

Friday, 31 March 2023

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FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 12 April 2023 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: Alaa Al-Yousuf (Chair), Alaric Smith (Vice-Chair), Hugo Ashton, Michael Brooker, Nathalie Chapple, Andrew Coles, Julian Cooper, Suzi Coul, Gill Hill, Mark Johnson, Richard Langridge, Charlie Maynard, Michele Mead, Ruth Smith and Alex Wilson

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, 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 - 10)
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2023.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting
4. **Participation of the Public**
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure, anyone who lives in the district or who pays council tax or business rates to the Council is eligible to read a statement or express an opinion at this meeting. You can register to speak by sending your written submission of no more than 750 words to democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk, by no later than 10.00am on the working day before the meeting.
5. **Service Performance Report 2022-23 Quarter Three** (Pages 11 - 26)
Purpose:
This report provides details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2022-23 Quarter Three (Q3)

Recommendation:
That the 2022/23 Q3 service performance be noted
6. **Committee Work Programme** (Pages 27 - 38)
Purpose:
To provide the Committee with an updated Work Programme for 2022/23.

Recommendation:
That the Committee notes the work programme and provides comment where needed.
7. **Executive Work Programme** (Pages 39 - 48)
Purpose:
To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Executive Work Programme published 1 March 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Recommendation:
That the Committee decides whether any items on the Executive Work Programme should be subject to scrutiny.

8. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

If the Committee wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Committee to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Committee may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

9. **Unicorn Public House update (Pages 49 - 50)**

Purpose:

The Committee requested an update on the Unicorn public house in Great Rollright, which has been closed since 1991.

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes the updated Officers response.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the
Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 1 February 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: Alaa Al-Yousuf (Chair), Alaric Smith (Vice-Chair), Hugo Ashton, Michael Brooker, Andrew Coles, Julian Cooper, Mark Johnson, Charlie Maynard, Michele Mead, Ruth Smith, Jane Doughty and Harry St John

Officers: Phil Martin (Group Manager - Business Support), Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer) and Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica)

Other Councillors in attendance: Dan Levy and Mathew Parkinson

36 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to:

- Page 8 – Cabinet Work Programme; Councillors Harry St John and Ruth Smith requested that it be noted that they had raised the item “CIL Review –Replacement of 106”.

37 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Langridge, Hill, Coul and Wilson.

Councillor St. John substituted for Councillor Langridge, and Councillor Doughty substituted for Councillor Hill.

38 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

39 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at this meeting.

40 Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 3

The Chair announced that the Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 3 would be considered first followed by 2022/24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Chief Finance Officer Elizabeth Griffiths introduced the Finance Performance Report for Quarter 3 2022/23. The results this year showed inflationary increases that are reflected in the budget next year.

The points raised were;

- Challenges faced by residents – cost of living, food, inflation and energy prices unexpectedly going up.

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- Challenges faced by businesses – running costs including energy, fuel and inflation unexpectedly going up.
- Inflationary pressures that are built into the budget next year are being experienced this year.
- 2023/24 budget next year have increased expectations due to challenges in the year ahead.
- Staffing and departmental pressures due to loss of funding previously received from grants given over the Covid period.
- Unbudgeted items such as additional costs to cover member allowances, £20,000 on Council Tax leaflet and additional staffing costs in Democratic Services.

The Chair invited comments and questions from the committee.

The Councillors queried car parking and loss of income. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the revenue is based on fines. The car parking team had been reduced to 3 members of staff who focused on both on-street car parking and off-street. The County Council are due to take on-street back and the team can focus on off-street parking. There will be a review of Car Parking which is on the Executive Work Programme with a report to come back with recommendations.

A discussion took place regarding the use of forecasting when looking at the budget. The Chief Finance officer explained that factors such as unexpected pressures for example the cost of living crisis, inflationary pressures and rise of fuel costs had driven up the budget, which were shown in the current year's figures. The Councillors had concerns that there had not been a forecast. The Chief Finance Officer explained the budget was the focus and where needed individual areas had variances to budget that could be addressed, this was raised and discussed but due to limited resources in staffing, work had to be prioritised.

The Councillors asked for a point of note and thanked the team for the table on page 12 and asked for percentage variances to be included going forward.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Finance team worked with each Service area to get the best estimate of every individual line in coming year's budget and every factor was considered. Amendments were made through December and January resulting in almost weekly budget updates ahead of the final draft to Council in February.

The Committee discussed the following points;

- Review of Building Control and targets. – demand for services were low due to market share and the Council are in competition with the private sector.
- Agile working – costs incurred but this is an investment to generate a new revenue stream. Offices in Elmfield are being freed up for outside rental to generate income.
- There were some questions around inflation expectations and how this will affect staff and salaries they are as not RPI linked.
- Investment properties – we have an annual review of performance and expect an increase in this area in 2023/24. This is an item on the Work Programme.
- New Initiatives Programme –this is a one off not annually funded, unspent funds will roll over and there is still scope to use funds for up-coming projects.

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- Request to publish Aged Debt figures going forward. This was agreed.
- Waste contract - trade waste and revenue, the Committee asked for report on Waste Service Review on the Executive Work Programme to be added to the Committee Work Programme for the next FMOS Meeting.
- Questions around the issue of premises registered as businesses such as holiday rentals who are still having their waste collected for free as if they were a Council Tax paying home.

The Councillors commended the Chief Finance Officer and her team for all their hard work particularly in difficult times with additional factors and economic pressures that have occurred without prior warning. The Chief Finance Officer acknowledged her thanks to her team and highlighted again the pressures facing the team in the coming months and year.

The Committee **Resolved** to

1. Note the Finance Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 3 and it's comments.

41

2023/24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Chief Finance Officer Elizabeth Griffiths introduced the 2023/24 Budget and Medium Term Finance Strategy, and gave an explanation on how the paper has been presented. The Committee were asked to take into account the updated position since the budget was last considered in December. The following points were highlighted;

- The last report highlighted the £1.8m deficit as the settlement figure was not confirmed.
- New Homes Bonus has been extended for 1 year and is £1m less than the previous year. This is a 1 year settlement and not guaranteed to continue.
- It is not known whether there will be a funding guarantee and funding could be lost in the future.
- Significant inflation which has caused disproportionate pressures
- Rates reset will not happen till at least 2025/26
- Uncertainty on GLL income.
- Waste team have requested a 10% increase to their container budget which was not included in this draft but will be for Council.
- NNDR rates calculation was later than usual this year due to late issuing of the guidance by government and then further delayed by and software upgrades. This was expected to result in another adjustment to the budget of £15,000 ahead of Council.

The Chair clarified that the budget papers presented to committee are the same set of papers to be discussed at the Executive meeting on 8 February 2023. The Revenue Budget had options of growth and no growth. The Executive would make recommendations on this paper

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to put to Council. So there were two versions to discuss. The Chief Finance Officer explained that both versions had been included so that members could see the impact that the proposed budget growth had in both the short and long term.

The Committee discussed the following points;

- Fixed-term Contracts for staff created challenges for recruitment and retention of staff. The Chair asked for this to be noted as and passed to the Executive.
- Grants were given during Covid and used for short term projects with an understanding that there was a time limit on the contract of employment. In some posts there is a possibility to extend the contract with a view to finding funding from an outside source. Where roles have ended, staff are re-deployed into other vacancies where possible.
- Clarification that the Leisure contract contingency was cumulative within the MTFS calculation.
- Wage settlement for Publica Staff,- the current year saw a fixed cashed increase across all payscales which averaged at 6%. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the difference between Publica staff and Councillors figures can be shown.
- Costs of Members Allowances- an additional amount has been included in next year's budget to cover uplifts not yet reflected in the budget which had caused an overspend in the current year.
- Finance team are currently under resourced - there has been a shared request from other Publica Councils for an additional post but it was under discussion as to the exact post and further requests were expected.
- Leisure facilities and the provision of swimming pools. Most residents only have the opportunity to learn to swim in one of our three main leisure centres and the provision of leisure facilities remains a challenge post Covid. A strategy is being developed to consider how we might improve the performance and take the leisure service forward.
- Unicorn Public House, was discussed at a previous Uplands Planning committee. The Estates Team are dealing with this case. Claire Locke will provide a written response to Councillor Cooper.

Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Comment to Executive and noted the report.

Councillors Graham and Parkinson left the Council Chamber at 4pm.

42 Committee Work Programme

The Chair asked for comments on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23.

The Committee asked that the following items be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme;

- Waste Service Review and Update Report
- Leisure Centre Strategy

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- Stand-alone report from CBRE for the regeneration plan for Marriott's Walk – due July 2023.

Committee **Resolved** to

1. Note the Scrutiny Work Programme.

43 Executive Work Programme

The Chair invited comments on the Executive work programme published January 2023. None were received.

