
- 2.2 The proposed new partnership would be an efficient and streamlined locally-led partnership of local government, universities and local enterprise partnerships.
- 2.3 The partnership would link with the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and with the other member Growth Boards across the region. It would involve partners in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire.
- 2.4 A new pan-regional partnership has the potential to provide a range of benefits locally. It can provide an additional vehicle to help deliver local priorities in the short and longer term. It would attract revenue funding support which can increase capability and the capacity to deliver value in areas of common interest. This would include capacity and capability to build future business cases and proposals for investment. It would also provide an open channel into government and help improve cross-departmental engagement within government.

Governance

- 2.5 A new Oxford to Cambridge Pan-regional Partnership Board is proposed to oversee the work and operations of the partnership and this would comprise of:
 - An Independent Chair as selected by the Board;
 - One Chair from each of the member Growth Boards or equivalent (including an additional Co-Chair from the Central Area Growth Board) – for Oxfordshire this would be the Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership
 - One Chair representing each of the Programme Sub-Groups (Economy and Environment)
 - One Chair each from the main constituent stakeholder groups: LEPs, Arc Universities Group, England's Economic Heartland
 - Independent Stakeholders as selected by the Board (non-Executive)
 - Senior Government representatives (non-Executive)
- 2.6 The Board's prime function will be to oversee the delivery of the partnership's work programme, as agreed by the membership. Detailed terms of reference will be developed for the Board which will clearly state that the Board will not seek to impose decisions onto partners, whilst ensuring there continues to be respect for the sovereignty of each partner's formal, statutory and legal status. Subsidiarity will be a key working principle for the new Board in how it carries out its functions. It is anticipated the Board will meet quarterly, with

an annual conference where the activity of the region will be promoted, and all partners will meet as a plenary to consider future work priorities and progress.

- 2.7 To support programme delivery, two further Sub-Groups will be established (Economy and Environment). These will be comprised of relevant stakeholders and local partner representatives. The Sub-Groups will select their Chair who will also represent the Sub-Group on the Board. The Board will oversee the Communications programme directly as this underpins all activity.
- 2.8 A local authority will act as the accountable body to underpin finance and resource management.

Operations

- 2.9 A Chief Executive/Lead Officer group comprising similar representation to the main Board will support the programme delivery and effective management of the partnership through transition, supported by a lead CEO and Director role.
- 2.10 The OCPRP and its programme will be supported and delivered by a small operational team as follows: Director to oversee day to day operations and be the lead officer advocate for the partnership supporting the Board and the Chair; three programme leads for the thematic programme areas; lead for Communications; and an administrator. The nature and scope of the roles will be agreed through the Chief Executives Working Group. Operations will be supported (HR, finance, legal) by a Host Authority acting as the Accountable Body.
- 2.11 It is proposed to have senior responsible officers (SROs) for each of the major work programmes (Economy, Environment, Communications). This will ensure there is local ownership and commitment to the programme and will assist with the match-funding element which Government requires.
- 2.12 The SROs will work closely with their relevant Chair of the Programme Sub-Group as well as be the lead officer representative for the programme supported by a senior programme lead officer from the operational team.

Work Programme

- 2.13 An outline work programme has been developed and this reflects the level of budget available for 2022/23. A programme for 2023/24 would be developed and agreed by the Board in consultation with the whole partnership for presentation to Government for agreement in Spring 2023.
- 2.14 The outline work programme sets out three major programme areas; Economy, Environment and Communications. The programme includes an investment prospectus and atlas, environmental initiatives, and identity and brand development.
- 2.15 In April 2021 Cabinet endorsed the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Environment Principles. These have also been endorsed by a significant number of other stakeholders across the Arc. The establishment of the pan-regional partnership will provide a mechanism to take forward these principles and collaborate on action.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Government has agreed a first tranche of interim capacity funding support of £250,000 for the current financial year. The planned 2022.23 budget for the partnership does include a small local contribution this year from local partners of £4,000, and this will help unlock a second tranche of Government funding (£250,000).
- 3.2 There will also be local contributions of in-kind officer time on project oversight and delivery.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no significant legal implications from involvement in the pan-regional partnership. The new partnership will not have the ability to impose its decisions on the Council and local sovereignty will be respected.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 If the partnership fails to work effectively there could be a small reputational risk for the Council.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1. No negative effect on different service users, customers or staff is expected from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

6 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The new pan-regional partnership provides a useful forum for the Council to pursue its environmental and climate ambitions.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1 A decision could be made not to be a participant in the pan-regional partnership. The Council would therefore not be able to influence the work programme of the partnership.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.2 The following documents are of relevance to this report:

- Shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Reported to Cabinet April 2021 as part of the item on the Oxfordshire Growth Board Environment Advisory Group.

