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## CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Climate & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Thursday, 23 June 2022 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Climate & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: Norman MacRae MBE (Chair), Charlie Maynard (Vice-Chair), Alaa Al-Yousuf, Hugo Ashton, Michael Brooker, Andrew Coles, David Cooper, Harry Eaglestone, Ted Fenton, Andy Goodwin, Natalie King, Martin McBride, Rosie Pearson, Alaric Smith and Ruth Smith

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. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 8)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2022.
3. **Committee appointments and start time for civic year 2022/23**  
Purpose:
  1. Confirmation of appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Committee, civic year 2022/23.
  2. Members to agree start time of the Committee for civic year 2022/23.  
Recommendations:
  1. The committee confirms appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Committee, civic year 2022/23.
  2. Members to confirm start time of the Committee for civic year 2022/23.
4. **Chair Announcements**  
Purpose:  
To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Committee.
5. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting.
6. **Participation of the Public**  
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.
7. **Witney Flood Report Update (Pages 9 - 64)**  
Purpose:  
To provide the Committee with Witney Flood Report update.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Committee notes the report, and provides comment and feedback where needed.
8. **Annual Carbon Action Plan 2022/23 (Pages 65 - 68)**  
Purpose:  
To provide the Committee with a report on projects to be scrutinised during 2022/23.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Committee notes the report, and provides comment and feedback where needed.
9. **Presentation on the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) 2021/22 (Case Study)**  
Purpose:

To provide the Committee with a presentation on the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) 2021-22 (Case Study), and benefits delivered by the Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme (Case Study).

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes the presentation, and provides comment and feedback where needed.

10. **Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Four (Pages 69 - 98)**

Purpose:

To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Q4 Performance Monitoring Report.

Recommendation:

That the Committee decides whether to express a view to the Cabinet on the Q4 Performance Monitoring Report.

11. **Cabinet Work Programme 2022/23 (Pages 99 - 106)**

Purpose:

To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Cabinet Work Programme 2022/23.

Recommendation:

That the Committee decides whether to express a view to the Cabinet on relevant issues in its Work Programme.

12. **Committee Work Programme for 2022/23 (Pages 107 - 114)**

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

13. **Members Questions**

To receive any questions from Members of the Committee

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

### **Climate & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Held in the Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney at 2.00 pm on  
**Thursday, 7 April 2022**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: Andrew Coles (Chair), Joy Aitman, Mike Cahill, Rupert Dent, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Ted Fenton, Andy Goodwin, Liz Leffman, Martin McBride, Alex Postan and Carl Rylett.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Bill Oddy (Group Manager - Commercial Development), Louise Oddy, Vanessa Scott (Climate Change Manager WODC), Scott Williams (Business Manager - Commissioning Strategy) and Amy Bridgewater-Carnall (Democratic Services Manager).

#### **43 Minutes of Previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2022, under the previous

Committee name "Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **44 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harry St John and Councillor Alaa Al-Yousuf.

Councillor Duncan Enright substituted for Councillor Owen Collins.

#### **45 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### **46 Participation of the Public**

There was no participation of the public.

#### **47 Committee Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Chair introduced the Committee work programme and welcomed Scott Williams and Louise Oddy to the meeting. There were in attendance to provide a verbal update on Waste and Recycling.

Mr Williams provided an update on the progress made since the last Cabinet report which agreed the introduction of dual bins for litter and dog waste. He advised that most locations had been supplied with Witney due to receive their bins in the next few weeks. It was noted that numbering the bins would be considered as part of the Street Cleansing Review and Innovation programme.

Mr Williams answered questions from Members on a number of queries including tanneries using waste, the location of the bins aiding wheelchair users and the extensive communications that had taken place with parish councils.

Following a question from Councillor Goodwin, Mr Williams advised that capacity had been created in the Ubico team and explained the steps being taken to address the ongoing impact from the pandemic. Members were assured that officers monitored public comments using a number of sources including social media channels, parish and town council communications and customer service calls.

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Councillor Coles queried the communication with Ward Members and how the various sites of the bins had been agreed. Mr Williams advised that studies had shown that removing bins reduced the levels of litter rather than increasing it and new estates would be serviced where appropriate. However, if parish councils felt strongly enough, they could pay for installation and servicing.

Ms Oddy explained that regular meetings with Ward Members had taken place and their knowledge had been shared with Ubico. Councillor McBride confirmed that his interactions with Mr Williams and Ms Oddy had been extremely positive and residents were happy with the service.

Councillor Dent expressed his thanks to the team and highlighted that satisfied comments being received. Mr Williams directed these thanks to Ms Oddy who had been driving the project and Members noted the update.

Following the conclusion of the update, the work programme was considered further and it was agreed that the Carbon Action Update would be a regular item on each committee agenda. It was also noted that the Trade Waste Review was forthcoming and should be added to the work programme for July 2022.

**Resolved** that the Committee Work Programme be noted.

48

## **Climate Action Update**

The Climate Change Manager Ness Scott gave a verbal update to Members on the Climate Action current programme of works.

The update included the progress so far on the PSDS 3 Carterton Leisure Centre project, which Members noted had moved on the Cabinet work programme. It was noted that this may be scrutinised by the Finance & Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration.

With regard to Decarbonisation work, a modelling exercise had been taking place in relation to the Agile Working project, council offices, signage and energy reduction. Communications to staff would be increased in the office and for those working from home to share the message.

Mrs Scott gave an overview of the District wide work taking place, Biodiversity and Land Management plans which had been adopted and published formally, wildflower areas across Council owned sites and the Hedgehog Highway campaign. In addition, she provided an update on the Electric Vehicle Charging Points projects, promoting energy surveys to landlords, retrofitting and the focus on those residents in fuel poverty.

Members made comment on a number of the projects and were pleased with the level of involvement from local schools. It was noted that the Council had been nominated at the LGA awards, which was recognised as a national achievement, with no other District Councils being nominated.

Future work noted by the Committee was the electric street sweeper that had been trialled in Bampton, the relationship being encouraged with Blenheim Palace with regards to their development plans and the options being considered for solar energy.

Councillor Goodwin queried the Carbon Action Plan and asked for a projection of where the Council was looking to fund and invest in as a multi-year projection. Mrs Scott confirmed that this was published as part of the Annual Monitoring Review and Bi-annual reports.

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Councillors commented that they were impressed with the achievements made during the past year, and asked Ness Scott to feedback and thank the team for their continual hard work.

The update was noted.

**49 Cabinet Work Programme**

**Resolved** that the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

**50 Members' Questions**

Councillor Postan asked for an update on the revised wording relating to Thames Water as a consultee in Development Control matters. He was advised that the revised wording was currently being considered by Phil Shaw and Councillor Haine. It was suggested that the wording be looked at by the Committee prior to adoption.


Councillor Goodwin asked that his disappointment be recorded in relation to the approval of the Eynsham Master Plan, as he had made it clear he was not satisfied with the decision that Cabinet made.

Councillor Coles, who had chaired the meeting in Councillor Al-Yousuf's absence, thanked everyone for their hard work and their contributions throughout the last year. He wished all those who were standing for election in May, good luck. Finally, he thanked all staff in Democratic Services and in the Environmental teams for their support.

The Meeting closed at 3.34 pm

CHAIR

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 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>West Oxfordshire District Council</b>
<b>Name and date of Committee</b>	<b>Climate &amp; Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Thursday 23 June 2022</b>
<b>Report Number</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Witney Flood Update</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Witney
<b>Accountable member</b>	Cllr Lidia Arciszewska - Cabinet Member for Environment Email: <a href="mailto:lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk">lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	Phil Martin, Group Manager, Business Support Services Tel: 07764352360; Email: <a href="mailto:phil.martin@publicagroup.uk">phil.martin@publicagroup.uk</a>
<b>Summary/Purpose</b>	To update the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) on the progress of the actions set out in the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Witney in conjunction with a verbal presentation from the Environment Agency</li> <li>b) on Thames Water's response to the Motion raised by Cllrs Graham and MacRae at the Council meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Annexes</b>	None
<b>Recommendation</b>	That the Committee notes the report
<b>Corporate priorities</b>	Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity
<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Consultees/ Consultation</b>	N/A

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- I.1. On the 23rd and 24th December 2020 approximately 54 residential and business properties were affected by some degree of internal flooding.
- I.2. Due to the number of properties affected a formal investigation into the flood incidents in Witney was carried out.
- I.3. The main areas affected with internal flooding were Woodford Mill, Riverside Gardens, Bridge Street, West End (including Industrial Estate), Millers Mews, Newland area (near the Madley Brook) and Eastfield Road. One property was also affected in New Yatt Road.
- I.4. Whilst Oxfordshire County Council are the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), responsible for Section 19 reports, as the Council wanted to ensure the investigation report was concluded in an appropriate timeframe it procured additional support to produce the report for Witney (see Appendix 1) and invited Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the Environment Agency (EA) and other stakeholders including the Witney Flood Group and landowners for their comments.
- I.5. At the Council Meeting on the 23rd February 2022, Councillors Andy Graham and Norman MacRae raised the following motion –

"This Council believes that historical underinvestment in the sewerage infrastructure in West Oxfordshire and further up the catchments of the rivers Windrush, Evenlode and other Thames tributaries in West Oxfordshire has led to a marked deterioration in water quality in these rivers and in the Thames due to excessive spills of untreated or partially treated sewage in both storm and normal conditions.