Committee **Resolved** to

1. Note on the Executive Work Programme.

44 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

45 Briefing on the procurement of Marriotts Walk

Frank Wilson, Group Finance Director (Publica) delivered a briefing on the procurement of Marriott's Walk.

There was a discussion within on the briefing in respect of the regeneration aspects of the site and the business case. The Committee asked that a stand-alone report from CBRE be brought to the committee when completed (anticipated in 6 months' time). This would be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme.


Committee **Resolved** to:

1. Note the briefing.

The Meeting closed at 4.53 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>Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Wednesday 12 April 2023</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>Agenda Item No. 5</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>Service Performance Report 2022-23 Quarter Three</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Dan Levy, Executive 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 Three (Q3)</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Service Dashboards</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the 2022/23 Q3 service performance be noted</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Putting Residents First Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Together for West Oxfordshire</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, the Executive 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 was presented to the Executive on 11 January 2023 and adopted at Full Council on 18 January 2023.
- I.2. A high level Commissioning Framework was approved by the Executive in October 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica 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 Q3, the council tax collection rate was similar to the previous year but could still be impacted as we move into the final quarter of the year. The Council has completed the £150 Council Tax rebate programme. At the end of December 2022, the Council had paid out £5,045,550 (core scheme), and an additional £179,625 (discretionary scheme) to 33,989 households. Looking further ahead, the revised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for the next financial year was approved by the Executive and Council in November 2022. There is also an Exceptional Hardship Fund to support those residents who are struggling to pay any remaining council tax following the application and award of CTS.
 - ii. The business rates collection rate improved by around five percentage points on the previous two years but has not returned to pre-Covid levels. Recovery is expected to take longer due to the impact of the cost of living crisis. The government is continuing to support certain businesses with extended retail relief of 50% during this financial year, and will increase to 75% in 2023-24 for leisure and retail businesses. However, the criteria for eligibility is more stringent than during Covid times so some businesses will miss out. The service will be writing to those businesses affected. In addition, some businesses will see their rates increase as a result of the business rates revaluation 2023-24;
 - iii. The Council is continuing to support the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme in which people in the UK are sponsoring/hosting a Ukrainian individual or family. As at 22 December 2022 there were 178 sponsors. Re-matching guests with new sponsors is continuing as relationships break down or the sponsor does not wish to continue in the scheme. Since government increased the monthly sponsor payments to £500, more sponsors have agreed to continue to support their families past the initial 6-month period;
 - iv. Affordable housing completions are ahead of the year to date target (Actual: 234; Target: 207). Working in partnership with housing associations and developers to bring forward more affordable homes will help to alleviate some of the pressures in Housing Support created by the cost of living crisis, the Ukraine situation, and the cold weather. The

Council has received additional Winter Pressures funding to support the increase in homeless cases;

- v. The Executive 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 October 2022 and is undertaking a range of reactive and proactive work. During Q3, 25 fly tips were investigated resulting in six Fixed Penalty Notices.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 2.1. The West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2023 – 27 was adopted at Full Council on 18 January 2023. This presents five strategic priorities, of equal importance, for the District:
 - 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. Portfolio Holders will work with Officers to develop an Action Plan that will identify a range of actions to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond to make progress on the delivery of the Council Plan priorities.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 3.1. Overall, performance for the quarter appears mixed. Some services including Revenues and Benefits, and Housing Support are reporting increased workloads due to the cost of living crisis which is beginning to impact performance. Consequently some of the improvement that had been made in benefit processing times has slipped in particular for Council Tax Support new claims and Housing Benefit changes, although this was exacerbated by a shortage of staff.
- 3.2. Some areas that have performed well include planning determination times, average time to respond to calls in customer services, and delivery of affordable homes.
- 3.3. The council tax collection rate is where we would expect it to be, and may have been helped by the £150 council tax/energy rebate to some households. Some households will have had their accounts credited if there was no facility to return the rebate. Business rates collection rate has improved compared to the previous two years but is lower than historical levels. We will have to await the end of the year to understand better the impact of Covid Additional Relief Fund payments on the business rates collection rate.
- 3.4. Overall, resource levels appear to be more stable. Some recruitment has taken place in a number of services during the quarter including customer services, benefits and planning with further recruitment expected in these services.
- 3.5. There are a number of improvement programmes in progress across services including Planning and Revenues and Benefits, 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.

3.6. Key points by service area themes

3.7. Customer services

- 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.
- The Customer Services team made a significant improvement in the average time to respond to calls, from two minutes and 51 seconds in the previous quarter to 65 seconds in Q3. A lower volume of calls into the Council (as expected at this time of the year), and recruitment to vacant posts during the quarter contributed to this improvement, although these staff are still training up.
- Retention of staff is an issue and further recruitment is currently taking place as there are leavers in Q4. Furthermore, workloads will be higher in Q4 due to annual billing, garden waste renewals in addition to the introduction of voter ids.
- During the quarter, there were short periods when the average time to respond was elevated, for example, towards the end of October 2022 when call volumes rose following the mail out of CT reminders (delayed by postal strike) which coincided with a shortage of staff. Call volumes continued to fall throughout November and December 2022. The average time to respond increased in the week before Christmas due to a slight elevation in call volumes as the council offices were due to close at 12.30pm on the Friday and more staff on annual leave.
- The service has recently implemented a new process for managing demand through improved engagement with other services. This will mean that communications with residents and customers will be staggered so that workloads are 'smoothed' and can be dealt with more effectively by the team.
- Further work on automation and integration of forms to the back office systems is continuing, aimed at improving the on-line offer for customers and reducing call volumes and call length time. For example during Q3, the bulky waste online form was integrated with Salesforce and a new sign up to waste alerts was introduced which provides information on waste collection days and changes.
- 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.

3.8. Development Management

- Last quarter, 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 resulted in the determination date [of planning applications] being set incorrectly to add on extra days for Bank holidays thereby understating performance. As Planning officers work to the determination date/target date, some applications were assessed as 'determined out of time' although officers have actually performed to the 'official' standard set. The error has now worked its way through the system (as it can take eight weeks to determine a minor or other planning application) and December's outturn in the Planning dash and PS2 government return are aligned.
- Planning determinations times for 'Minors' and 'Others' are continuing to improve and are some way ahead of the target, and caseloads have become more manageable. The service reports that the number of applications has slowed but still exceeds historical levels in line

with the national trend. Overall, staff capacity has improved since the beginning of this financial year, although two planning officers left the organisation during the latter part of Q2, adding to the two existing vacant enforcement posts. During the quarter, one vacant senior officer post was filled (working half time in DM and half time in enforcement); and there was a restructure of the existing team to improve capacity. The remaining vacant DM post will become an enforcement post which will commence in mid-February 2023 which will reduce the need for DM officers to take on enforcement work in addition to their current workloads which is not reflected in the average caseload metrics.

- The average caseload targets were set when the number of applications coming into the service was rising and there was insufficient staff capacity which impacted on work allocations and the team structure, which was further exacerbated by the lack senior case officers. The dashboard style report was introduced a year ago, and the context has since changed. An improved DM dash will be designed for 2023-24 to provide more useful metrics to gauge performance. Some of the proposals are:
 - The introduction of a metric that gives a better reflection of throughput;
 - Caseload targets to be replaced with a range (recommended minimum and maximum) which would reflect current workloads and team structure;
 - The introduction of a trend chart aligned to the indicator that local planning authorities are measured on by the government.

The changes will be agreed with West Oxfordshire District Council.

- There is an improvement programme and roadmap in place. The recent focus has been on clearing the backlog of enforcement cases; and a new Planning Checklist designed to improve the quality of the applications submitted and reduce the impact of invalid applications on the validation team went live on 1 February 2023.

3.9. Housing

- The pressures on Housing services, systems and pathways remain high. The number of people contacting the Housing Team continues to rise due to the cost of living crisis, the evolving Homes for Ukraine situation and the cold weather during December 2022.

The cold weather, along with the cost of living crisis has resulted in some people who would normally be staying between family and friends becoming homeless which has required greater use of hotel placements. Although the Housing Team is able to recover some of the costs of emergency accommodation through claiming housing benefits, the Council loses part of this through subsidy loss. The Council's owned and managed hostels are operating at full capacity.

The Council has received additional Winter Pressures funding to support the increase in homeless cases and resulting pressures on services which is being used for temporary resources to assist with 'moving on' people who were accommodated during the recent severe cold weather. Specialist Temporary Accommodation officers offer dedicated support and bespoke solutions for helping clients move on successfully from emergency accommodation.

The availability of social housing stock 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 specialist Ukraine Housing Officer (funded by the County) is working 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;

- Seventy-six affordable homes (41 affordable rent and 35 shared ownership) reached practical completion in Q3. The affordable housing provision at Shilton Road, Burford has now concluded.