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET 14 DECEMBER 2022
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM NO 11
Subject	INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (IFS) 2021-2022
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Carl Rylett, Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development Email: carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686; Email: Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for 2021/22.
Annex	Annex A - Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021/22
Recommendation	That the content of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) attached at Annex A be noted with a view to it being published on the Council's website by 31 December 2022 in accordance with legislative requirements.
Corporate priorities	The main purpose of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is to provide greater clarity on the receipt and use of developer contributions including Section 106 planning obligations to fund new and enhanced infrastructure in support of planned growth. As such, the IFS will help to support a number of the aims and objectives of the Council Plan.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	None.

I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Local authorities are required to report annually on the receipt and use of developer contributions through the publication of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS).
- 1.2. The IFS must be published by 31 December each year and cover the previous financial year (1 April - 31 March). Its main purpose is to set out in a transparent manner, future infrastructure requirements and expected costs, contributions received during the previous financial year, anticipated funding from developer contributions and the Council's future spending priorities.
- 1.3. In particular, the IFS must include:
 - A report relating to the previous financial year on section 106 planning obligations;
 - A report relating to the previous financial year on the Community Infrastructure Levy (where CIL is in place); and
 - A report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund wholly or partly through CIL.
- 1.4. Any authority that receives a contribution from development through Section 106 planning obligations or CIL must prepare an IFS. This includes County Councils.
- 1.5. The IFS must be updated annually (although local authorities can produce more regular updates if they wish) and should be published on the Council's website no later than 31st December each year.
- 1.6. The IFS is intended to feed back into Local Plan reviews and effectively replaces previous local authority CIL regulation 123 lists (which set out CIL spending priorities) where these were in place.

2. WEST OXFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2021/22

- 2.1. The Council's latest Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is attached at Annex A and covers the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.
- 2.2. Section 2 of the IFS provides an overview of future infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire with reference to a number of sources of information including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) prepared in support of the Local Plan and more recent infrastructure studies prepared for the Eynsham area and Woodstock respectively.
- 2.3. Section 3 reports on S106 planning obligations (agreed, received, spent etc.) in the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.
- 2.4. Headline figures to note are as follows:
 - £1,265,635.00 of Section 106 funds were secured/entered into during 2021/22;
 - £3,555,410.73 of Section 106 funds were collected by the District Council in 2021/22 of which the majority (£2,506,702.73) was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities and affordable housing (£560,512.94);
 - £444,927.69 of Section 106 funds were either spent by West Oxfordshire District Council, transferred to Oxfordshire County Council or transferred to the Town/Parish Council;
 - £2,501,226.84 of received Section 106 funds were allocated (i.e. committed to a certain project) but not spent in 2021/22;

- A total of £5,402,232.64 has been received from Section 106 funds before 1st April 2021 but has not yet been allocated (i.e. committed to a certain project) by the District Council;
- As of 1st April 2022, the District Council held a total of £1,411,105.59 in commuted sums for maintenance.

- 2.5. Section 4 of the IFS provides a brief update on the introduction of CIL with Section 5 explaining the extent of the infrastructure funding gap that exists in West Oxfordshire which is estimated to be in the region of £192.2m - £198m. The extent of the funding gap emphasises the importance of maximising funding through developer contributions.
- 2.6. Section 5 also provides an overview of the District Council's future spending priorities with reference to a number of relevant sources including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) and the Council's revised draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was published for consultation in October 2022.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. Subject to the approval of Members, the IFS will be published on the District Council's website before 31 December in accordance with legislative requirements.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The IFS provides information on monies received and spent in relation to Section 106 planning obligations during the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. It also provides an overview of future infrastructure needs and costs and the spending priorities of the Council in relation to Section 106 planning obligations and CIL, subject to future implementation.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) is a requirement of the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.
- 5.2. There are potential legal implications if the Council does not fulfil its obligations in respect of Section 106 legal agreements. The preparation of the IFS provides much greater transparency in relation to S106 funds including those which have been received, spent, allocated and not yet allocated or spent.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. The report raises no specific risks.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1. The report raises no specific implications in respect of equality.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The report raises no specific implications in respect of climate change.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1. None. The publication of the IFS is a legislative requirement and its content is dictated by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1. None.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire District Council
Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)
2021/2022