The Council would like to receive the following details:

- Capital improvements by Sewage Treatment Works (STW) over the last ten years (description and cost);
  - Operating capacity analysed by STW over each of the last ten years;
  - Capital Plans by STW over the next five years (description and estimated cost);
  - Number of spills by STW over each of the last ten years together with reason for spill;
  - Details, including logs, of failures at pumping stations, and to include downtimes and the use of tankers;
  - The level of any fines levied by the regulator or courts for spills over each of the last ten years."
- I.6. Thames Water has provided a detailed response, which is outlined in Appendix 2, however as not all the information requested has not been supplied, a follow up meeting with Thames Water is being arranged and the results of this will be fed back to the Committee at a future meeting.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. The S19 Flood Investigation Report for Witney was presented to the Committee at their meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

- 2.2. The report concluded that the 2020 event was greater than the current EA modelled '1 in 100 year' flood event, and confirmed that an updated flood risk model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town, which includes information gathered since 2014 and from the December 2020 floods needed to be carried out by the EA.
- 2.3. The report also included a table of actions on pages 2 to 4, many of which are led by the EA who will provide a verbal update to the Committee. The report also has specific recommendation for all the relevant agencies.
- 2.4. The Council continues to work closely with a range of partners, including Thames Water, OCC (LLFA), EA and riparian land owners to help mitigate the risk of future flooding not only in Witney but across the district.
- 2.5. Progress on the specific actions identified for the Council to lead on is outlined in the table below:

Action	Progress
Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow Capacity	Before the investigation work can be undertaken the results of the EA modelling are needed to help clarify whether any benefit would be achieved from such work.
Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	EA modelling is needed to help define what needs to be achieved to deliver tangible protection.
WODC to continue regular maintenance of their ordinary watercourse assets and use their powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to ensure Riparian owners carry out required maintenance	WODC continue to utilise UBICO to maintain Council owned watercourses. The team negotiates with landowners/riparian owners to maintain watercourses/ditches that are causing a tangible flood risk.
Measures to improve the resilience of existing public or community-owned infrastructure;	The team will discuss with partner organisations at planned multi-agency meetings how to protect such infrastructure.

- 2.6. The Flood Risk Management (FRM) team currently work with colleagues in the planning department in respect of planning applications for new developments to reduce flood risk as well as applying its enforcement powers on riparian owners who fail to maintain ordinary watercourses in their ownership.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The actions identified in the report, where the Council has been identified as the lead, can in part (WODC ditch maintenance and some surveying) be undertaken with the existing budgets. If further financial support is required to support potential schemes/works, a follow up report will be presented to the Committee for consideration. A new agency contract with Oxfordshire County Council is current under negotiation to formalize an existing arrangement where the Council acts as an agent for OCC on consenting and enforcement for land drainage and watercourse alterations in return for the current fee of £15,000 pa.

#### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The Council has limited enforcement powers. However, due to an Agency Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council, the Council is able to take action against riparian owners whose conduct and activities affects local water-courses.

#### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. The main risk associated with the report is that if progress on the actions identified are not undertaken then a similar event could occur in the future.

#### **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1. None.

#### **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1. None.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## Witney Flood Investigation Report December 2020

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Version	Date	Details	Author	Checked	Approved
1	06/01/2022	Draft	Richard Bennett	Laurence King	
2	26/01/2022	Final Report	Richard Bennett	Laurence King	Frank Wilson

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) has undertaken a flood investigation into the Witney Christmas floods 2020 and shared this report with the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority for comments. Wherever possible, given the time constraints, these comments have been included within this document. WODC works collaboratively through an informal agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to undertake flood investigations as well as drainage enforcement and consenting functions on behalf of the LLFA in West Oxfordshire. This is separate to the County Council's LLFA responsibility for the final approval and publication of the Section 19 report. In the interests of having this investigation report concluded in an appropriate timeframe WODC has procured additional support to produce this report for Witney and invited the County Council, the EA and other stakeholders including the Witney Flood Group and landowners for their comments.

### **December 2020 flood event**

It was deemed necessary to complete a formal investigation into the flood incidents in Witney due to the number of properties that reported flooding internally.

At least 54 residential and business properties were confirmed as flooding internally on the 23rd and 24th December 2020. This included residents at Mill House Care Home, Riverside Gardens and Riverside House needing to be evacuated.

Surface water flooding of some roads first occurred during the 23rd December 2020 in a number of places in Witney (section 2.1 for more detail). The amount of rainfall and its intensity that fell on that day overwhelmed some parts of the highway drainage systems which are very reliant on outfalls to watercourses which had started to become compromised by the rising river level. This was followed on the 24th December 2020 by river flooding when the upstream catchment flows reached Witney and river levels peaked. The level peaked just after midnight on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

Not unusually in flood events, the causes are from multiple sources with no one cause and no one solution required to reduce risk of future events.

### **Conclusions**

From reviewing the information provided regarding the December 2020 flood event, historic river data and modelling information, it is clear that the 2020 event was greater than the current EA modelled 1 in 100 year flood event with flows similar to the peak flow in the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 20% event.

From the level information obtained from the Lidar (Laser Imaging, detection and Ranging) data it is clear that there is an issue with flood plain connectivity downstream of the Aquarius site and through the raised footpath at Langel Common.

Levels in the field to the South of the Aquarius site and to the east of the eastern channel of the river Windrush seem to suggest that flood flows would not be able to fill and pass through to the flood plain further downstream as easily as the 2014 modelling suggests. The flood levels in the model are lower than the ground level in the field adjacent to the channel in the modelled 1 in 20 year event and at the 1 in 100 year flood level, not all flows would be able to spill back in to the river.

The level of the raised footpath further downstream varies between 79.72m and 80.1m AOD which is higher than the modelled 1 in 100 year flood level of 79.68m AOD, confirming that the embankment is not accurately reflected in the 2014 model. The river through this area and upstream of Bridge Street is in poor condition due to no significant maintenance being carried out for many years.

It has been confirmed that an updated flood risk model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town is to be carried out by the EA which will include information gathered since 2014 and from the December 2020 floods.

The updated model will need to fully understand the issues around Bridge Street and through to Langel Common, and confirm the main causes affecting the flood levels upstream of Bridge Street.

There is currently minimal information on the private and highway drainage systems throughout Witney and further investigations need to be carried out throughout the affected areas to fully understand the existing drainage systems and any issues with them.

## Main Actions

Action	Lead Stakeholders	Consulting stakeholders
Communicate the explanation for the previous problems with the flood warning system and explore what further improvements and enhancements could be made.	EA	WODC, LLFA and residents.
Re-establish the Agency flood group meetings to discuss problems and to look at strategies to combat flooding due to Climate Change. Have periodic meetings with the local flood group to discuss the issues and recommendations with representatives from key authorities.	LLFA	All Authorities
Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney	EA	WODC, LLFA, WFMG

Increased EA / Riparian maintenance to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits and encouragement to ensure riparian owners carry out their duties.	EA	Landowners
Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	EA	Landowners ,LLFA and WODC.
Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow Capacity.	WODC	EA, Landowners, LLFA
Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.	EA	OCC, Landowners ,WODC
Install Gauge boards from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a Flood Warden network with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events.	EA	WFMG, LLFA
Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	EA	Landowners, LLFA, WODC
Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	WODC	LLFA, EA Landowners, WFMG
Property flood resilience (PFR) measures which improve the resilience of the community before a flood occurs. Many properties have already carried out measures on their properties, but further funding and support may be available to help more people;	Homeowners	WODC, EA, OCC
Measures to improve the resilience of existing public or community-owned infrastructure;	All Local Government Bodies	
Local community volunteer approaches to improve the community's ability to plan, respond and recover from flooding; link to local community emergency plans; encourage affected Care Home to develop Business Continuity Plan and Evacuation Plan.	All	Communities and Residents

WODC to continue regular maintenance of their ordinary watercourse assets and use their powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to ensure Riparian owners carry out required maintenance.	WODC	Landowners
OCC to regularly check and maintain highway assets through Witney, in line with their current maintenance regimes. Any affected areas that haven't been checked after December 2020 should be prioritised.	OCC Highways	
Bridge Street bridge to be checked regularly and de-silting under the bridge to be carried out as and when required accepting that without de-silting being also undertaken on the upstream side of the bridge there would be little benefit to simply de-silting under the bridge.	OCC Highways	EA
Privately owned drainage systems to be checked for blockages and defects and remedial works to be carried out where necessary. Connectivity downstream to be confirmed.	Developers, Landowners	WODC, LLFA
Foul sewers to be checked for surface water connections, blockages and capacity issues. Remedial works to be carried out as necessary to minimise surface water entering the system and increase capacity.	TW	LLFA, WODC

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## Appendix A – Further Photos

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) Investigation

Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (F&WMA) states:

- 1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a Lead Local Flood Authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate:-
  - a. which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
  - b. whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.
- 2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must:-
  - a. publish the results of its investigation, and
  - b. notify any relevant risk management authorities.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is not the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), but does deliver a delegated Flood Risk Management Service for the LLFA through an informal arrangement.

The legal obligations of the LLFA cannot be delegated, but in the interests of having investigation reports concluded in a timeframe that will help reduce residents' concerns around speed of resolution WODC has produced this report for Witney, in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), which can be used by the LLFA and other RMA's for their own purposes.

The LLFA have a set criteria which determines when a S19 report is required. The criteria is set out below and WODC have decided to follow that criteria.

### **LLFA/OCC Criteria**

- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) to five or more residential properties or businesses within an area of 1km<sup>2</sup>.
- Internal flooding of a business premises employing more than 10 people within an area of 1km<sup>2</sup>.
- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) of at least one property or business for one week or longer.
- Flooding of one or more items of critical infrastructure, which could include hospitals, health centres, clinics, surgeries, colleges, schools, day nurseries, nursing homes, emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) stations, utilities and substations.