Cottsway negotiated affordable housing on the additional phases at West Witney (additional areas identified by the developers has created additional phases to this development). The first 13 of these homes were completed in Q3. Platform Housing Group has purchased some of the market housing on the West Witney site which will provide additional shared ownership affordable homes; the first two completed in Q3 with a further six forecast for Q4.

Overall, a total of 234 for the year has been completed against a target of 207. Registered Providers report that a number of completions scheduled for Q3 have now been reforecast for Q4 although year end forecast is unaffected at this stage.

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.

3.10. Revenues and Benefits

- The Revenues and Benefits service reports that the cost of living crisis has started to increase overall customer contact and workloads in the service.

At the end of Q3, the year to date council tax collection rate was similar to the previous year while the year to date business rates collection rate has improved since emerging from the pandemic but is not back to pre-Covid levels, and is now expected to take longer to recover due to the impact of the cost of living crisis. The service is monitoring insolvencies to understand the impact of the cost of living crisis on businesses. Last year, the Council wrote off £35k in business rates due to insolvency/bankruptcy compared to £63k this year, indicating that more businesses are failing.

On a more positive note, the latest data (at 14 February 2023) indicates that business rates collection rate is continuing to improve at 91.04% (up from 87.9% a year ago), with six further instalments to collect. Council tax collection rate was 95.23% (up from 94.11% a year ago).

The service is continuing to support homeowners and businesses including encouraging customers to contact the Council so that they can be supported via manageable repayment plans, or refer them on to other services both internally and externally. The debt, however, can only be secured through recovery action and issuing of a liability order. The service is up to date with in year processes for the recovery of both council tax and business rates. In addition, the Council has asked enforcement agents to put in additional steps during the early stages of debt recovery to help avert court action and higher costs later in the process. The service is also planning to redesign the recovery process during the first six months of 2023-24 with scoping work starting at the end of March 2023.

It was previously reported that there would be fluctuations in business rates outstanding debt during the year caused by Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) payments. There was a significant increase in business rates outstanding debt since the end of Q2 which related primarily to CARF payments applied to 2021-22 accounts. Outstanding debt for 2021-22 is expected to stabilise over the coming months.

- An increase in the number of benefit applications and reduced staffing during the quarter has resulted in longer processing times. The average days to process CTS new claims increased by 2.7 days to 23 days since the end of the previous quarter while the average days to process HB changes increased by one day to 8.4 days. The CTS changes indicator remained comfortably within the target at 3.7 days.

The team has been prioritising new claims as far as possible as these households are likely to be in the greatest needs while also being mindful of the impact of delays to processing changes in particular HB changes. Plans are being implemented to secure and restore/increase resources to deal with increased workloads and improve processing times including the use of overtime and accessing Civica On Demand. Furthermore, £20k from the cost of living associated activities fund has been agreed for additional resources for West Oxfordshire only. It will be used to procure further resources to help the service manage growing demand and reduce the potential impact of delays in processing claims on other services such as Housing Support. These actions are expected to reduce processing times for CTS new claims to be within or close to the 20 day target at the end of Q4, as well as reducing the processing times for HB changes which will also be helped by the auto processing of pension credit up ratings and new year rent increases from landlords which are applied during Q4.

- Workloads are expected to increase during Q4 due to annual billing and the usual end of year activities. Furthermore, both the Revenues and Benefits teams will be implementing the additional £25 payment (as a credit on council tax accounts) to all working age and pension age individuals who are in receipt of Council Tax Support; as well as the alternative energy payments (on behalf of Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) to those households who do not have a direct contract with an energy supplier e.g. park homes and other shared communities, and therefore did not receive the £400 payment.
- The OpenPortal which provides a facility for customers to self-serve their council tax accounts, business rates accounts and benefit claims is being promoted by both Revenues and Benefits service and Customer Services, which should help to reduce customer contact. The annual bills going out in March 2023 will display the link prominently, and further work on improving benefit forms to make them more customer friendly and accessible through the OpenPortal is planned.

3.11. Waste and environment

- Households produced 10% less household waste in the first nine months of 2022-23 than the same period of the previous year. Since emerging from the pandemic, all household waste streams (tonnages) have fallen. Composting tonnages, which are largely affected by the weather conditions, has fallen the most, while residual waste tonnages have fallen more slowly but remain 3.5% higher than the pre-Covid year. However, taking into account the increase in households in the District, residual waste per household is falling and is generally lower than pre-Covid levels.

Between April and December 2022, the combined recycling rate was 57.25%, around two percentage points lower than the previous year. The lower combined recycling rate was due to a lower composting rate as a result of a prolonged period of hot weather and lack of rainfall during the summer months. The dry recycling rate and food recycling rate were unchanged.

The Council supported national 'Recycle Week 2022' in October 2022. This year's theme was 'Let's Get Real' and challenged perceptions and myths around recycling, and targeted contamination to improve recycling behaviours; and the Council produced a 'behind the scenes' video for social media showing residents what happens to their recycling once Ubico has collected it. During Q3, there was also a focus on food waste recycling at both Halloween and Christmas as well as other specific messages on recycling and reduction at Christmas time.

- The number of missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections reduced from 149 in Q2 to 137 in Q3. The number of misses was expected to start falling in Q3 following the implementation of a range of improvement work. However, the extent of the improvement was reduced due to the severe weather conditions in December 2022 which impacted on collections. During the cold spell, collections ran daily and messages to the public went out each afternoon to advise residents to leave their bins out. The crews were able to access most of the District although the Chipping Norton area was inaccessible for some days. The cold weather increased the number of vehicle breakdowns and particularly affected the hydraulics/bin lifts.

During the severe weather conditions, supervisors were out every day to assess the conditions; and the crews did Saturday collections in order to catch up with delayed rounds as well as collect additional waste produced at Christmas time (side waste amnesty). Previous shortages of staff caused by illness/absence and challenges in securing agency staff appear did not present a problem this quarter. The supervisors have improved team working and overall management of the rounds facilitated by In-Cab technology. Crews are now fully trained up in its use.

- The number of fly tips has remained fairly stable over the last few quarters (since falling post Covid-19) and is not showing any indication that they may increase 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.

An additional Environmental Support Officer started in Q3; this post is aimed at tackling environmental crime such as fly tipping. Some of the areas of work being considered include the potential use of surveillance cameras to help with enforcement as well as working with the Neighbourhood Policing teams and Rural Crimes Taskforce to expand the Council's coverage and its ability to clamp down on fly tipping, and keep neighbourhoods clean.

3.12. Finance

- Further detail on the Council's financial performance will be provided as a separate item on this agenda.

3.13. 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

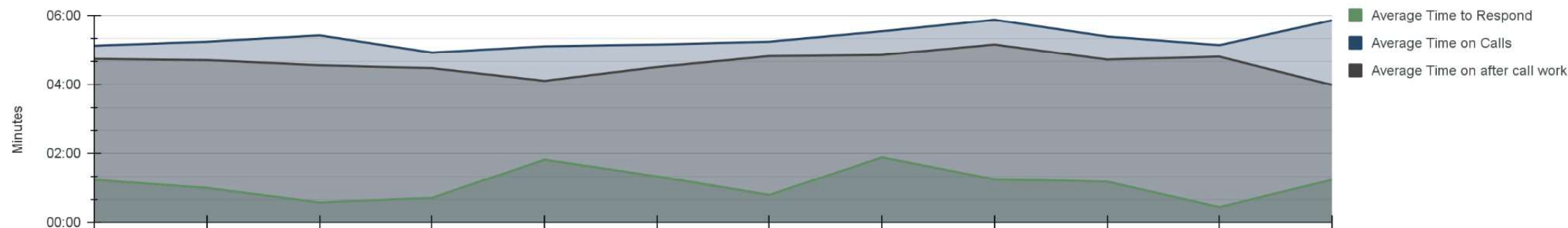
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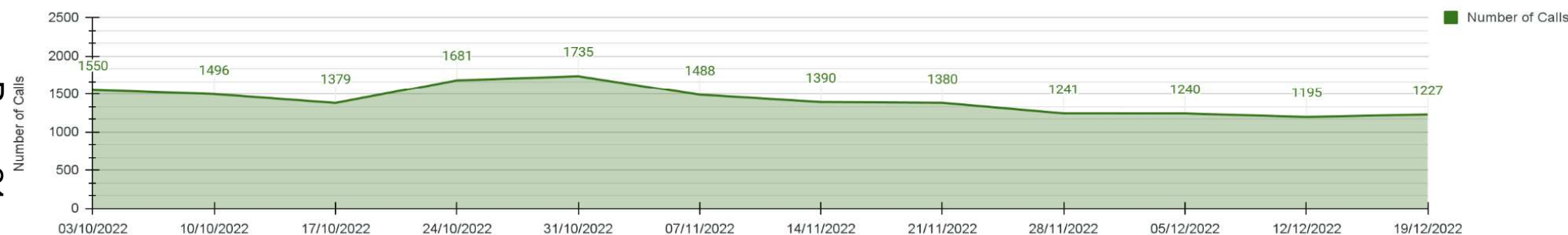
Satisfied

Customer Services Quarter 3

Average time to respond, on calls, and on after call work



Call volumes



Business as Usual Business as Usual Business as Usual 2479 CT reminders (Postal Strike) 3 CSAs sick, 2 hybrids late due to emergencies Business as Usual Business as Usual Business as Usual Business as Usual Training for all staff on system changes Snow disrupts some waste collections Finish 12.30pm on Friday for Christmas

The Customer services team made a significant improvement in the average time to respond to calls from two minutes and 51 seconds in the previous quarter to 65 seconds in Q3. Lower call volumes (as expected at this time of the year), and recruitment to vacant posts during the quarter contributed to this improvement, although new staff are still training up.