December 2022

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I. Introduction

- I.1. In order to support planned growth, developers are often asked to make contributions towards new or improved infrastructure (schools, roads etc.). These developer contributions can take a number of different forms but most typically include Section 106 (S106) legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- I.2. Section 106 agreements often relate to direct provision e.g. a developer agreeing to provide say 40% affordable housing as part of a residential scheme but can also take the form of a financial contribution e.g. where the developer makes a payment towards improving community facilities nearby.
- I.3. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) applies where local authorities have adopted a CIL Charging Schedule and is essentially a fixed financial contribution based on the size of development proposed. Unlike S106 agreements, money received through CIL is not tied to a particular development and can be spent more flexibly on new and enhanced infrastructure across the District.
- I.4. To ensure greater transparency on the receipt and use of developer contributions, in accordance with the CIL Regulations (2019) as amended¹, local authorities are now required to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) by 31st December each year (or more often if a local authority chooses to do so).
- I.5. The main purpose of the IFS is to ‘look back’ over the previous financial year² in terms of Section 106 agreements and CIL monies agreed, received, allocated and spent.
- I.6. The IFS must also ‘look forward’ setting out, where possible, estimated future income from developer contributions along with the Council’s future infrastructure spending priorities.
- I.7. There is no single format for preparing an IFS but, as a minimum, it must include the following information:
 - A report relating to the previous financial year on section 106 planning obligations;
 - A report relating to the previous financial year on the Community Infrastructure Levy (where CIL is in place); and

¹ Regulation 121A

² For this report from the 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022.

- A report on the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund wholly or partly through CIL.

I.8. This West Oxfordshire IFS for 2021/22 is structured as follows:

- Section 1 (this section) provides a brief overview of what an IFS is and the legal requirements for preparing one;
- Section 2 provides an overview of identified infrastructure needs and anticipated costs in West Oxfordshire;
- Section 3 provides a summary of developer contributions relating to Section 106 (S106) Legal Agreements allocated, collected and spent by the District Council in 2021/22;
- Section 4 provides an update on the implementation of CIL in West Oxfordshire; and
- Section 5 provides an overview of the Council's future spending priorities for S106 planning obligations and CIL.

I.9. This IFS should also be read in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council's IFS which is available to view separately at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>.

2. Infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire

West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 2.1. The main source of information on infrastructure needs in West Oxfordshire is the District Council's [Infrastructure Delivery Plan \(IDP\) 2016](#).
- 2.2. The IDP identifies the infrastructure that is needed to support housing and employment growth in West Oxfordshire during the Local Plan period 2011 – 2031.
- 2.3. It considers infrastructure needs under three broad categories.
 - **Physical infrastructure** (including transport, water, energy, waste and recycling, minerals and telecommunications);
 - **Social infrastructure** (including education, leisure and sport, health, public safety, community and culture, social care and criminal justice); and
 - **Green infrastructure** (including informal and formal green space, public rights of way, Local Wildlife Sites, Conservation Target Areas etc.)
- 2.4. The IDP includes a schedule of infrastructure projects based on these three main categories. For each project, the schedule provides details of the anticipated costs (where known) expected delivery partners, any funding which has already been secured and how any shortfall is expected to be funded (e.g. S106, CIL).
- 2.5. A number of key projects identified in the IDP have now been completed including Phase 2 of Carterton Leisure Centre, a pedestrian crossing on Bridge Street in Witney and improvements to the Downs Road/A40 junction at Witney.
- 2.6. Others such as the new Eynsham Park and Ride are currently in the process of coming forwards whilst some projects such as the West End Link Road in Witney are expected to come forward in the later period of the Local Plan. The IDP (2016) will be updated as part of the review of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

Eynsham Area Infrastructure Delivery Plan (July 2020)

- 2.7. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 identifies the provision of around 3,200 new homes to the north and west of Eynsham, the former comprising a new garden village of around 2,200 homes and the latter, a sustainable urban extension of around 1,000 homes (237 of which are already completed/underway).
- 2.8. Delivery of the garden village (now referred to as Salt Cross) is being led by an Area Action Plan (AAP) and West Eynsham through a developer-led masterplan.