### **Caused a transport link to be impassable:**

- Motorways, trunk roads, Class A and B highway closures shall all be investigated.
- Class C highways – 10 hours or more unless the route is the only means of access, or is primary route for critical infrastructure then reduce to 4 hours.
- Class U highways – 24 hours or more unless the route is the only means of access, or is primary route for critical infrastructure then reduce to 4 hours.
- All rail link closures shall be investigated.

Any flooding event that a risk management authority deems significant but does not meet the agreed thresholds should be put forward to the Strategic Flooding Group Committee for consideration.

## **1.2. Site Location and context**

Witney is a thriving market town on the edge of the Cotswolds, 12 miles west of Oxford and just north of the A40 road. Witney has over 25,000 residents in over 10,000 households, according to recent figures from Oxfordshire County Council, making it the largest town in West Oxfordshire.

Witney has developed along the banks of the River Windrush. The river is braided upstream and downstream of Witney but through the built up area, it has been straightened and it passes under two main road bridges, Bridge Street and New Bridge Street. In recent years, the town has expanded rapidly, with housing development at Madley Park, Millers Mews, Grangers Place, Woodford Mill and also post 2007, with the completion of the Aquarius Site and developments of notable size being built off Burford Road and West Witney.

Three main tributaries enter the River Windrush in the centre of Witney; Hailey Road Drain upstream of Bridge Street, the Madley Brook in Langel Common and the Colwell Brook/QED system that joins the river Windrush near Ducklington. The Hailey Road Drain is culverted under Eastfield Road and Hailey Road.

A further tributary of the River Windrush, the Queen Emma's Dyke, forms and flows through Witney before joining the Windrush south of Witney.

The Environment Agency (EA) has previously identified over 100 properties in Witney to be at high risk of fluvial flooding. The EA flood map, Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Seas, is shown in Figure 1 below.

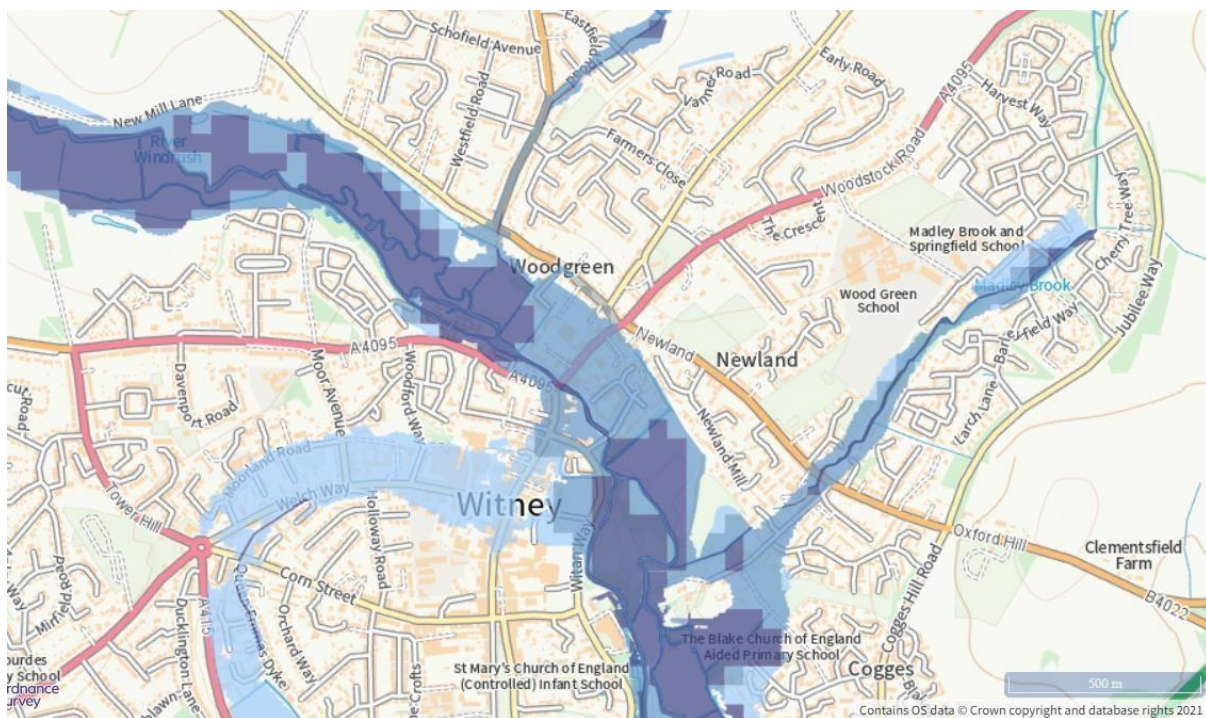


Figure 1 - EA flood map, Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Seas

### 1.3. Previous flood events

Approximately 235 properties in Witney were flooded during the events of July 2007. The flooding was from multiple sources due to the sheer the amount of rainfall that

fell during within a 24 hour Period and the accumulation of rainfall from the weeks before.

The EA report “Witney Flood Review July 2007” stated “On the 19 July 2007, 113mm of rain fell at Bourton-on-the-Water in 28 hours. This equates to more than twice the average monthly rainfall for July. Several rain gauges in the upper parts of the Windrush catchment recorded even greater totals: Sherbourne recorded 122mm, and Guiting 140mm. This extraordinary rain is what caused the majority of flooding in the town centre, from the River Windrush.”

“Rainfall totals for Witney (from the rain gauge at the Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works) are more relevant when considering flooding that the town witnessed on Friday 20 July – the pluvial flooding. This rain gauge recorded 84mm in 17 hours.”

The EA report also confirmed that the peak flow recorded at the Worsham flow monitoring station during July 2007 was 29.26m<sup>3</sup>/s. The river flows during the July 2007 even are shown in figure 2 below.

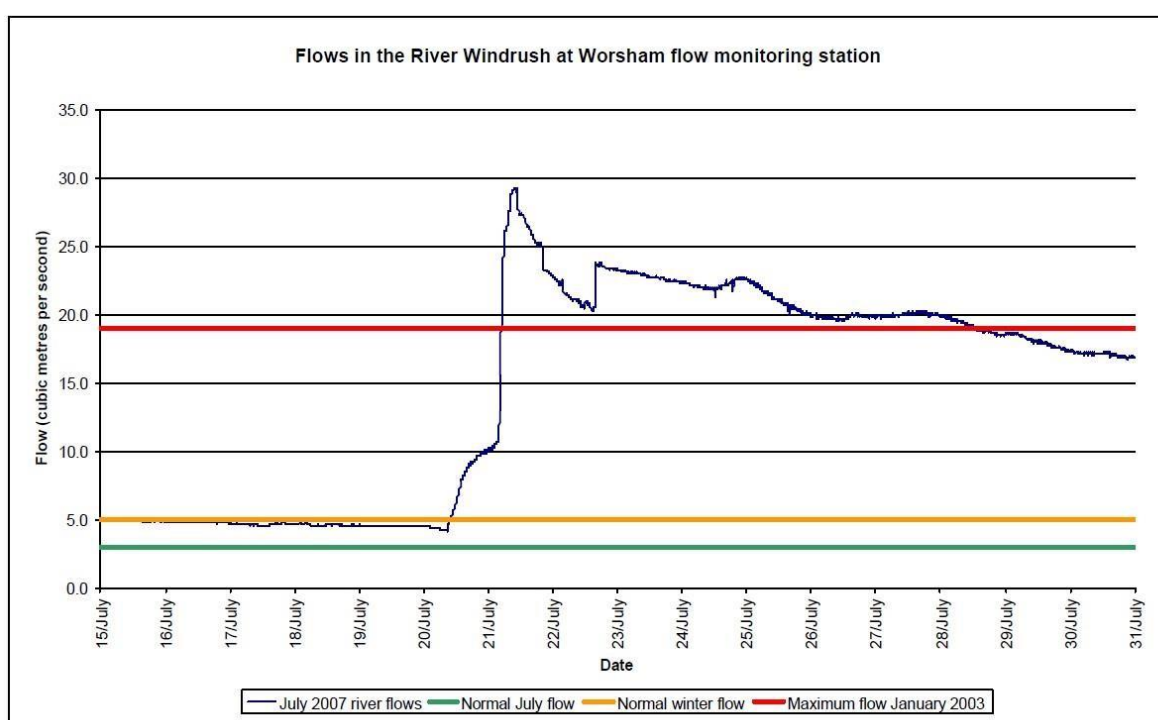


Figure 2 – July 2007 river flows for the River Windrush from EA Flood Review July 2007

The West Oxfordshire District Council Witney flood report stated that RAF Brize Norton recorded 125 millimetres of rain in a period of 12 hours.

In December 2013 - January 2014, flooding was also experienced in Witney. Internal flooding was reported in West End (including the industrial Estate), Bridge Street and Riverside gardens and also highway flooding in Eastfield Road and Hailey Road which was witnessed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> December. Flooding also occurred in February 2014. Rather than a significant rainfall event, the flooding in January and February was mainly down to continuous heavy rainfall which did not allow the river level to recover to its normal level.

## **2. RECENT FLOOD ISSUES AND INVESTIGATION**

### **2.1. Summary of December 2020 Floods**

It was deemed necessary to complete a formal investigation into the flood incidents in Witney due to the number of properties that reported flooding internally.

At least 54 residential and business properties were confirmed as flooding internally on the 23rd and 24th December 2020. This included residents at Mill House Care Home, Riverside Gardens and Riverside House needing to be evacuated.

The main areas affected with internal flooding were Woodford Mill, Riverside Gardens, Bridge Street, West End (including Industrial Estate), Millers Mews, Newland area (near the Madley Brook) and Eastfield Road. One property was also affected in New Yatt Road.