Over the quarter, there were short periods when the average time to respond was elevated, for example, towards the end of October 2022 when call volumes rose following the mail out of

CT reminders which coincided with a shortage of staff. Call volumes continued to fall throughout November and December. The average time to respond increased in the week before Christmas as more staff were on annual leave and call volume was slightly raised due to the council offices closing at 12.30pm on the Friday.

There was no identifiable cause for the spike in average time to respond in November 2022.

The service has recently implemented a new process for

managing demand through improved engagement with other services. This will mean that communications with residents and customers will be staggered so that workloads are 'smoothed' and can be dealt with more effectively by the team.

Further work on automation and integration of forms to the back office systems is continuing, aimed at improving the on-line offer for customers and reducing call volumes and call length time. For example during Q3, the bulky waste online form was integrated with Salesforce and a new sign up to waste alerts was introduced which provides information on waste collection days and changes.

Development Management Quarter 3

Average Planner
Caseload

38

TARGET 50

Average Senior
Planner Caseload

41

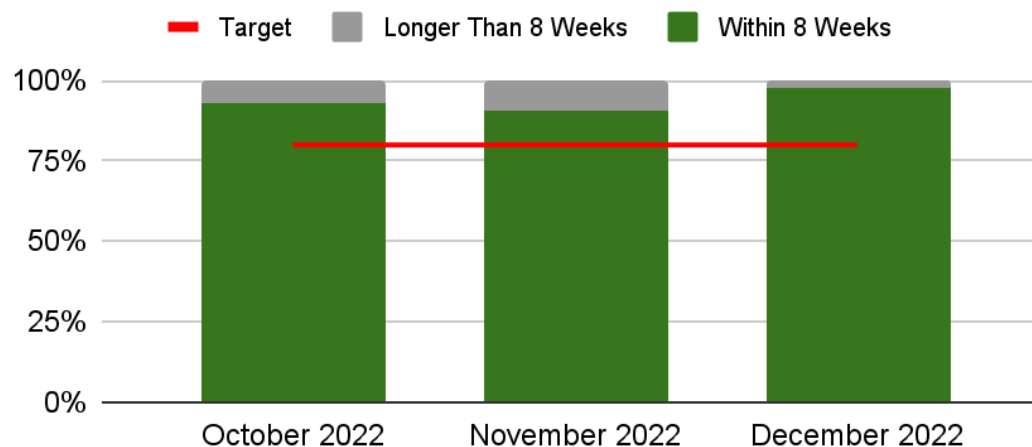
TARGET 35

Average Principal
Planner Caseload

21

TARGET 20

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



Average Cases
closed per Planner
in Quarter

45

TARGET 50

Average Cases
closed per Senior
Planner in Quarter

39

TARGET 40

Average Cases
closed per
Principal Planner in
Quarter

19

TARGET 25

Average days from
receipt to
validation

7

TARGET 7

Customer
Satisfaction



n/a

Planning determination times for 'Minors' and 'Others' are continuing to improve and caseloads have become more manageable. The service reports that the number of applications coming into the service has slowed but still exceeds historical levels which is in line with the national trend.

Overall staff capacity has improved since the beginning of this financial year, although two planning officers left the organisation during the latter part of Q2, adding to the two existing vacant enforcement posts. During the quarter, one vacant senior officer post was filled (working half time in DM and half time in enforcement); and there was a restructure of the existing team to improve capacity. The remaining vacant DM post will become an enforcement post which will commence in mid-February 2023. This will have a positive impact on performance as it will reduce the need for DM officers to take on enforcement work in addition to their current workloads which is not reflected in the average caseload metrics.

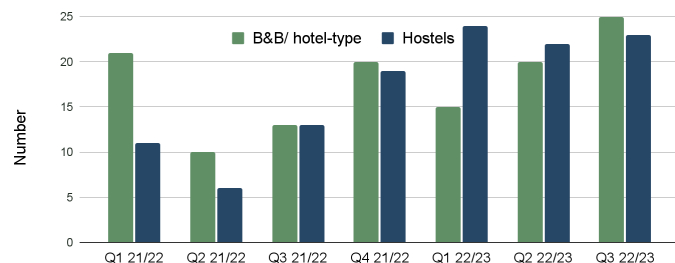
An improved DM dash will be designed for 2023-24 to provide more useful metrics to gauge performance as well as throughput, and which better reflects the current context.



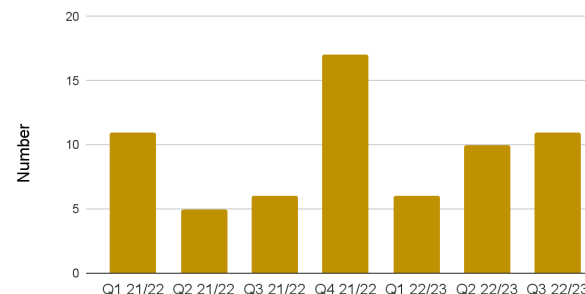
Housing Quarter 3

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

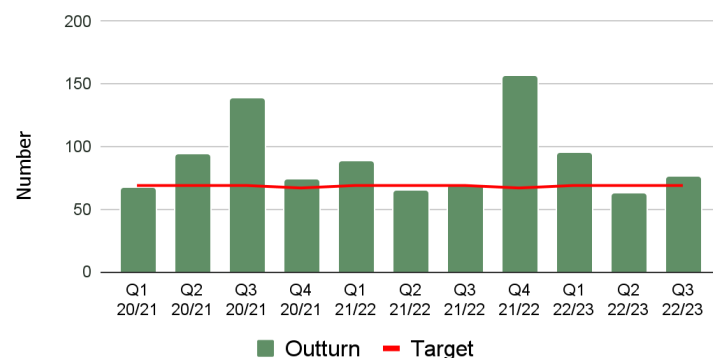


The number of successful 'move ons' from Emergency Accommodation to long term accommodation



The number of affordable homes reaching practical completion

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



The pressures on Housing services, systems and pathways remain high. The numbers of people contacting the Housing team continues to rise due to the cost of living crisis, the evolving Homes for Ukraine situation and the cold weather during December 2022.

The cold weather, along with the cost of living crisis has resulted in some people who would normally be staying between family and friends becoming homeless which has required greater use of hotel placements. The use of this type of placement impacts on the Council's budget as not all of the costs can be recovered by claiming Housing Benefit. The Council's owned and managed hostels are operating at capacity.

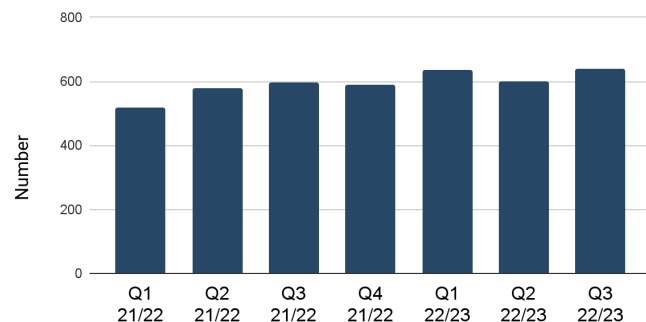
The Council has received additional Winter Pressures funding to support the increase in homeless cases and resulting pressures on services which is being used for temporary resources to assist with 'moving on' people who were accommodated during the recent severe cold weather.

The specialist Ukraine Housing Officer (funding secured from County) is working with families and hosts to prevent homelessness wherever possible and assist families to secure their own accommodation in the private sector.

Seventy-six affordable homes (41 affordable rent and 35 shared ownership) reached practical completion in Q3. The affordable housing provision at Shilton Road, Burford has now concluded. Registered Providers report that a number of completions scheduled for Q3 have now been reforecast for Q4 although the year end forecast is unaffected at this stage. Overall, a total of 234 for the year has been completed against a target of 207.