- 2.9. An Eynsham Area IDP ([Stage 1 Draft Report, May 2019](#) and [Updated Draft Report, July 2020](#)) has been prepared, forming part of the evidence base for the Salt Cross AAP and helping to inform discussions on future infrastructure provision at West Eynsham.

Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019)

- 2.10. In February 2019 the Blenheim Estate and Woodstock Town Council commissioned Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) to consult the community about the current and future infrastructure needs of Woodstock.
- 2.11. Following extensive consultation during 2019, the findings of the CFO work were launched at community events held in November 2019. Their report can be viewed [online](#) including a series of supporting appendices.
- 2.12. The report will be taken into account in future discussions on potential planning obligations associated with the two allocated sites at Woodstock (Hill Rise and Banbury Road) and will also be taken into account in the review of the West Oxfordshire IDP (2016).

3. Section 106 Planning Obligations

- 3.1. Planning obligations (generally referred to as Section 106 agreements) are legal obligations entered into in order to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal and make it acceptable in planning terms.
- 3.2. Most often, this will be via a planning agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – known as a Section 106 or S106 agreement and will involve both the person with an interest in the land and the Council. It can also be achieved via a unilateral undertaking without the Council’s involvement.
- 3.3. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address the unacceptable impact of development through a planning condition or by the use of other statutory controls. They are legally binding and enforceable if planning permission is granted and they are tied to the land.
- 3.4. Importantly, planning obligations must meet three legal tests. In particular they must be:
 - a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) Directly related to the development; and
 - c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 3.5. The District Council has been negotiating, securing and entering into S106 agreements for many years and has used this process to successfully deliver a raft of benefits to West Oxfordshire residents including new affordable housing, highway improvements, pedestrian and cycling routes, leisure and sports facilities, culture and art, primary health care provision and so on.
- 3.6. Set out below is an overview of S106 contributions which have been secured (i.e. formally agreed), collected, spent and allocated during 2021/22.

Section 106 contributions secured (formally agreed) in 2021/22

- 3.7. A total of **£1,265,635** in financial contributions to West Oxfordshire District Council was secured through Section 106 agreements entered into during 2021/22. This sum is broken down in Table I, which sets out the location of each development and the type of provision/contribution made.
- 3.8. It is expected that these contributions will come forward in a phased manner and it is important to note that the majority of the contributions will be index-linked and therefore this total should not be taken to be an exact sum that will be received by the District Council.

3.9. There are also several non-monetary obligations which have been entered into through S106 agreements signed in 2021/22, including on-site affordable housing provision. These are categorised and listed by location in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 1 – Section 106 funds secured through S106 agreements entered into in 2021/22

Reference	Location	Type	Amount (£)
20/00140/FUL	Unit 2-3 Stanton Harcourt Road, Eynsham	Public Transport	7,942.00
20/00140/FUL	Unit 2-3 Stanton Harcourt Road, Eynsham	Travel Plan	1,426.00
20/02422/FUL	Land East of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Biodiversity	106,260.00
20/02422/FUL	Land East of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Healthcare	63,072.00
20/02422/FUL	Land East of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Public Art	9,870.00
20/02422/FUL	Land East of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Play and Recreation	34,214.40
20/02422/FUL	Land East of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Sport and Leisure	81,648.00
20/02452/FUL	Land At Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Community Facilities	5,000.00
20/02452/FUL	Land At Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Play	15,542.00
20/02452/FUL	Land At Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Sport	34,466.00
21/00228/FUL	Land South of Milestone Road, Carterton	Biodiversity	208,560.00
21/00228/FUL	Land South of Milestone Road, Carterton	Biodiversity Monitoring	11,250.00
21/00228/FUL	Land South of Milestone Road, Carterton	Police	22,964.00
21/00228/FUL	Land South of Milestone Road, Carterton	Public Open Space	71,916.00*
21/00228/FUL	Land South of Milestone Road, Carterton	Sports	362,800.00
21/01285/FUL	Phase 3B Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Witney	Community Facilities	198,000.00
21/02248/FUL	Gateway House, Windrush Industrial Park, Witney	Public Transport	25,000.00
21/02364/FUL	Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Monitoring Fee	120.00
21/02364/FUL	Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Cycling	5,584.60
			1,265,635.00

*maintenance payment only on transfer of public open space and Local Equipped Area for Play to Carterton Town Council

Table 2 – Affordable housing required from S106 planning obligations signed in 2021/22