Highway flooding was also reported on Hailey Road linked to the Hailey Road Drain. Further external flooding was reported in Blakes Avenue, Park Road, Marriots Walk, Cherry Tree Way, Vanner Road and Woodford Way Car Park. There may have been internal flooding in these areas although no internal flooding was confirmed by WODC or OCC.

Surface water flooding first occurred on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 in a number of places in Witney, due to the sheer amount of rainfall and intensity that fell on that day which overwhelmed the existing drainage systems. This was followed on the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020 by river flooding when the upstream catchment flows reached Witney and river levels peaked. The level peaked just after midnight on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

Not unusually in flood events, the causes are from multiple sources with no one cause and no one solution required to reduce risk of future events.

River levels were already high from the significant rainfall that fell at the beginning of October 2020 and river levels were unable to fall back to normal levels before the event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

### **2.2. Rainfall and river data analysis**

Data has been obtained from CEH, riverlevels.uk and Shoothill Gauge Map. The Rain gauge upstream of Witney at Worsham recorded 37.22mm of rainfall on the 23/12/2020 and a total of 64.5mm the 7 days up to 25/12/2020 when the river was still at its peak upstream of Bridge Street. The gauge in Bourton on the Water, which is located in the upper part of the Windrush catchment, record 56.1mm of rainfall on the 23/12/2020 and 89.7mm for the 7 days up to 25/12/2020.

The Worsham river gauge confirmed the peak flow in the Windrush was 30.348 m<sup>3</sup>/s on the 24/12/2020. This was more than the flow recorded in July 2007 which was 29.26m<sup>3</sup>/s.

The gauge at Riverside Gardens, recorded the flood level to peak at 81.45m AOD on the 25/12/2020. (Datum Level 79m + gauge reading 2.45m). The Hydrograph for December 2020 is shown below.

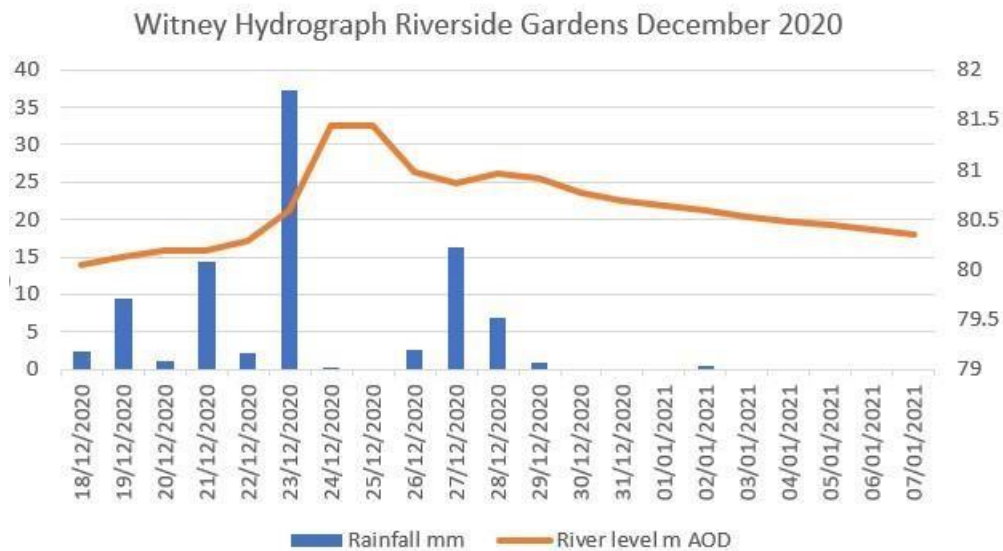


Figure 3 - Hydrograph for Riverside Gardens December 2020

Figure 4 below shows the hydrograph for Riverside gardens from December 2013 through to January 2014. Although the river peaked on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014 to over 81m AOD, the similar rainfall event to the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020, on the same day of December 2013, did not see a significant raise in levels at Riverside Gardens compared to the peak level in December 2020. Following the event in 2020, the river level increased by 1.69m from the river level on the previous day to its peak level within 24 hours of the initial event. In 2013, the river raised only 0.55m from the river level on the previous day to its peak level which took over 48 hours to reach its peak level following the 2013 event. This paragraph is a very simplified view of the different events but it is stating points for further explanation and exploration by the EA and partner RMA/ stakeholders.

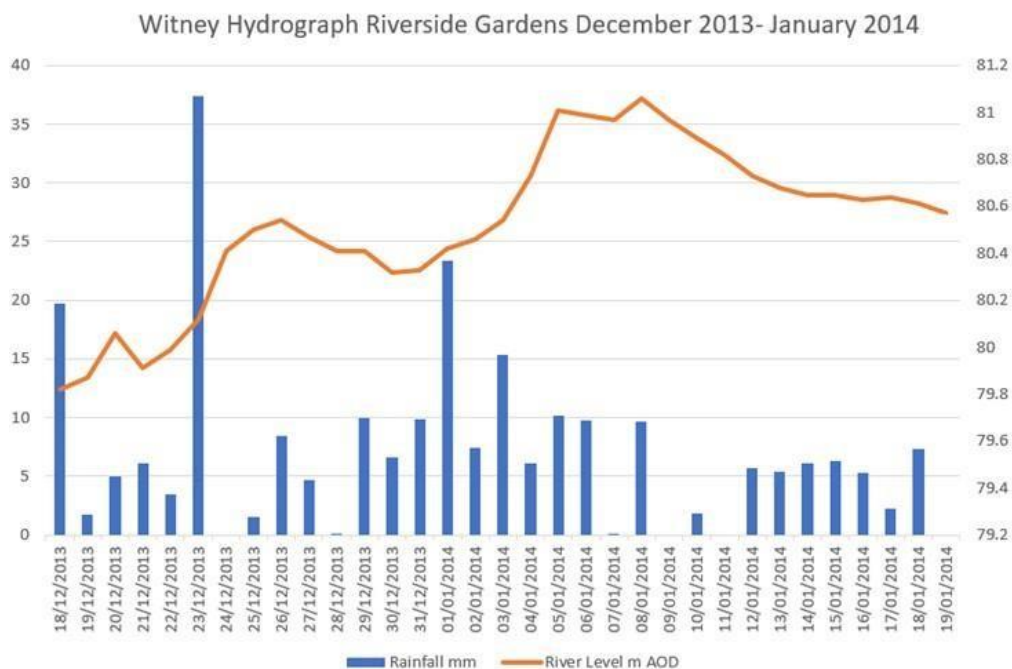


Figure 4 - Hydrograph for Riverside Gardens December 2013 to January 2014

### **2.3. Documents Reviewed**

A list of the documents reviewed as part of this report are listed below;

- WODC Parish Flood Report for Witney (May 2008)
- EA report Witney Flood Review July 2007 (February 2008)
- Witney Flood Mitigation groups Report, River Windrush at Witney; Flooding in December 2020 (January 2021)
- Witney Flood Mitigation Group update to Members (September 2021)
- CH2M Hill Post 2007 ABD – Windrush: Worsham to Witney (A40) Modelling Report and updated model for the EA (April 2014)
- Cllr Enright's Witney Floods 2020, Notes of meeting with residents (January 2021)
- Oxfordshire County Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (April 2011)

### **2.4. Existing Level information**

Lidar (Laser Imaging, detection and Ranging) data of the 2020 flown survey was obtained from the Environment Agency's data.gov.uk website. This has been reviewed and the levels in the field to the South of the Aquarius site, between the two channels and to the east of the eastern channel of the river Windrush seem to suggest that any out of bank flows will not be able to fill and pass through to the flood plain further downstream easily. The ground levels in the flood plain raise up in places in the field adjacent to the eastern channel and the flood plain is lower than the bank of the river further downstream before the confluence with the Madley Brook. Upon completion of the EA updated model, this situation can be looked at.

The Lidar data shows the level of the raised footpath in Langel Common varies between 79.72m and 80.1m AOD. It shows that this is a continuous raised structure which completely disconnects the flood plain upstream and downstream. It is important that this reported situation is included in the EA modelling to be carried out.

### **2.5. Site visits and observations**

A meeting was held with the Witney flood Mitigation Group (WFMG) on the 10/12/2021. This involved a site walkover from Langel Common footpath up to Woodford Mill to look at and discuss the main issues and concerns of the flood group and residents of Witney.

The walkover followed the river up through Langel common, the Aquarius site, Bridge Street Mills, Bridge Street, Mill Street, Riverside Gardens and Woodford Mill. However, the other affected areas including West End, Hailey/Eastfield Road and Madley Brook were also discussed.

The main concerns raised were regarding lack of river maintenance which was evident throughout the site walkover. They understand that this is the responsibility of the riparian owners however, they are concerned at the lack of action by key authorities to ensure the necessary maintenance is carried out. Figure 5 below shows a fallen tree in the river at the rear of the Blanket Hall.



Figure 5 – Fallen Tree at the rear of Blanket Hall

The current gauge boards at Bridge Street were discussed and it was mentioned that they are submerged during floods. The WFMG would like to see further gauge boards installed on the Windrush, ideally from Woodford Mill down to Langel Common footbridge so the difference in levels throughout, upstream and downstream of the key structures, can be monitored and assessed.

Concerns were raised over the channel alignment and capacity of the bridge on Bridge Street. It was observed to be restricting peak flows and causing a bow wave effect when the river levels were high on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020. This is evident in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6 – Bridge Street Bridge upstream 24th December 2020 approximately 23:30PM. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group

The raised footpath in Langel Common, shown in Figure 7 below, is a significant concern to the WFMG and affected residents as it has been observed impounding flood plain flows which is evident in Figure 7. The photograph also shows a noticeable difference in level upstream and downstream. WFMG would like to see this replaced with a continuous bridge to allow the flows to pass through unrestricted.