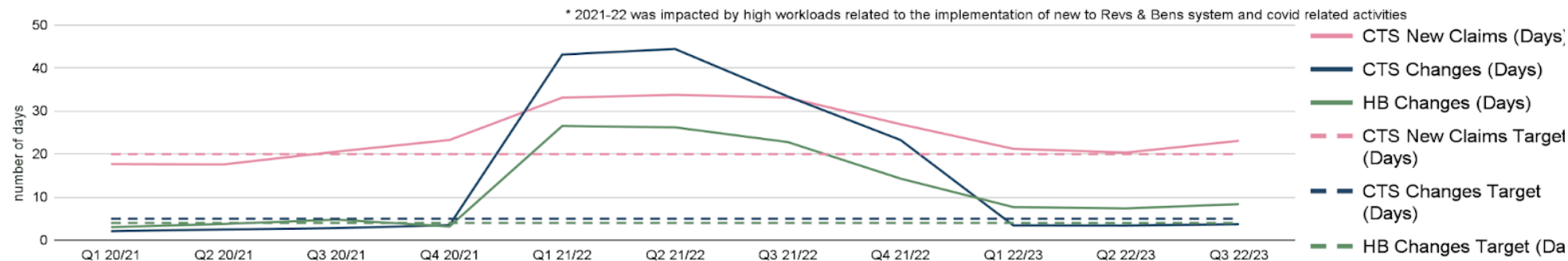
In addition, a range of proactive work is being undertaken to reduce the number of LTE properties in the District. During Q3, 137 properties were removed from the LTE list, although 175 were added. The two main strands of work are maintaining accurate LTE data, and then through improved reporting, better targeting properties to return them into use. Some of the work is resource intensive as the properties are owned by households. The cost of living crisis is likely to be having an impact on bringing LTE properties back into use.

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

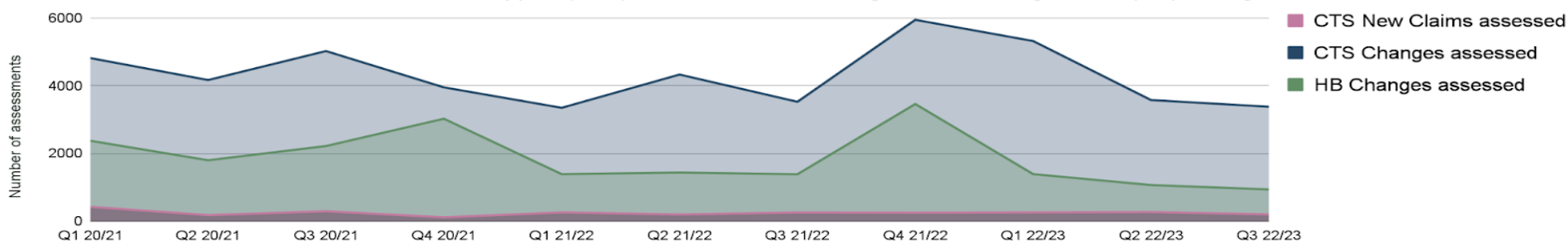


Revenues and Benefits Quarter 3

Average number of days to process Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes



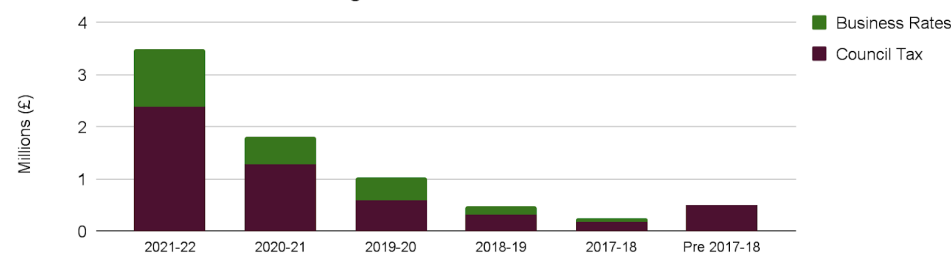
Number of assessments for Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes



22/23 Collection Rates

	Council Tax		Business Rates	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
QTR	31.3%	32%	22.9%	30%
YTD	90.1%	85%	81.8%	87%

Council Tax & Business Rates Aged Debt



Qtrly Aged Debt

% Change Council Tax

-6.1%

% Change Bus. Rates

+190%

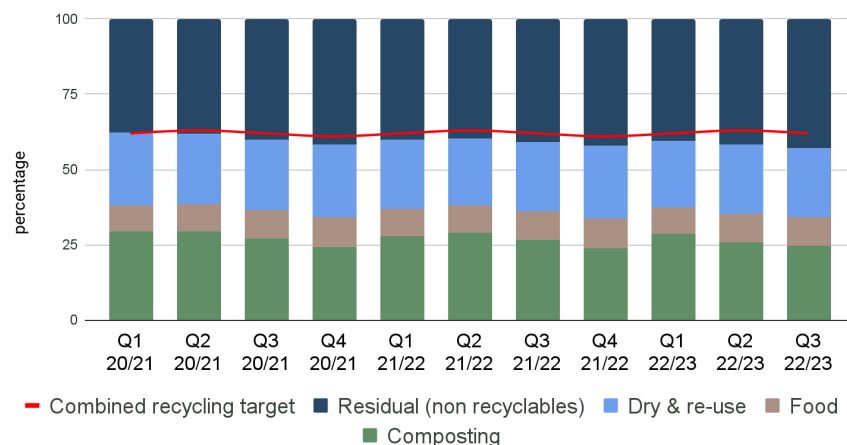
The Revenues and Benefit service reports that the cost of living crisis has started to increase overall customer contact and workloads. A combination of increased number of benefit applications and reduced staffing in the Benefits team during the quarter has resulted in longer processing times. Plans are being implemented to secure and restore/increase resources to deal with increased workloads including the use of overtime and accessing Civica On Demand. Furthermore, £20k from the cost of living associated activities fund has been agreed for additional resources for West Oxfordshire only to help the service manage growing demand and reduce the potential impact of delays on other services.

At the end of Q3, the year to date council tax collection rate was similar to the previous year while the year to date business rates collection rate has improved by almost five percentage points but is not back to pre-Covid levels. More recent data indicates that the in-year collection rates will exceed the rates achieved in 2021-22, however, we need to be mindful of the continuing impacts of the cost of living crisis. Plans are in place to re-design the recovery process during 2023-24 which should have a positive impact on collection rates. It was previously reported that there would be fluctuations in business rates outstanding debt during the year caused by Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) payments. There was a significant increase in business rates outstanding debt since the end of Q2 which related primarily to CARF payments applied to 2021-22 accounts.

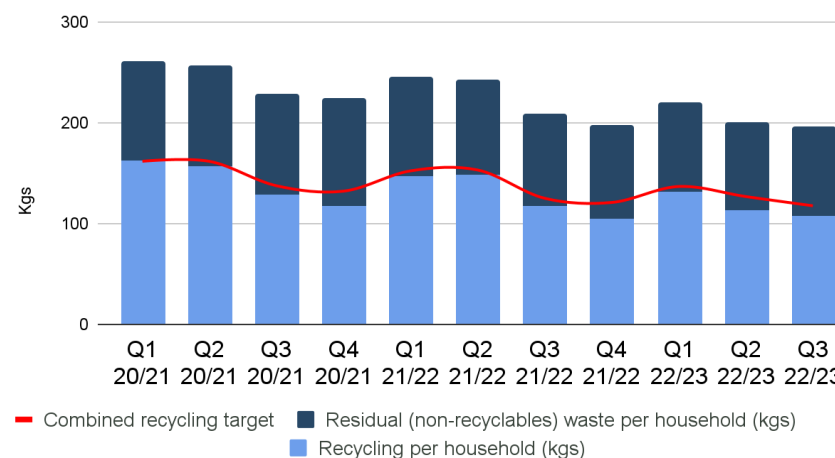


Waste and Environment Quarter 3

(Cumulative) Household waste collected composition



Household waste collected per household

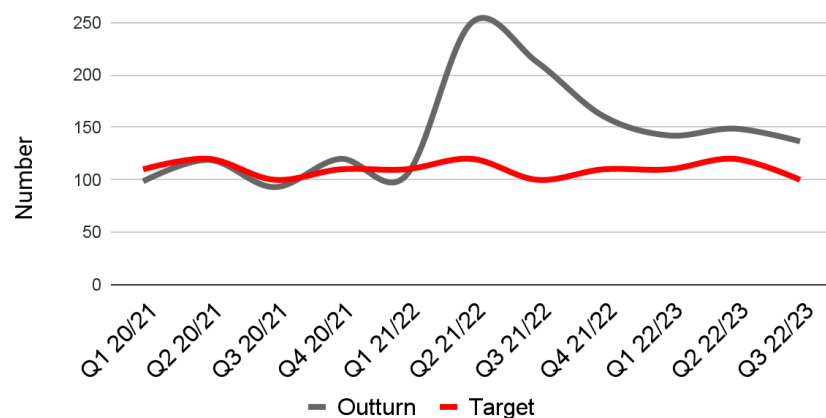


At the end of Q3, the combined recycling rate was lower than a year ago due to the prolonged period of hot weather and lack of rainfall in the summer months. Since emerging from Covid-19, households are producing less household waste, although residual waste tonnages have not reduced as much as other waste streams and is still 3.5% higher than the pre-Covid year. This position is clearly indicated in the top right hand chart which shows residual waste per household falling more slowly than recycling per household.