Reference	Location	Total Units
20/02422/FUL	Land East of Swinbrook Road, Carterton	25
20/02452/FUL	Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	7
21/00228/FUL	Land South of Milestone Road, Carterton	200
		232

Table 3 – Non-monetary contributions from S106 planning obligations signed in 2021/22

Reference	Location	Type
15/01999/OUT	Land East of Nethercote Road, Tackley	Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)

Section 106 contributions collected in 2021/22

- 3.10. A total of **£3,555,410.73** was collected by the Council through Section 106 planning obligations in 2021/22.
- 3.11. Of this total, the majority was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities (£2,506,702.73) and affordable housing (£560,512.94).
- 3.12. A full breakdown of the contributions collected is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4 – Section 106 funds collected in 2021/22

Reference	Location	Contribution for	Received (£)
12/0084/P/OP	Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge	Affordable Housing	144,060.86
12/0084/P/OP	Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge	Corn Exchange	35,043.48
12/0084/P/OP	Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge	Off Site Play	221,820.59
12/0084/P/OP	Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge	Public Art	35,043.48
12/0084/P/OP	Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge	West Witney Recreation Ground	87,607.20
12/0084/P/OP	Land at West Witney, Downs Road, Curbridge	Witney Town Centre	87,607.20
13/1494/P/OP	Land East of Saxel Close, Aston	Community Facilities ³	21,607.00
13/1494/P/OP	Land East of Saxel Close, Aston	Dredging	9,625.00
13/1494/P/OP	Land East of Saxel Close, Aston	Parish Council	25,328.00
13/1494/P/OP	Land East of Saxel Close, Aston	Play Facilities	13,477.00
13/1494/P/OP	Land East of Saxel Close, Aston	Thames Valley Police	14,944.00
13/1494/P/OP	Land East of Saxel Close, Aston	Village Hall	10,131.00
14/0091/P/OP	Land East of Monahan Way, Carterton	Cemetery	25,559.85
14/0091/P/OP	Land East of Monahan Way, Carterton	Elderbank Hall	63,899.61
14/0091/P/OP	Land East of Monahan Way, Carterton	Town Centre	63,899.61
14/1215/P/OP	Land North of Burford Road, Witney	Sports and Recreation Facilities	98,319.58
14/1234/P/OP	Land South of Witney Road, Long Hanborough	Sport/Recreation	117,051.11
15/00166/OUT	Land West of Shilton Road, Burford	Leisure Centre	90,919.14

³ Agreement refers to sports and recreation facilities

15/00166/OUT	Land West of Shilton Road, Burford	Local Leisure	12,835.45
15/00567/FUL	Land North of Little Lees, Charlbury	Public Art	2,382.72
15/01184/FUL	Land at Newland Street, Eynsham	Affordable Housing	65,000.00
15/01563/FUL	Land North of Ditchley Road, Charlbury	Affordable Housing	78,859.78
15/01934/OUT	Land South of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Public Art	10,308.00
15/01934/OUT	Land South of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Sports and Recreation Facilities	112,064.23
15/01999/OUT	Land East of Nethercote Road, Tackley	Off Site Sports	107,919.03
15/01999/OUT	Land East of Nethercote Road, Tackley	Public Art	9,295.54
15/03128/OUT	Land South of High Street, Milton under Wychwood	Play and Recreation	30,033.94
15/03128/OUT	Land South of High Street, Milton under Wychwood	Sports and Recreation	39,947.35
15/03148/OUT	Land West of Thornbury Road, Eynsham	Play Facilities	142,488.00
15/03148/OUT	Land West of Thornbury Road, Eynsham	Sport and Recreation Facilities	201,364.00
16/00667/OUT	Land at Tanners Lane, Burford	Affordable Housing	148,878.96
16/01450/OUT	Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Parish Council	34,201.95
16/01450/OUT	Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Spectator Stand/Football	22,801.30
16/01450/OUT	Land at Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney	Sport and Recreation	464,511.68
16/01902/OUT	Land North of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Community Facilities ⁴	56,290.00
16/01902/OUT	Land North of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Play Facilities	42,321.00
16/02851/OUT	Land South of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood	Play Facilities	23,898.00
16/02851/OUT	Land South of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood	Sport and Recreation	27,840.00
16/03416/OUT	Land South of Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	Public Art	13,642.00
16/03416/OUT	Land South of Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	Sport and Recreation	56,196.93
16/03761/OUT	Land West of Quarhill Close, Over Norton	Play Facilities	20,863.97
16/04234/OUT	Land North and West and East of Belclose Cottage, Witney Road, North Leigh	Community Facilities ⁵	57,800.03
16/04234/OUT	Land North and West and East of Belclose Cottage, Witney Road, North Leigh	Public Art	6,300.00
16/04250/FUL	Glebe Farm, Weald, Bampton	Affordable Housing	72,490.10
17/00426/OUT	Land South of Oxford Road, Enstone	Play and Recreation	33,614.18
17/00426/OUT	Land South of Oxford Road, Enstone	Public Art	6,944.04
17/00426/OUT	Land South of Oxford Road, Enstone	Sport and Recreation	41,607.80
17/01758/FUL	Cotswolds Hotel and Spa, Southcombe, Chipping Norton	Highway Signage	1,162.27
17/01859/OUT	Land West of Minster Lovell, South of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Burial Ground	20,244.65
17/01859/OUT	Land West of Minster Lovell, South of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Community Facilities ⁶	151,835.00
17/01859/OUT	Land West of Minster Lovell, South of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Ripley Avenue Play Area	35,190.26