Figure 7 – Footpath in Langel Common, overtopping. Photograph provided by WFMG

Figure 8 below shows the risk of flooding from Surface Water. Although it doesn't take into account the river channel and bridge structures, it identifies the low lying areas through Langel Common and clearly shows the continuous raised footpath that could act as a barrier to flood waters.



Figure 8 – EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Other information provided by WFMG are listed below;

- The flood warning was issued too late and after properties were flooding.
- Sewer flooding in Bridge Street Mills - One of the properties in this area had an overall insurance bill of £40,000. Total estimated insurance bill for all businesses affected is c£300,000. None claim they can get insured now.
- Riverside House/Gardens - 13 Residents were evacuated for 20 hours, 4 homes were flooded, with repairs taking on average 6 months, one resident is still not back in nearly 12 months
- Mill House Care Home - 9 Residents were evacuated.

The WFMG and affected residents in Witney felt there was a lack of action, communication and collaboration from all the key authorities.

The actions the WFMG see as quick wins are;

- Significant EA/Riparian maintenance carried out from Woodford Mill to downstream of the footbridge through Langel Common.
- New Gauge Boards installed from Woodford Mill to Langel Common footbridge
- Investigation into the replacement of the raised footpath to a continuous bridge.

## 2.6. Environment Agency Model Review

Modelling information has been provided by the Environment Agency (EA) which is based on the Windrush (Worsham to A40) 2014 model. The peak flow recorded at Worsham on the 24/12/2020 compares to the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 20% event and the recorded peak flood level at Riverside Gardens is greater than the 1 in 100 year flood event.

The 2014 model was an update of the existing model following the construction of the Fish bypass channel and replacement weir. It also was updated to better reflect the flows through Bridge Street.

The modelling shows all modelled flows including the modelled flows in the 1 in 100 year plus 70% climate change event to pass through the Bridge Street Bridge however, it shows the flood levels to increase significantly upstream, up to the 70%

modelled event. The modelling does suggest a capacity issue further downstream where the river splits into two channels. The model outputs show flows reduce at the river split significantly by over 7m<sup>3</sup>/s. It is hoped that the model to be updated will help to clarify the situation.

It is not clear from the modelling if the increase in flood levels upstream of Bridge Street are caused by the Bridge itself or the capacity issues downstream.



Figure 9 – River Windrush split to two channels.

The model results suggests that all the excess flows will spill into the flood plain at this point and re-join the river further downstream before the raised footpath in Langel Common. It also suggests that the water will overspill the footpath in the 1 in 100 year event. The Flood level at the footpath is 79.68m AOD for the modelled 1 in 100 year event. The modelled 1 in 100 year flood extent is shown in Figure 10 below.



Figure 10 – EA modelled 1 in 100 year flood extent

The 2014 model doesn't include the tributaries through Witney.

## **2.7. Remedial Work Undertaken**

Although site visits and meetings were carried out by the WODC Flood Engineer and the EA after the flooding to discuss the merit of several items of work, the EA have not yet carried out any significant works on or adjacent to the river Windrush although the EA have confirmed that it has carried out its annual maintenance programme along the Windrush, Colwell brook, QED and the Hailey Road drain. The EA also sent 2 crews in the immediate aftermath of the flood to check the river for blockages and spoke at length to affected residents to offer advice on flood protection.

The EA have carried out a review of the flood alarms serving Witney. The review prompted the EA to change the level for the 2 hour warning to be issued as well as to install an flow monitor alarm at Worsham to alert the EA duty officer.

The flooding of 2020 has also prompted the EA to carry out a review of its model for the area.

WODC have carried out the annual maintenance of the WODC owned watercourses to the rear of West End industrial estate and Millers mews.

WODC have given advice on PFR to those affected residents who have shown an inclination to acquire it.

WODC are currently reviewing their Emergency Response Plan.

The EA have acquired funding in the current (2021/22) financial year, to investigate flood risk in Witney. They will use this to improve their understanding of flood risk to the community in the area. This will include building on the understanding of the 2014 Initial Assessment, considering information gathered since 2014, including the December 2020 flooding, and developing an updated flood risk computer model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town. This improved understanding will be key to future decisions regarding options to manage flood risk in Witney. Other benefits from the updated model will include: an updated Flood Map for Planning, an improved basis for Flood Warnings and improved data for use in assessing options and their benefits

After the EA issue a flood warning, they carry out a review to see whether any aspects of the flood warning process can be improved. As the flood warning at Witney was issued late, due to the river level rising so rapidly, they carried out this process for Witney during January 2021. They have since made two changes.

Firstly, they have revised the threshold at which they consider issuing the flood warning, which needs to provide two hours' notice of property flooding. They receive an alarm when this threshold is crossed and use model outputs to forecast this in advance. As river levels rose much more quickly than previously seen on the Witney gauge (installed in 2008) they have lowered that initial threshold. However, they do need to balance out the need for timeliness with the risk of false alarms which degrade customer confidence in the flood warning service.

Secondly, they have reviewed the data from our upstream gauge at Worsham, both level and flow. Following this they now believe that a flow rate of 20m<sup>3</sup>/s (cumecs, or cubic metres per second) at Worsham relates to flood warning levels being reached at Witney. They have therefore added an alarm to the flow at Worsham, and their duty officers will be notified when this flow is reached.

Residents can sign up to the Flood Warning Service to receive Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings using this link <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> or by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

## 2.8. Current Maintenance

WODC carries out annual maintenance on WODC owned ordinary watercourses throughout Witney, which includes the ditches behind Millers Mews and West End Industrial Estate.

Figure 11 below shows an update of the EA's maintenance for this financial year and planned for the next financial year. Using its permissive powers the EA carry out annual maintenance on main rivers where it is needed, justified, funded and resourced.

Maintenance – 2021/22	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EA use permissive powers to undertake maintenance</li><li>• Does not absolve riparian landowners from their responsibilities</li></ul>	
Location	2021/22 Programme Date
Madley Brook	June 2021
Emmas Dyke	June 2021 (spraying completed last week Oct 2021)
Windrush (West Branch)	July 2021
Colwell Brook	August 2021 (lower section south of A40 – delayed, clearance of overhanging vegetation will happen over the coming weeks)
Hailey Road Drain	October 2021
Maintenance – 2022/23	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bids for government funding to carry out maintenance at locations above have been submitted</li><li>• Awaiting confirmation for 2022/23 funding allocation</li></ul>	

Figure 11 – EA maintenance

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

From Reviewing the information provided regarding the December 2020 flood event, historic river data and modelling information, It is clear that the 2020 event was greater than the current EA modelled 1 in 100 year flood event with flows similar to the peak flow in the in the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 20% event.

From the Lidar level data it is clear that there is an issue with flood plain connectivity downstream of the Aquarius site and through the raised footpath at Langel Common.

Levels in the field to the south of the Aquarius site and to the east of the eastern channel of the river Windrush seem to suggest that flood flows would not be able to fill and pass through to the flood plain further downstream easily as the 2014 model suggests. The flood levels in the model are lower than the ground level in the field adjacent to the channel in the modelled 1 in 20 year event and at the 1 in 100 year flood level, only some flows would be able to spill back in to the river.

The level of the raised footpath further downstream varies between 79.72m and 80.1m AOD which is higher than the modelled 1 in 100 year flood level of 79.68m AOD, confirming that the embankment is not accurately reflected in the 2014 model.

The river through this area and upstream of Bridge Street is in poor condition due to no significant maintenance being carried out for many years.

An updated flood risk model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town is to be carried out by the EA which will include information gathered since 2014 and from the December 2020 floods.

The updated model will need to fully understand the issues around Bridge Street and through to Langel Common, and confirm the main causes affecting the flood levels upstream of Bridge Street.

There is currently minimal information on the private and highway drainage systems throughout Witney and further investigations need to be carried out throughout the affected areas to fully understand the existing drainage systems and any issues with them.

### 4. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 4.1. Communities and Residents

Communities may consist of the Town or Parish Council, Flood Forum, Community Group and affected residents, amongst others.

Communities and residents who are aware that they are at risk of flooding should take action to ensure that they and their properties are protected.

Community resilience is important in providing information and support to each other if flooding is anticipated. Actions taken can include [subscribing to MET Office email alerts](#) for weather warnings, nominating a Community Flood Warden, producing a community flood plan, implementing property level protection and moving valuable items to higher ground. Finally, individual households can create their own personal flood plans, such as collating important documents for quick removal from the property, torches, waterproof clothing etc.

Oxfordshire County Council has produced a number of flood guides covering various subjects, some of which relate to this type of flood incident. The relevant guides have been identified and are available at: [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com)

#### **4.2. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)**

As stated within the introduction section, OCC as the LLFA has a responsibility to investigate flood incidents under Section 19 of the F&WMA.

The LLFA also has a responsibility to maintain a register of assets which have a significant effect on flooding from surface runoff, groundwater or ordinary watercourses (non-Main River) as detailed within Section 21 of the F&WMA. The register must contain a record about each structure or feature, including the ownership and state of repair. OCC is also required to keep a record of flooding hotspots across the county.

OCC's practices relating to third party assets is to notify third party owners of their asset forming part of a flood risk system, and assist by advising those third party owners on the condition of their assets and their maintenance responsibilities.

As Lead Local Flood Authority, OCC will be looking for support from other risk management authorities, communities and individual home owners to ensure flood incidents are reported, and any assets which have a significant effect on flood risk are recorded on the asset register.

While OCC can suggest possible causes of flooding in Witney, and make recommendations to ensure flood risk is mitigated as far as possible, the F&WMA does not provide OCC with the mandate or funding to act on identified causes of flooding or force risk management authorities to undertake any recommended actions.