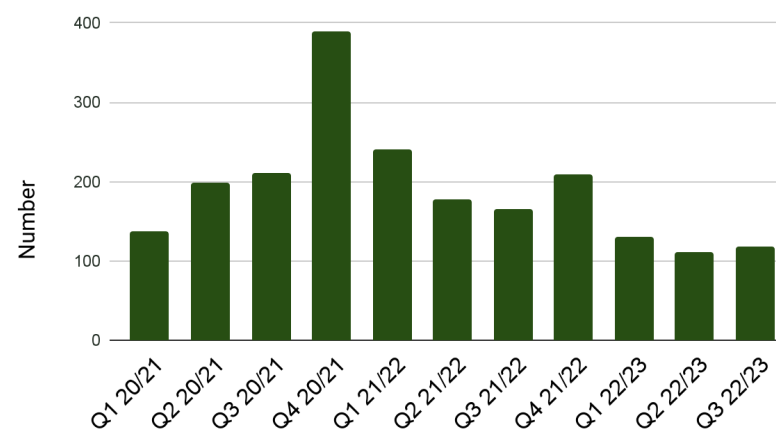
The number of missed bins has improved slightly following the implementation of a range of improvement work in the previous quarter. The severe weather conditions in December 2022 resulted in increased misses as some areas such as Chipping Norton were inaccessible, and there were more vehicle breakdowns. Good comms and the use of In-Cab to manage the collection rounds has helped, while crews did Saturday collections to catch up.

The number of fly tips reduced post Covid and appears to be relatively stable, and unaffected by the cost of living crisis. An additional Environmental Support Officer started in October 2023 to support and increase enforcement activities around fly tipping in West Oxfordshire District. During the quarter, there were 25 investigations resulting in six FPNs.

Missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections



Number of flytips collected



WODC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY



VARIANCE TO BUDGET		£k		
Service Area	Original Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp.	Variance (under) / over
Democratic and Committee Services	1,059	860	928	68
Environmental & Regulatory Services	507	342	397	55
Environmental Services	7,107	4,519	4,823	304
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	922	723	704	(19)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,924	1,891	1,931	40
Land, Legal & Property	903	572	708	136
Leisure & Communities	661	(232)	(254)	(22)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,528	779	811	32
Revenues & Housing Support	1,049	799	786	(13)
Investment Property and Retained Services	(2,218)	(2,217)	(1,449)	768
Total cost of services	13,442	8,036	9,385	1,349
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(1,139)	(855)	(963)	(108)
Cost of services before financing:	12,303	7,181	8,422	1,241

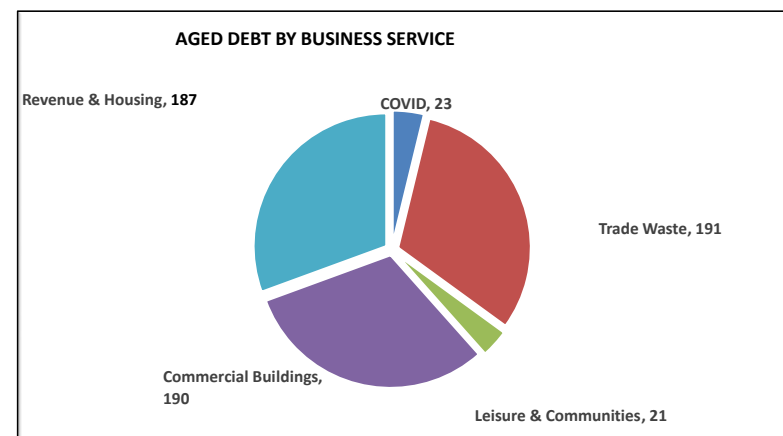
AGED DEBT SUMMARY

	Dec-22	Sep-22	Jun-22	Movement vs. prior period		
Invoices	1,297	1,180	1,140	117	10%	↑
£k	613	609	625	4	1%	↑

Aged Debt Summary:

Whilst there appears to have been slight deterioration in our overall Aged Debt position during the past quarter, the figures are heavily impacted by recent Trade Waste and Commercial Property subscriptions falling due. The profile of our debt has improved significantly during the quarter, with debt over 6mths old falling from 70% of aged debt in Q2 to 47% in Q3.

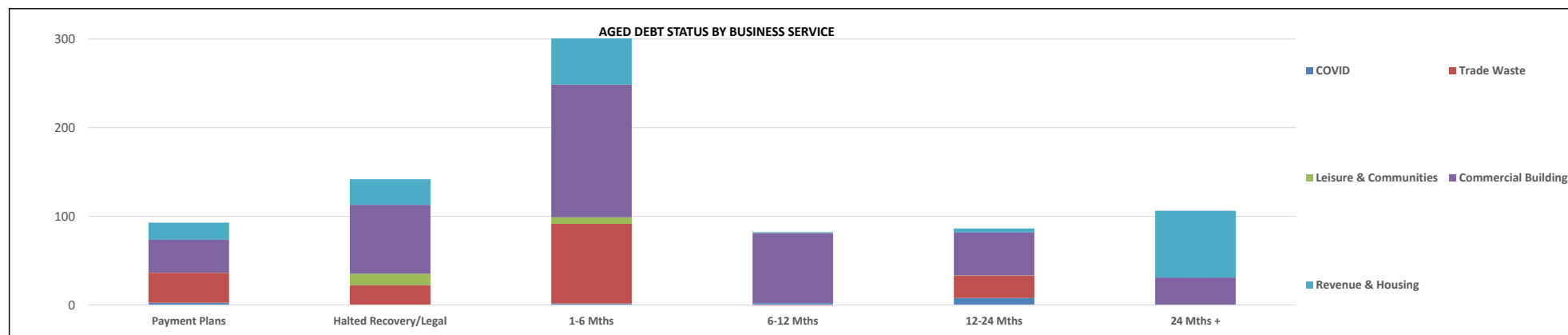
Credit Control has also identified a number of Write Off requests submitted prior to 2022 that did not meet approval criteria at that time, further inflating these stats. Members of the Finance Team have begun a collaborative effort to get as many of these cases reviewed and resolved by year end, with S151 Officer approval obtained, as required.



Overall Summary:

Q3 results show a significant deterioration from those reported in Q2 with losses across service areas. Many of the cost elements providing this shift are uncontrollable i.e. electricity prices, general inflation, pension contributions, property voids and a lack of demand for some of the Council's fee generating services. There is some cause for optimism, in that new tenants have been found for empty Investment Properties with rent levels expected to return to budgeted levels in 2023/24. The 2023/24 budget includes adjustments for utilities, inflation and fees but the emphasis for next year must be how we can effectively control our costs and review our fee earning services to best use our available resources. We are budgeted to make a £1.6m contribution to General Fund Reserves in this financial year, but it is now apparent that we may need to make a contribution from General Fund Reserves to fund our Revenue over spend. The budget set was realistic but could not have anticipated the catastrophic world events that have triggered the cost of living crisis, a rise in utilities and general inflation of 10%.

S151 Officer Write Off approved			
Cost Centre	Case Status	Days Overdue	Total W/O
Trade Waste	Debtor Bankrupt	1280	£11,646.68
Trade Waste	Debt Irrecoverable	1002	£1,435.76
Trade Waste	Debtor Bankrupt	915	£1,523.34
Trade Waste	Debtor Bankrupt	1229	£2,742.91



 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12 April 2023</p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p>Agenda Item No. 6</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Finance and Management Accountable member / Group Manager Lead</p>	<p>Councillor Alaa Al-Yousuf, Chair of Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: alaa.al-yousuf@westoxon.gov.uk Group Manager Lead: Phil Martin, phil.martin@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Climate and Environment Accountable member / Group Manager Lead</p>	<p>Councillor Norman MacRae, Chair Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: norman.macrae@westoxon.gov.uk Group Manager Lead: Bill Oddy, bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Economic and Social Accountable member / Group Manager Lead</p>	<p>Councillor Andrew Beaney, Chair Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: Andrew.beaney@westoxon.gov.uk Group Manager Lead : Jon Dearing, jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Andrew Brown, Business Manager - Democratic Services Email: Andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To provide the Committees with an update on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex I - Work Programme for 2022/23</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Committee notes the Work Programme and provides comment where needed.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>To enable the Committee to review the Scrutiny Work Programme and support the Council's priorities to protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy, to meet the current and future needs of residents and to provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees / Consultation</p>	<p>None</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. At the meetings of the Scrutiny Committees in May and June 2022 the committees gave consideration to the development of their work programmes for the year. These work programmes have been brought together in a single document to provide visibility of the work of Scrutiny across the three committees.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. Committees are asked to consider the work programme, along with the Executive work programme, and decide if there are any items that they wish to prioritise or deprioritise.
- 2.2. When an item is considered by a committee, the Committee can decide whether to submit recommendations to Executive.
- 2.3. The Scrutiny Work Programme is intended to provide clarity to the organisation and the public about the priorities of the committees and when different items will be considered but it does need to be a flexible document that enables Scrutiny to respond to new or emerging issues and priorities during the year. As such, committees will be able to review their work programme at each meeting. The inclusion of a standing agenda item for Members' questions also provides the opportunity to raise relevant issues.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Requests from Scrutiny for reports to be produced for consideration at meetings will place demands on officer capacity. Committees are urged to be mindful of the limitations of the organisation and to prioritise effectively, having regard to the advice of supporting officers.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. None

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. Not applicable.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Whilst there may be climate change implications arising from specific items within the Work Programme, there are none arising directly from this report.

7. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

- 7.1. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, Committee has the power to investigate any matters it considers relevant to its work area, and to make recommendations to the Council, Executive or any other Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council as it sees fit.
- 7.2. The agreement of a Scrutiny Work Programme, which is regularly reviewed, is considered to be good governance practice and promotes openness and transparency.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. None

Financial Management OS 12 April 2023

WP	Title	Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Scrutiny Aim and Comments
1	Treasury Management	Report	Elizabeth Griffiths / Phil Martin	When Required	Scrutiny aim:
2	Investment Property Review Update Purpose	Annual Verbal Report	Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths	April	Scrutiny aim: To receive a verbal update on the Council's investment property and the capital valuation process; focussing on any substantial moves or changes that have occurred in the Council's property portfolio valuations for 2022.
4	Service Performance Report – Quarter 3 or 4	Quarterly Report	Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths / Bill Oddy	Quarterly	Scrutiny aim: Report for comments or clarity
5	Finance Performance Report – Quarter 3 or 4	Quarterly Report	Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths	Quarterly	Scrutiny aim: Report for comments or clarity
6	Unicorn Public house Update	One off report	Clare Locke / Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths	Redacted Update Report	Scrutiny aim: Receive an update as requested from councillor Julian Cooper

Future FMOS reports

WP	Title		Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Scrutiny Aim and Comments
1	Treasury Management		Report	Elizabeth Griffiths / Phil Martin	When Required	Scrutiny aim:
2	Treasury Management Outturn		Report	Elizabeth Griffiths / Phil Martin	When Required	Scrutiny aim:
3	Treasury Management Mid Term		Report	Elizabeth Griffiths / Phil Martin	When Required	Scrutiny aim:
4	Waste Service Review and Update Report		Report	Elizabeth Griffiths / Bill Oddy	June 2023	Scrutiny aim:
5	Leisure Centre Strategy		Report	Elizabeth Griffiths / Joy Aitman / Bill Oddy	Summer 2023	Scrutiny aim:

Financial Management Regular Reports:

Regular Reports	Further Information	Comments	Lead Officer / Executive Member
Service Performance Report – Quarter 1 Financial Performance	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 2 Financial Performance	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 3 Financial Performance	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 4 Financial Performance	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.

Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 March 2023

WP	Title	Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Comments
1	Fly Tipping Enforcement update	Verbal Update	Councillor Prosser / Phil Measures / Susan McPherson / Mandy Fathers	As required	Scrutiny aim: To receive information on how many enforcement notices have been issued and ask questions
2	Flood – what is happening What is the progress	Verbal Update	Councillor Arciszewska / Laurence King / Phil Martin	As requested	Upstream out of Witney, Evenlode and Windrush Flood Management Service Review on Executive 8 Mar – awaiting responses. Scrutiny aim: To receive information and ask questions
3	Carbon Action Plan – update on one project (30 mins)	Verbal update and supporting documentation	Councillor Prosser / Hannah Kenyon Claire Locke re Carterton Leisure Centre	Every committee update on one project	Project: Environment Act and its implications for WODC Differed to later meeting. Scrutiny aim: To receive information and ask questions
4	Service Performance Report – Quarter 3	Quarterly Report	Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths / Bill Oddy	Quarterly	Scrutiny aim: Report for comments or clarity

Climate and Environment suggestions for future workstreams 2023

WP	Title	Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Comments
1	Governments initiative of zero recycle cost for residents	Verbal update	Councillor Arciszewska / Scott Williams	When there is news to share. Initiate began 2019 but is behind due to the pandemic, review 2022	Verbal update due from Scott Williams when there is news to share. See link for current details: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-overhaul-waste-system Scrutiny aim:
2	Air Quality	Annual Report	Councillor Prosser/ Phil Measures / Susan McPherson	As requested	Scrutiny aim: To receive information and ask questions
3	Environment Act and its implications for WODC	Report	Janice Barnsey / Clare Locke / Hannah Kenyon	When ready	Environment Act and its implications for WODC (Bill Oddy)
4	Waste Service Review and Update Report	Update Verbal/ Report	Bill Oddy		Scrutiny aim:
5	Regular Flood Updates	Update Verbal/ Report	Councillor Arciszewska / Laurence King / Phil Martin	As required	Scrutiny aim:

Climate and Environment Regular Reports:

Regular Reports	Further Information	Comments	Lead Officer / Executive Member
Service Performance Report – Quarter 2	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 4	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.

Economic Overview and Scrutiny 16 March 2023 (Postponed from 23 February 2023)

WP	Title	Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Scrutiny Aim and Comments
1	Upgrade to WO public space CCTV provision & monitoring arrangements	Verbal update – timescale requested by the Committee	Councillor Saul / Andy Barge	Verbal update – timescale requested by the Committee	Andy Barge had a Emergency Decision taken on the CCTV replacement programme. Scrutiny aware. Scrutiny aim: To review the documents provided to the committee re CCTV replacement programme.
2	Defence Infrastructure. Jon Dearing said he had invited Mr Wooden				Defence Infrastructure. Scrutiny aim: To note the latest update from MOD
3	Establishment of a working party to consider issues of concern around the Leisure Centres		Councillor Andrew Beaney /		Bill Oddy – Consultant dealing with Leisure Centre Review.
4	Service Performance Report – Quarter 2 and 3	Quarterly Report	Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths / Jon Dearing / Bill Oddy	Quarterly	Report for comments or clarity – 45 mins Scrutiny aim: Note and comment
5	Refugee status	Statement report	Paula Massey	Quarterly	Report for comments or clarity – 5 mins, Chair to read out.
6	Public houses – future after closure	statement	Chris Hargreaves	One Off	Motion Forwarded to Scrutiny. Scrutiny aim: Note and comment
7	Enforcement Improvement Programme Update	Verbal update	Jon Dearing	One Off	Committee requested a Enforcement Improvement Programme Update Scrutiny aim: Note and comment

Economic Overview and Scrutiny Future Meetings

WP	Title	Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Scrutiny Aim and Comments
1	Housing Association invite to brief on their role and problems being faced	Working Group	Geoff Saul / Caroline Clissold / Jon Dearing	Spring 2023	Update from Jon Dearing: Caroline Clissold is going to set up a separate meeting for Councillor Saul, Councillor Poole, Caroline and Jon Dearing..
2	Leisure Centre Strategy		Joy Aitman / Bill Oddy	Summer 2023	Bill Oddy spoken with Chair
3	Stand-alone report from CBRE for the regeneration plan for Marriott's Walk – due July 2023.	Report		July 2023	
4	Developer contributions S106 money (SIL)	Update	Chris Hargraves	As requested	Scrutiny aim:
5	Service Performance Report – Quarter 3	Quarterly Report	Councillor Levy / Elizabeth Griffiths / Bill Oddy	Quarterly	Report for comments or clarity – 45 mins Scrutiny aim: Note and comment
6	Parking Strategy	Update	Councillor Arciszewska / Maria Wheatley	Executive in June 2023	Contact Maria 4 weeks before Committee, ask if it's a report or presentation – 30 mins Sent Maria an email reminder 10 Jan 23. Maria confirmed put back until June. Scrutiny aim:
5	Defence Infrastructure. Jon Dearing said he had invited Mr Wooden				Defence Infrastructure. Jon Dearing had invited Mr Wooden to scrutiny meeting, no answer as yet. Sent jon an email reminder 10 Jan 23. Email received from Jon Wooden with update, no visit scheduled. Scrutiny aim:

Economic suggestions for future workstreams 2023

WP	Title	Format	Executive Member / Lead Officer	When	Comments
1	RAF Brize Norton	As required	Councillor Saul / Giles Hughes	AS REQUIRED	Business model for housing on site – last update given May 2022 Scrutiny aim:
2	Health Care Provision in Oxfordshire	Ongoing	Councillor Aitman / Andy Barge / Heather McCulloch	As required	Scrutiny aim: Health Care Provision in Oxfordshire
3	Local Police with status update	Verbal update	Chair		Scrutiny aim:
4	WODC Housing in for a briefing on WODC housing work, responsibilities, current status and future			Jon Dearing – Crib sheet of questions	Scrutiny aim:
5	Enforcement Update	Update	Kelly Murray		Scrutiny aim:
6	REEMA North Site, Carterton update (Jon Wooden, Deputy Head Estates)	Written Update	Councillor Saul / Giles Hughes Jon Wooden	When Required (Jon Dearing chasing)	Regular committee written update Scrutiny aim:

Economic Overview and Scrutiny Regular Reports:

Regular Reports	Further Information	Comments	Lead Officer / Executive Member
Service Performance Report – Quarter 1	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 2	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 3	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.
Service Performance Report – Quarter 4	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.		Elizabeth Griffiths / Councillor Levy Bill Oddy or Frank Wilson on hand for questions.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME
INCORPORATING NOTICE OF DECISIONS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE SESSION AND NOTICE
OF INTENTION TO MAKE A KEY DECISION
1 MARCH 2023 – 30 JUNE 2023

By virtue of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, local authorities are required to publish a notice setting out the key executive decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before such decisions are to be taken. The Regulations also require notice to be given of any matter where it is proposed that the public will be excluded during consideration of the matter.

This Forward Plan incorporates both of these requirements. In the interests of transparency, it also aims to include details of those items to be debated by the Executive that relate to either policy/budget formulation, matters which will be subject to a recommendation to the Council, and other matters due to be considered by the Executive. This programme covers a period of four months, and will be updated on a monthly basis. The timings of items may be subject to change.

It should be noted that although a date not less than 28 clear days after the date of this notice is given in each case, it is possible that matters may be rescheduled to a date which is different from that given provided, in the cases of key decisions and matters to be considered in private, that the 28 day notice has been given. In this regard, please note that agendas and reports for meetings of the Executive are made available on the Council's website at www.westoxon.gov.uk/meetings five working days in advance of the meeting in question. Please also note that the agendas for meetings of the Executive will also incorporate a necessary further notice which is required to be given in relation to matters likely to be considered with the public excluded.

There are circumstances where a key decision can be taken, or a matter may be considered in private, even though the 28 clear days' notice has not been given. If that happens, notice of the matter and the reasons will be published on the council's website, and available from the Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxon, OX28 1NB.

Key Decisions

The Regulations define a key decision as an executive decision which is likely –

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or*
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the authority".*

The Council has decided that a cost or saving of an amount greater than £150,000 is necessary to constitute expenditure or savings which are significant for the purposes of this definition.

Please note that if a matter is approved by the Council following a recommendation from the Executive, that decision will not be a key decision.

Matters To Be Considered in Private

The great majority of matters considered by the Council's Executive are considered in 'open session' when the public have the right to attend.

However, some matters are considered with the public excluded. The public may only be excluded if a resolution is passed to exclude them. The grounds for exclusion are limited to situations where confidential or exempt information may be disclosed to the public if present and, in most cases involving exempt information, where in a

the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The definitions of these are set out in the Council's Constitution.

Documents and Queries

Copies of, or extracts from, documents listed in the programme and any which subsequently become available are (subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure), obtainable from the following, and this contact information may also be used for any queries.

Democratic Services - Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk Tel: 01993 861111

West Oxfordshire District Council: Executive Members 2022/23

Name of Councillor	Title and Areas of Responsibility
Andy Graham (Leader)	Leader of the Council: Policy Framework; Corporate Plan; Executive functions; Strategic Partnerships; Representation on Regional and National Bodies; Oxfordshire Partnership Board; Future Oxfordshire Partnership; Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership; Oxfordshire Leaders; Publica & Ubico; Democratic Services; Communications; Legal Services; Emergency Planning; Data Protection; FOI; and Counter Fraud.
Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader)	Economic Development: Inward investment; Business Development; Visitor Economy; and Town and Village regeneration.
Dan Levy	Finance: Finance & Management; Council Tax and Benefits; Efficiency Agenda; Performance management of the Council; Asset management; Investment Strategy; and South West Audit Partnership.
Carl Rylett	Planning and Sustainable Development: Local Plan; Government planning policies and guidance; Conservation and Design; Design and Historic Environment; Landscape and Biodiversity; Strategic Housing; Development Management; and Ensuring planning policies meet 2030 requirement.
Mathew Parkinson	Customer Delivery: Parish and Town Empowerment; Equality and Diversity; Customer Services; ICT and services; Councillor Development; and Broadband.
Joy Aitman	Stronger Healthy Communities: Community; Community Revenue Grants; Voluntary sector engagement; Sports and Leisure facilities; Health and Safety; Public art; Facilities Grants; Community and Public Health; Healthy Communities; Health Improvement Board; Accountable Member for Refugee Resettlement Programme; and Young People.
Geoff Saul	Housing and Social Welfare: Housing Allocations; Homelessness; Provision of affordable homes; Sheltered Housing Accommodation; Safeguarding – Community Safety Partnership; Crime and Disorder; Neighbourhood Policing; Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioner; and Assets of Community Value.
Lidia Arciszewska	Environment: Energy Advice; Flood alleviation and sewage; Environmental and Regulatory; Environmental Partnership; Waste collection and recycling; Street Scene (cleansing, litter and grounds maintenance); Car parking; Air Quality; and Land, food, farming.
Andrew Prosser	Climate Change: Renewable energy and retrofit investment; Biodiversity across the District; Carbon neutral by 2030; Fossil fuel dependence reduction; Local, national and county wide liaison on climate; Internal liaison on Climate Change; and EV Charging Rollout.

For further information about the above and all members of the Council please see www.westoxon.gov.uk/councillors

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Likely to be Considered in Private (Yes / No)	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Executive Member	Lead Officer	Consultation	Background Documents
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 - Update	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Carl Rylett	Planning Policy Manager - Chris Hargraves		
Council Tax Support Fund	Yes	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Dan Levy	Business Manager Environmental, Welfare and Revenues - Mandy Fathers		
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Councillor Mathew Parkinson, Executive Member for Customer Delivery	Assistant Director - Organisational Effectiveness - Zoe Campbell		
West Oxfordshire Annual Monitoring Report 2021/2022	Yes	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Carl Rylett	Planning Policy Manager - Chris Hargraves		

Transfer of Playing Areas to Witney Town Council	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman	Assets Manager - Jasmine McWilliams		
Integrated Care Strategy Engagement Work	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman	Community Wellbeing Manager - Heather McCulloch		
Development Management Improvement Programme	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Carl Rylett	Business Manager Development & Sustainability - Phil Shaw		
Supporting Small Business Rate Relief	Yes	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Dan Levy	Business Manager Environmental, Welfare and Revenues - Mandy Fathers		
Environmental Health Out of Hours Service	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman	Philip Measures		

Ubico Business Plan 2023/2024	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Business Manager Contracts - Scott Williams		
Consideration of Local Authority Housing Fund Application	Yes	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare - Cllr Geoff Saul			
Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Carl Rylett	Chris Hargraves		
Salt Cross Area Action Plan	No	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Carl Rylett	Chris Hargraves		
FOP/Growth Board Terms of Reference	Yes	Open	Executive	19 Apr 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham			
West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan	No	Open	Executive	21 Jun 2023				

Approval of upgrade to WODC public space CCTV provision and monitoring arrangements	Yes	Open	Executive	21 Jun 2023	Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare	Assistant Director - Communities - Andy Barge		
Review of Car Parks	No	Open	Executive	21 Jun 2023	Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Lidia Arciszewska	Maria Wheatley		
Key Decisions Delegated to Officers								
Allocate funding from the Project Contingency Earmarked Reserve	Yes	Open	Chief Finance Officer / Deputy Chief Executive - Elizabeth Griffiths	Before 31 Mar 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Dan Levy	Chief Finance Officer / Deputy Chief Executive - Elizabeth Griffiths		

Standing delegation: Settlement of Legal Claims The Head of Legal Services has delegated authority in the Council's Constitution to settle or compromise any proceedings as they deem appropriate and expedient for the Council's interests.	Yes	Open	Interim Head of Legal Services - Helen Blundell	Before 31 Dec 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Dan Levy, Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Interim Head of Legal Services - Helen Blundell		
Allocation of New Initiatives Funding	Yes	Open	Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service - Giles Hughes	Before 31 Mar 2023		Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham		
Other business for Council Meetings								
Constitution Working Group	Yes	Open	Council	22 Mar 2023				
Members Allowances Scheme 2023-2027	Yes	Open	Council	22 Mar 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Business Manager Democratic Services - Andrew Brown		

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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