⁴ Agreement refers to sports and recreation facilities

⁵ Agreement refers to a Multi-Use Games Area

⁶ Agreement refers to the provision/improvement of sports facilities and/or community facilities

17/01859/OUT	Land West of Minster Lovell, South of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Public Art	8,077.61
17/01859/OUT	Land West of Minster Lovell, South of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	St Kenelms Hall Play Area	5,061.16
17/01859/OUT	Land West of Minster Lovell, South of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Wash Meadow	4,555.05
18/00731/FUL	Land West of North Farm, Woodstock Road, Stonesfield	Affordable Housing	51,223.24
18/01611/FUL	Land at Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield, Main Road, Stanton Harcourt	Play and Recreation	41,085.35
18/01611/FUL	Land at Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield, Main Road, Stanton Harcourt	Sport and Recreation	114,233.34
18/02597/FUL	Garden Centre, Park Road, North Leigh	Play	5,431.26
18/02597/FUL	Garden Centre, Park Road, North Leigh	Sports and Recreation	8,667.85
			3,555,410.73

Section 106 funds spent in 2021/22

- 3.13. A total of **£444,927.69** of funds collected from S106 planning obligations was spent in 2021/22.
- 3.14. The Council did not spend any funds collected from S106 planning obligations on repaying borrowed money.
- 3.15. The Council did not spend any funds collected from S106 planning obligations on monitoring the delivery of planning obligations.

Table 5 – Section 106 funds spent in 2021/22*

Reference	Contribution for	Recipient	Amount (£)	
07/1970/P/FP	New Leys Farm House, Curbridge Road, Witney	Public Art (Temporary)	St Mary's Church, Witney	2,106.00
13/1752/P/FP	Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Community Albums)	3,809.10
13/1752/P/FP	Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Carterton Family Centre)	3,100.00
14/0091/P/OP	Land East of Monahan Way, Carterton	Maintenance of Public Rights of Way	Oxfordshire County Council	36,834.00
14/01884/FUL	Land South and East of Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (St Mary's Church, Chipping Norton)	3,247.45
14/01884/FUL	Land South and East of Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton	Public Art (Temporary)	West Oxfordshire District Council (Chipping Norton Theatre)	543.84
15/00320/OUT	Park Farm, Standlake Road, Northmoor	Play Facilities	Northmoor Parish Council	1,724.00
15/00567/FUL	Land North of Little Lees, Charlbury	Public Art (Temporary)	Charlbury Art Society	2,382.72

15/01934/OUT	Land South of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Sports and Recreation Facilities	North Leigh Parish Council	23,565.64
15/03128/OUT	Land South of High Street, Milton under Wychwood	Play and Recreation	Milton under Wychwood Parish Council	52,943.08
15/03128/OUT	Land South of High Street, Milton under Wychwood	Sports and Recreation	Milton under Wychwood Parish Council	16,044.60
16/00758/OUT	Land North of Standlake Road, Ducklington	Play and Recreation Areas	Ducklington Parish Council	20,560.00
16/01902/OUT	Land North of New Yatt Road, North Leigh	Play Facilities	North Leigh Parish Council	42,321.00
16/02851/OUT	Land South of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood	Sport and Recreation	Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council	55,680.00
16/02851/OUT	Land South of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood	Play Facilities	Shipton under Wychwood Parish Council	47,796.00
16/04230/FUL	Land at London Road and Trinity Road, Chipping Norton	Public Art (Temporary)	Chipping Norton Theatre	3,190.00
16/04244/FUL	Land South of London Road, Chipping Norton	Villager Community Bus	Villager Bus Services Ltd	9,000.00
18/01611/FUL	Land at Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield, Main Road, Stanton Harcourt	Play and Recreation	Stanton Harcourt Parish Council	30,118.00
18/02597/FUL	Garden Centre, Park Road, North Leigh	Play and Recreation	North Leigh Parish Council	10,962.26
STC032		Maintenance of Open Spaces	West Oxfordshire District Council	79,000.00
				444,927.69