#### **4.3. Highway Authority (Oxfordshire Highways)**

Oxfordshire Highways have a duty to maintain the highway under Section 41 of the Highway Act 1980 but subject to the special defence in Section 58.

New highway drainage systems are designed to Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (Volume 4, Section 2). They are only required to be constructed to drain surface water runoff from within the highway catchment rather than from the wider catchment.

There are historic drainage systems in historic highways which can become the responsibility of the Highway Authority due to dedication, as opposed to adoption. These drainage systems may not have been designed to any standard.

They undertake regular highway drainage cleansing. Identify and develop a detailed plan of their assets.

If flooding occurs OCC will assess the capacity of the highway assets and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for draining runoff from the highway. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement works should be considered.

Assess the suitability of third party drainage systems accepting discharge from Highway Drainage systems and report any unsatisfactory areas to the relevant Risk Management Authorities.

#### **4.4. Water Authority - Thames Water Utilities (TW)**

Water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from surface water, foul water or combined sewer systems. Public sewers are designed to protect properties from the risk of flooding in normal wet weather conditions. However, in extreme weather conditions there is a risk that sewer systems can become overwhelmed and result in sewer flooding.

Since October 2011, under the 'Private Sewer Transfer', AWS adopted piped systems on private land that serve more than one curtilage and were connected to a public sewer on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. Sewerage Undertakers have a duty, under Section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991, to provide sewers for the drainage of buildings and associated paved areas within property boundaries.

Sewerage Undertakers are responsible for public sewers and lateral drains. A public sewer is a conduit, normally a pipe that is vested in a Water and Sewerage Company or predecessor, that drains two or more properties and conveys foul, surface water or combined sewage from one point to another, and discharges via a positive outfall.

There is no automatic right of connection for other sources of drainage to the public sewer network. Connection is therefore discretionary following an application to connect.

#### **4.5. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)**

District Councils have powers under Section 14 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (LDA) to undertake flood risk management works on ordinary watercourses (non Main River) where deemed necessary.

Under Section 20 of the LDA, District Councils have the powers to (by agreement of any person and at that person's expense) carry out any drainage work which that person is entitled to carry out. Agreement may not be required in certain emergency or legally upheld situations.

The District Council also has delegated authority from OCC/LLFA to serve notice on persons requiring them to carry out necessary works to maintain the flow of ordinary watercourses under Section 25 of the LDA and receives funding from the LLFA to do this.

The District Council is the Planning Authority and has a role in Building Control and the Building Regulations.

#### **4.6. Environment Agency (EA)**

The EA is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. This includes setting the direction for managing the risks through national and strategic plans; providing evidence and advice to inform Government policy and support others; working collaboratively to support the development of risk management skills and capacity; and providing a framework to support local delivery.

The EA also has operational responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers. Main rivers are usually larger river and streams and include all watercourses defined on the main river map which can be accessed at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?mapService=EA/StatutoryMainRiverMap&Mode=spatial>

The responsibility for maintenance and repair of rivers lies with the riparian owner, but the EA have permissive powers to carry out maintenance work on main rivers under Section 165 of the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA).

The EA encourage third party asset owners to maintain their property in appropriate condition and may take enforcement action on a prioritised basis where it is appropriate. They may also consider undertaking maintenance or repair of third party assets only where it can be justified in order to safeguard the public interest and where other options are not appropriate.

Further remit of the EA includes;

- preparing preliminary flood risk assessments and flood risk management plans for flooding from main rivers, reservoirs and the sea (Flood Risk Regulations 2009)
- warning and informing (Ministerial Direction to the National Rivers Authority, 1996)
- regulating activities that may affect the risk of flooding from main rivers (Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) Regulations 2016)
- Carrying out surveys and mapping (Flood Risk Regulations 2009, Water Resources Act 1991)
- reporting to the minister on flood and coastal erosion risk and how the national and local strategies are being applied by all of the authorities involved (FWMA, 2010)
- acting as a statutory consultee for planning authorities providing advice on planning applications, local plans and environmental assessments regarding flood risk from main rivers and the sea (Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)

## **4.7. Land Owners and Developers**

Land owners are responsible for the drainage of their land and controlling any movement of sediment from their land. Legally, owners of lower-level ground have to accept natural land drainage from adjacent land at a higher level. The exception to this is where the owner of the higher level land has carried out “improvements” such that the runoff from the land cannot be considered “natural”.

Agricultural practices by land owners can be considered as “improvements” to the land, so that cultivation of crops or other land uses can take place. Mitigation works are required on improved land to account for the change in natural land drainage and changes to surface water runoff this can create.

Land owners and developers are responsible for working with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that their development is completed in accordance with the planning permission and all conditions that have been imposed.

Advice for developers is available on the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.  
[www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/planning/developers/](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/planning/developers/)

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. General**

Listed below are the recommended course of actions emanating from this formal Flood Investigation Report. All the actions are simply initial recommendations that require discussing in detail to determine their true feasibility.

It is important to note that it is for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess each recommendation in terms of the legal obligation, resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of undertaking such action.

The recommendations may be included within the Action Plan linked to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or in the relevant risk management authority's future work programmes, as appropriate.

Authorities should work together Look into funding opportunities to carry out the listed actions. There are multiple funding sources which could contribute to schemes and improvement works going forward. The majority schemes will require elements of partnership working and contributions to be successfully funded. They are likely to need to provide multiple benefits such as improving flood resilience whilst also managing water levels, reducing drought risks, helping nature recovery as well as climate adaptation.

There are several funding options available which can be explored through multi agency working groups such as,

- Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) ○ Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) ○ Local Levy Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)
- DEFRA Natural Flood Management Funding
- Woodland Creation Grants
- Agricultural & Environmental Schemes (Countryside Stewardship)
- Funding sources relating to development and regeneration, such as section 106 agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and New homes bonus
- Non-government organisations and charitable trusts
- Community fundraising and events
- Lotteries (Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, Arts Council)
- Volunteering
- Nature for Climate Fund
- Grants from other government departments, such as BEIS, MHCLG, DfT, DfE (for example, Flood Resilient Schools)
- UKRI – the research councils funding
- Business in the community
- Green recovery challenge fund

## 5.2. Main Actions

Action	Lead Stakeholders	Consulting stakeholders
Fully communicate the explanation for the previous problem with the alert system and consider what further improvements and enhancements could be made.	EA	WODC, LLFA and residents.
Re-establish the Agency flood group meetings to discuss problems and to look at strategies to combat flooding due to Climate Change. Have periodic meetings with the local flood group to discuss the issues and recommendations with representatives from key authorities.	LLFA	All Authorities
Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney	EA	WODC, LLFA, WFMG
Increased EA / Riparian maintenance to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits and encouragement to ensure riparian owners carry out their duties.	EA	Landowners
Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	EA	Landowners, LLFA and WODC

Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow Capacity.	WODC	EA, Landowners, LLFA
Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.	EA	OCC, Landowners ,WODC
Install Gauge boards from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a Flood Warden network with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events. Ensure this engages with broader Community Emergency Plans.	EA	WFMG, LLFA WODC
Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	EA	Landowners, LLFA, WODC,EA
Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	WODC	LLFA, EA Landowners, WFMG
Property flood resilience (PFR) measures which improve the resilience of the community before a flood occurs. Many properties have already carried out measures on their properties, but further funding and support may be available to help more people;	Homeowners	WODC, EA, OCC
Measures to improve the resilience of existing public or community-owned infrastructure;	All Local Government Bodies	
Local community volunteer approaches to improve the community's ability to plan, respond and recover from flooding; link to local community emergency plans; encourage affected Care Home to develop Business Continuity Plan and Evacuation Plan.	All	Communities and Residents
WODC to continue regular maintenance of their ordinary watercourse assets and use their powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to ensure Riparian owners carry out required maintenance.	WODC	Landowners
OCC to regularly check and maintain highway assets through Witney, in line with their current maintenance regimes. Any affected areas that haven't been checked after December 2020 should be prioritised.	OCC Highways	

Bridge Street bridge to be checked regularly and de-silting under the bridge to be carried out as and when required, accepting that unless de-silting is also carried out upstream of the bridge there would be little benefit to simply carrying it out under the bridge.	OCC Highways	EA
Privately owned drainage systems to be checked for blockages and defects and remedial works to be carried out where necessary. Connectivity downstream to be confirmed.	Developers, Landowners	WODC, LLFA
Foul sewers to be checked for surface water connections, blockages and capacity issues. Remedial works to be carried out as necessary to minimise surface water entering the system and increase capacity.	TW	LLFA, WODC

### 5.3. Communities and Residents

(e.g. Town/Parish Council, Flood Forum, Community Group, land owners and affected residents)

Nominate a Community Flood Warden to help coordinate the following:  
Preparing Household Emergency Plans for vulnerable properties in this area.  
Regularly inspecting ditches and pipework in the area of flood risk. Report blockages or other issues to the land owner and the LLFA. Explore options for property level protection and implement any recommendations. This could include additional drainage at the rear of properties, self-sealing air bricks and flood barriers. Information on Flood Prevention measures for Home Owners, Communities and Businesses can be found on the Flood Toolkit:

[www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/prevention](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/prevention)

Residents should check whether they are at risk of flooding by using the long term flood risk service [www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk). If they are at risk of flooding they should sign up for flood warnings by visiting [sign up for flood warnings.gov.uk](http://sign-up-for-flood-warnings.gov.uk).