*West Oxfordshire District Council has passed on the contributions and the responsibility for the actual spend is normally with the recipient of the S106 monies.

Section 106 money received by the Council but not spent in 2021/22

- 3.16. The CIL Regulations require local authorities to report on the total amount of money under any planning obligations that was received before the reported year but which has not been allocated by the authority, and the total amount of money under any planning obligations that was allocated but not spent during the reported year.
- 3.17. A total of **£2,501,226.84** received under planning obligations was allocated for funding infrastructure but not spent during 2021/22.

Table 6 – Allocated Section 106 funds

Reference	Allocated to	Amount (£)
07/0696/P/FP	Temporary public art activities by Stanton Harcourt Primary School	535.00
07/1970/P/FP	Temporary public art programme at Windrush Place, Witney	788.24
12/0084/P/OP	Public art and a temporary public art programme led by West Oxfordshire District Council	138,783.48
13/0345/P/FP	Raleigh Crescent Play Area	75,000.00
13/0345/P/FP	Public art programme at Witney Community Hospital	2,603.27
13/1752/P/FP	Temporary public art and interpretation in Carterton provided by West Oxfordshire District Council	40,370.90
13/1752/P/FP	Toilets at Kilkenny Lane Country Park	11,133.00
14/0091/P/OP	Public art features and programme in village and Brize Meadow by Brize Norton Parish Council	30,694.98
14/01884/FUL	Temporary public art programmes for youth and community in Chipping Norton delivered by various organisations	31,889.71
14/01884/FUL	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	21,367.01
14/1215/P/OP	West Witney Sports Ground	356,669.58
16/00758/OUT	Public art features as part of sensory garden by Ducklington Parish Council	2,639.00
16/01450/OUT	3G Football Pitch	941,335.54
16/04230/FUL	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	18,422.21
18/01517/FUL	Kilkenny Lane Country Park trees	20,399.00
CGU008	Marriott's Walk Play Area	6,334.50
Various	Weavers Fold Affordable Housing Scheme	261,000.00
Various	Heylo Affordable Housing Scheme	361,875.00
Various	Car park at Kilkenny Lane Country Park	179,386.42
		2,501,226.84

- 3.18. A total of **£5,402,232.64** has been received through planning obligations before 1st April 2021, and has not yet been allocated by the District Council.
- 3.19. A breakdown per category is set out in Table 7 below. As and when decisions are made to allocate these various S106 contributions, this will be set out in future iterations of the IFS as per the information in Table 6 above.

Table 7 – Non-allocated Section 106 funds

Contribution for	Available (£)
Affordable Housing	1,975,269.08
Car Parking	251,563.77
Cemeteries	30,232.00
Community Facilities	126,084.87
Cycling	6,000.00
Education	10,147.00
Flood and Water Management	20,155.00
Green Infrastructure	483,383.20
Libraries	2,900.00
Public Art	158,495.85
Road Works/Improvements	17,647.00
Sports, Play and Leisure	1,604,940.87
Town Centre Improvements	624,251.00
Waste/Recycling	91,163.00
	5,402,232.64

3.20. The District Council held a total of **£1,411,105.59** in commuted sums for maintenance on 1st April 2022.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 3.21. CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help fund supporting infrastructure. Whereas S106 planning obligations are specific to particular developments, CIL is a more general financial contribution, the receipts from which can be spent on new and enhanced infrastructure across the whole District. CIL can however only be charged where there is an approved CIL Charging Schedule in place.
- 3.22. The Council consulted on a draft CIL charging schedule in July 2020 but it was not progressed to examination and has therefore not been adopted. In May 2022, a decision was taken to update the supporting viability evidence to help inform the most appropriate way forward. That process is currently ongoing.
- 3.23. Further information on CIL including a copy of the July 2020 draft charging schedule and the consultation responses received are available on the Council's website⁷.

⁷ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-infrastructure-levy/community-infrastructure-levy-examination/>

4. Infrastructure Funding Gap and Future Spending Priorities

- 4.1. The District Council has prepared an [Infrastructure Funding Gap Analysis](#) which sets out an assessment of the likely infrastructure funding gap that exists in West Oxfordshire to meet identified needs⁸.
- 4.2. The analysis identifies a total infrastructure funding gap of between £192.2m and £198m when taking account of expected costs and known sources of funding. However, this is considered to be a conservative estimate with the actual funding gap likely to be much higher.
- 4.3. This emphasises the importance of maximising available developer funding.
- 4.4. Future infrastructure spending priorities in West Oxfordshire will be influenced by a number of factors including the West Oxfordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016) and any subsequent update. Regard will also be had to any locally specific evidence of infrastructure needs such as the Eynsham Area IDP and Woodstock Community and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2019).
- 4.5. In considering infrastructure priorities emerging from these studies the Council will have regard to relevant changes in circumstance (e.g. projects since having been completed, or additional/alternative sources of funding having been identified etc.) as well as the respective degree of importance of each infrastructure item in supporting planned growth.
- 4.6. Future funding will be drawn from a variety of sources including Section 106 legal agreements (planning obligations), CIL and other potential sources of funding where applicable and available (e.g. from Central Government).
- 4.7. Further information on the District Council's future spending priorities is set out in the revised draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was published for [consultation](#) in October 2022.
- 4.8. The revised draft SPD provides information on what contributions will be sought from new development in West Oxfordshire and from what source i.e. Section 106 and/or CIL.

⁸ i.e. The shortfall in funding available to meet identified infrastructure requirements when the total cost (where known) is set against known or likely available funding.

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 14 DECEMBER 2022
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM NO 12
Subject	PAVEMENT LICENCE FEE REIMBURSEMENT
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Duncan Enright – Deputy Leader and Economic Development Email: Duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the proposal to reimburse licence fees in respect of Pavement Licences
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Approve the reimbursement of the pavement licence application fee to those eligible businesses; and,</i> <i>b) Approve the setting up of a process for an internal adjustment of funds for future applications rather than continuing to take payment and then reimburse; and,</i> <i>c) Approve the payments for reimbursement from the Cabinet Priorities Fund</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council • Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Head of Legal, Finance Business Partner, Group Manager, Director of Finance (Publica)

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Business and Planning Act 2022 (“the Act”) was created to promote economic recovery and growth in response to the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The Act included provisions designed to make it easier for premises in England serving food and drink, such as bars and restaurants, to seat and serve customers outdoors through temporary changes to planning procedures and alcohol licensing.
- 1.3 Sections 1 to 10 of the Act created a temporary regime for the issuing of pavement licences by appropriate local authorities. West Oxfordshire District Council (“the Council”) is the appropriate local authority for issuing pavement licences within the administrative area covered by the Council.
- 1.4 The temporary licensing regime was initially in place until 30 September 2022. However, this has now been extended to 30 September 2023 under the Business and Planning Act 2020 (Pavement Licence) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 pending a permanent change in the future.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 In its meeting on 22 September 2022, Licensing Committee Members approved the revised Pavement Licence Policy as well as a fee of £100 for each pavement licence application. This is the maximum fee permitted under the Act.
- 2.2 The Council currently has 17 pavement licences across the District.
- 2.3 Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses is one of the Council’s key priorities, and given the increasing risks to hospitality businesses caused by inflation and energy price rises, Councillors may want to consider waiving this fee and reimbursing any issued to date.
- 2.4 It is proposed that future applications would still receive an invoice for the fee of £100 as determined by the Licensing Committee but the invoice would show the figure to be reimbursed by the Council resulting in no fee payable by the business.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The financial impact of this change would be to reduce income by £1,700 per annum from existing pavement licences plus a further £100 per annum from any future pavement licenses issued during the year.
- 3.2 The reimbursement of fees can be financed from the Cabinet Priorities fund as established at the Cabinet meeting of 17 August 2022.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There is a risk that other licence fee payers , such as Street Traders, may approach the Council for a reimbursement of fees.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1 There are no unacceptable adverse effects on the protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act 2010 that have been identified.

7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none associated with this report.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1 None

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