Permanent measures such as installing floodgates, raising electrical sockets and fitting non-return valves on pipes can also be considered. WODC, OCC and the EA can provide advice on these matters and more information can be found at:

[www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation)

Explore community wide solutions (e.g. attenuation areas, overflow routes, tree planting). Use the Flood Toolkit Funding Tool to find sponsors who may be willing to help fund improvement projects: [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/funding](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/funding)

Continue to report flood incidents to the Lead Local Flood Authority at: [www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood). Endeavour to obtain as much evidence of flood events as possible, such as photographic and video evidence.

Residents to explore obtaining Government subsidised flood insurance via Can Flood Re help me? Floodre.co.uk

#### **5.4. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)**

Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team and the Environment Agency to support the community based Flood Wardens.

Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team, the Environment Agency and other flood management authorities to support the community in the production of a Community Flood Plan and provide advice to residents on how to explore options for property level protection.

Inform owners of the drainage systems and watercourses within the overall surface water catchment area of their legal responsibilities.

Re-establish the Agency flood group meetings to discuss problems and to look at strategies to combat flooding due to Climate Change. Have periodic meetings with the local flood group to discuss the issues and recommendations with representatives from key authorities.

Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.

#### **5.5. Highway Authority (Oxfordshire Highways)**

Regularly check and maintain highway assets through Witney in line with their current maintenance regimes. Add detailed information of the assets to the OCC Asset Register.

Assess the capacity of the highway assets in the affected areas and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for draining runoff from the highway. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement works must be considered.

Assess the suitability of third party drainage systems accepting discharge from Highway Drainage systems and report any unsatisfactory areas to the relevant Risk Management Authorities.

Work with the community and LLFA to clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities for watercourses, particularly where these are located within or near to the highway.

Bridge Street Bridge to be checked regularly and se-silting to be carried out as and when required.

## **5.6. Water Authority Thames Water Utilities (TW)**

Assess the sources of water entering the public sewerage system. Foul sewers to be checked for surface water connections, blockages and capacity issues. Remedial works to be carried out as necessary to minimise surface water entering the system and increase capacity.

Assess the capacity of their assets and identify any areas of insufficient capacity. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement work must be considered.

## **5.7. West Oxfordshire District Council**

Continue to consult with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority as required in respect of planning applications for new developments to reduce flood risk. Aim to ensure that all works are carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

Review the planning policies relating to developments in the vicinity of the flooding incident, together with any flood risk assessments and drainage designs. Consider contacting the developers to take action in the event that any items relating to surface water drainage and flood risk are not evident or ineffective in the final developments or in the construction period.

Utilise their enforcement powers under Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 where it is considered that riparian owners are failing to maintain ordinary watercourses in their ownership.

Continue regular maintenance of their Ordinary watercourse Assets, in line with current maintenance regimes.

Endeavour to assist other flood risk management authorities and land owners in the preparation of a detailed plan of assets relating to drainage and flood risk, to share with the LLFA and the community.

Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow capacity.

Support developers and landowners to investigate private drainage and check for blockages and defects with remedial works to be carried out where necessary.

Continue to support homeowners and businesses in providing individual property level protection.

## **5.8. Environment Agency (EA)**

Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team and the LLFA to support the community in the instatement of a community based Flood Wardens.

Fully understand and communicate the explanation for the previous issues with flood warnings for Witney. Consider what further improvements could be made to the alerts for Witney ( and West Oxfordshire).

Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney. Fully understand the issues affecting river levels upstream of Bridge Street.

Increased maintenance to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits to riparian owners and encouragement of riparian owners, also work with local groups to ensure regular maintenance is carried out.

Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.

Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.

Install gauge boards from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a network of flood wardens with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events.

Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.

## **5.9. Land Owners and Developers**

Developers should work with local authorities to ensure all development is completed in accordance with approved plans and documents, and planning policy.

Land owners should undertake regular inspection and maintenance of their drainage systems in accordance with a defined maintenance regime. Further, they should identify and develop a detailed plan of their assets to share with the LLFA, other flood risk management authorities and the community.

Land owners should assess the capacity of their drainage systems and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for the collection, conveyance, storage and disposal of surface water. Where this could lead to runoff to the public highway or nuisance to third party private property, improvement works should be considered.

Landowners who are riparian owners are responsible for carrying out work to maintain the natural flow of water in the relevant watercourse. Such work will include the removal of significant blockages and the removal of vegetation if it is causing premature flooding to third party land and or property.

Review the library of flood guides on the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.

Agricultural land owners should carry out works to their land to reduce surface water runoff. These include following principles of good soil husbandry and providing land drainage systems such as ditches. [The Single Payment Scheme, Cross Compliance Guidance for Soil Management, 2010 edition, should be referenced.](#)

These works help to retain the natural land drainage regime and provide the best soil conditions for the continued agricultural use of the land. Farmers in receipt of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments are required to carry out a Soil Protection Review which should identify any problems with soil erosion and runoff and help identify solutions to the problem.

Examples of good practice for reducing surface water runoff from agricultural land are:

Ploughing fields in a perpendicular direction to the slope of the land, reducing the effect of channelling of water over the land when it rains; Using techniques and machinery to limit compaction of soils; Growing crops that match the capability of the land, particularly in relation to the timings of activities and not overworking soils through the year; Providing new ditches, sub-soil drainage and outfalls, and reinstating and regularly maintaining existing ditches. Old existing ditches may be completely filled and difficult to see. The type of soil make-up, type of flora and overall lie of the land can help to determine the routes of filled in historic ditches; Preventing changes to the levels of the land that would cause channelling of surface water to a single point where this would not naturally occur. It should be noted that following good practice for managing surface water runoff cannot completely remove the risks of natural land drainage and the associated quantities and flow routes of runoff that can cause flooding.

## **6. DISCLAIMER**

The findings of the report are based on a subjective assessment of the information available by those undertaking the investigation and therefore may not include all relevant information. As such it should not be considered as a definitive assessment of all factors that may have triggered or contributed to the flood event.

Any recommended actions outlined in this FIR will be for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess in terms of resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of the proposal. Moving forward, these may be included in the Action Plan linked to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or in the relevant risk management authority's future work programme as appropriate.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on information provided to West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation and West Oxfordshire District Council expressly disclaims responsibility for any error in, or omission from, this report arising from or in connection with those opinions, conclusions and any recommendations.

The implications for producing Flood Investigation Reports and any consequences of blight have been considered. The process of gaining insurance for a property and/or purchasing/selling a property and any flooding issues identified are considered a separate and legally binding process placed upon property owners and this is independent of and does not relate to the information in this report highlighting flooding to properties at a street level.

West Oxfordshire District Council do not accept any liability for the use of this report or its contents by any third party.

## **ACRONYMS**

WODC West Oxfordshire District Council  
OCC Oxfordshire County Council  
EA Environment Agency  
TWA Thames Water Authority  
WFMG Witney Flood Mitigation Group  
FIR Flood Investigation Report  
F&WMA Flood and Water Management Act 2010  
LDA Land Drainage Act 1991  
LLFA Lead Local Flood Authority  
WRA Water Resources Act 1991

## **USEFUL LINKS Highways**

### **Act 1980:**

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/contents) **Water**

### **Resources Act 1991:**

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/57/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/57/contents) **Land Drainage**

**Act 1991:** [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/contents)

**EA - 'Living on the Edge'** a guide to the rights and responsibilities of riverside occupation: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities) **EA - Prepare your Property for Flooding:** How to reduce flood damage Flood protection products and services

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepare-your-property-for-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepare-your-property-for-flooding)

### **Oxfordshire County Council Flood and Water Management Web Pages:**

[www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com](http://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com) <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/emergencyplanning/community-resilience>

### **West Oxfordshire District Council Flood Reports and Reviews;**

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/flooding/flood-reports-and-reviews/>

### **Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

### **Oxfordshire County Council Highways:**

Tel: 0345 310 1111

Website: [www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Environment Agency:**

General Tel: 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8-6) Call charges apply.

Incident Hotline: 0800 807060 (24 hrs) Floodline:

0345 988 1188

Email: [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### **Thames Water**

Emergency Tel: 0800 316 9800 (select option 1)

Website: [www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/bursts-and-leaks/report-a-leak-or-burst-pipe](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/bursts-and-leaks/report-a-leak-or-burst-pipe)

## Appendix A – Further Photos



Bridge at New Bridge Street, Aquarius Site access



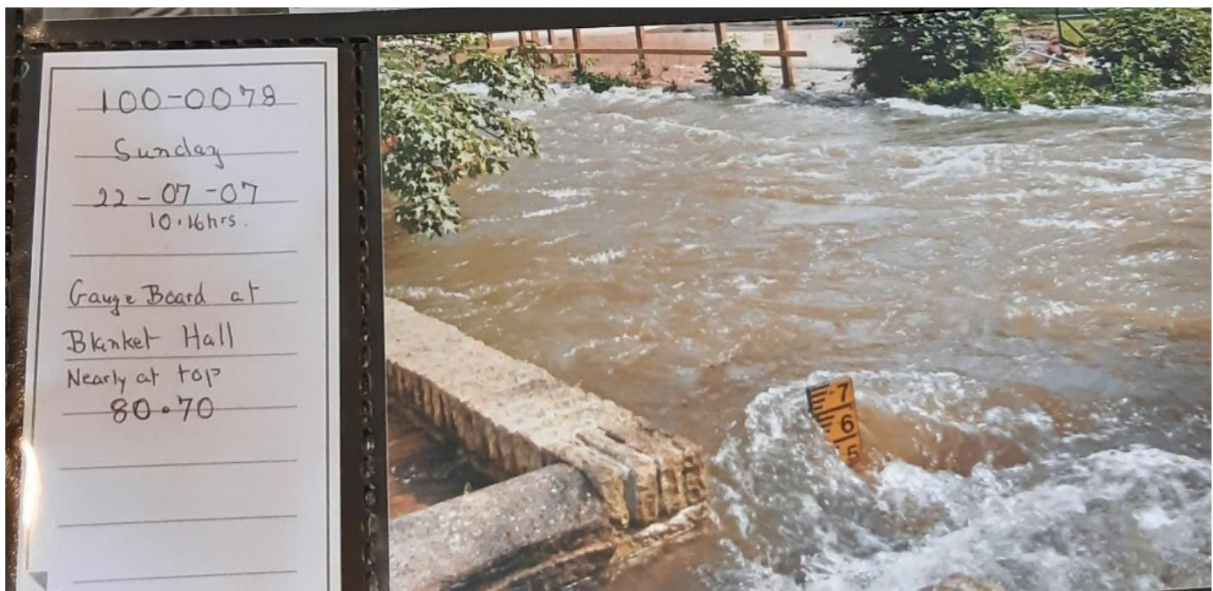
River Windrush looking downstream from Bridge Street



Channel through Woodford Mill



Weir near Woodford Mill



Gauge at Blanket Hall in 2007. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group



Flooding behind Eastfield Road backing up from Hailey Road Drain. Visible flow route from Vanner Road. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group



Upstream of Bridge



Riverside Gardens 24th December 2020 approximately 23:10PM. Level recorded at 23:15pm by the river gauge was 81.443m AOD. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group

Thames Water Utilities Limited  
EIR Requests  
Clearwater Court  
Vastern Road  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG1 8DB

Email: [EIR.Requests@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:EIR.Requests@thameswater.co.uk)

28 April 2022

Our Ref: EIR-21-22-773

## Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) Request

Dear Mr Hughes

This letter and its attachments provides our response to the e-mail from Councillor Norman MacRae, dated 1 March 2022. In view of the impending Council elections, I have been advised that it would be appropriate to address this reply to you, rather than to Councillor MacRae or another elected member.

Please see our response below to the request as set out in the e-mail.

### Your Request

This Council believes that historical underinvestment in the sewerage infrastructure in West Oxfordshire and further up the catchments of the rivers Windrush, Evenlode and other Thames's tributaries in West Oxfordshire has led to a marked deterioration in water quality in these rivers and in the Thames due to excessive spills of untreated or partially treated sewage in both storm and normal conditions. The Council would like to receive the following details: -

- Capital improvements by station over the last ten years (description and cost), to include details of storm overflows at both sewage pumping stations and at sewage treatment works.
- Operating capacity analysed by station over each of the last ten years.
- Capital Plans by station over the next five years (description and estimated cost);
- Number of spills by station over each of the last ten years together with reason for spill, and to include overflows.
- Details, including logs, of failures at pumping stations, and to include downtimes and the use of tankers, and to include hydraulic incapacity or equipment malfunction.
- The level of any fines levied by the regulator or courts for spills over each of the last ten years.

### Our Response

Please see the document attached (*WODC - Sites\_Investments\_Capacities - Final.xlsx*) detailing data pertaining to your request:

- Listed are all sites within the WODC area, as well as any additional sites that discharge to the Evenlode and Windrush catchments further upstream. Note, this does not include sites such as pumping stations that are not able to discharge to the environment;
- The type of discharge, receiving watercourses and catchments of each site are provided;
- Past and future investments are listed against each site, with a key to acronyms of investment schemes found at the top of the document;
- In columns I and J, we have provided expenditures for AMP6 (2015-2020) and AMP7 (expenditure to date; this does not include forecast expenditure for the remainder of AMP7) against each site. The spend is reflective of Operations Directly Managed Spend, and excludes spend on Health and Safety. This includes both reactive and planned expenditure, but does not necessarily provide the exact costs spent per site as expenditure may be split between sites.
- To also include major Capital Engineering costs, columns F and G detail past investment under AMP5 (2010-2015), where column G refers to the corresponding project detailed in column F. Should you wish to view a further breakdown of costs at any particular sites, please let us know;
- The current minimum permitted flow to full treatment capacity (prior to storm discharge) for each site is provided.
- We will not be providing estimates of the projected cost of planned capital works as this could prejudice our ability to achieve the most efficient bids during the tendering process. Once contractors for individual schemes have been appointed, this information can be made available.

Also attached is EDM (Event Duration Monitor) data for each site from 2019 (or when data became available) to the date of your request (*EIR-21-22-773 EDM Data.xlsx*).

All convictions and fines against Thames Water in the WODC area and vicinity, which relate to spills since 2011, have also been listed in a document attached:  
(*Extract\_TWUL\_EA\_convictions\_re\_spills\_2011-2021.xlsx*).

As discussed with Councillor Norman MacRae, it is not practical for us to respond to the request for 'Details, including logs, of failures at pumping stations, and to include downtimes and the use of tankers, and to include hydraulic incapacity or equipment malfunction'. The volume of information requested in this part of the request is immense and would require a disproportionate amount of time to assemble. We will of course, provide the information we hold about activities at specific sites on specific dates, on request.

## Disclaimer

The information provided with this letter is taken from the information we hold on our records as at the date indicated. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information and it should not be relied on for any purpose.

## Retention

Please note that we will also retain a record of your request to allow us to evidence our compliance with the law relating to EIR.

## Charging

Although in accordance with our published charging regime, we are able to charge fees/costs for dealing with requests under EIR, on this occasion, we have chosen not to do so. We reserve the right to charge in accordance with the fees published on our website for any requests, now or in the future.

For more information about our interim charges scheme please click [here](#) (please note that you will need to use an up to date web browser and that the web pages will not support access by an older browser, such as Internet Explorer).

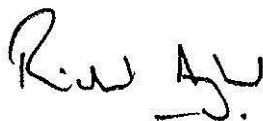
Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

## Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within three months of the date of receipt of this response and should be addressed to the Environmental Information Requests Manager and emailed to [EIR.Requests@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:EIR.Requests@thameswater.co.uk)

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you can apply, without charge, to the Information Commissioner, who will consider whether Thames Water has complied with its obligations under the EIR, and can require Thames Water to remedy any problems. You can find out more about how to do this, and about the EIR in general, on the Information Commissioner's website at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Yours sincerely



Richard Aylard CVO  
Sustainability Director

Attachment(s):

1. EIR-21-22-773 EDM Data.xlsx
2. Extract\_TWUL\_EA\_convictions\_re\_spills\_2011-2021.xlsx
3. WODC - Sites\_Investments\_Capacities.xlsx

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Site code	Site Name	Type of discharge
BAMPS1ZZ	Bampton STW	Treated Effluent
BLEDS1ZZ	Bledington STW	Treated Effluent
BOURS2ZZ	Bourton on the Water STW	Treated Effluent
BROAS2ZZ	Broadwell STW	Treated Effluent
BUCKS1ZZ	Buckland (Oxon) STW	Treated Effluent
BURFS1ZZ	Burford STW	Treated Effluent
BUSCS1ZZ	Buscot STW	Treated Effluent
CARTS1ZZ	Carterton STW	Treated Effluent
CASSS1ZZ	Cassington STW	Storm
CHADS1ZZ	Chadlington STW	Treated Effluent
CHARS1ZZ	Charlbury STW	Treated Effluent
CHIPS1ZZ	Chipping Norton STW	Treated Effluent
CHURS1ZZ	Church Hanborough STW	Treated Effluent
CLANS1ZZ	Clanfield STW	Treated Effluent
COMBS1ZZ	Combe STW	Treated Effluent
EATOS1ZZ	Eaton Hastings STW	Treated Effluent
ENSTS1ZZ	Enstone STW	Treated Effluent
FARIS1ZZ	Faringdon STW	Treated Effluent
FINSS1ZZ	Finstock STW	Treated Effluent
FOSCS1ZZ	Foscot STW	Treated Effluent
ROLLS1ZZ	Great Rollright STW	Treated Effluent
GUITS1ZZ	Guiting Power STW	Treated Effluent
KINGP4ZZ	KINGHAM PUMPING STATION	Storm
LECHS1ZZ	Lechlade STW	Treated Effluent

LCOMS1ZZ	Little Compton STW	Treated Effluent
LITTS1ZZ	Littleworth STW	Treated Effluent
LONGS2ZZ	Longborough STW	Treated Effluent
MBARS1ZZ	Middle Barton STW	Treated Effluent
MILTS1ZZ	Milton-Under-Wychwood STW	Treated Effluent
MOREP1ZZ	MORETON-IN-MARSH PUMPING STATION STORM	Storm
MORES3ZZ	Moreton-in-Marsh STW	Treated Effluent
NAUNS1ZZ	Naunton STW	Treated Effluent
NORTS1ZZ	Northleach STW	Treated Effluent
SANDS1ZZ	Sandford St Martin STW	Treated Effluent
SLEIS1ZZ	South Leigh STW	Treated Effluent
SOUT05ZZ	Southrop STW	Treated Effluent
SPELS1ZZ	Spelsbury STW	Treated Effluent
STANS1ZZ	Standlake STW	Treated Effluent
STANS8ZZ	Stanton Harcourt STW	Treated Effluent
TACKP1ZZ	TACKLEY PUMPING STATION	Storm
TACKS1ZZ	Tackley STW	Treated Effluent
TEMPS1ZZ	Temple Guiting STW	Treated Effluent
WITNS1ZZ	Witney STW	Treated Effluent
WOODS2ZZ	Woodstock STW	Treated Effluent

### [Go to Green](#)

Over the years some of our sewage treatment works can begin to reach  
On some occasions the need to upsize the treatment process with a big  
We refer to this programme as “go to green” and can often be the mos

WINEP	Water Industry National
NEP5	National Environment
Go to Green	See text below table
AMP	Asset Management Plan 2020; AMP7: 2020-2025
STW	Sewage Treatment Works
SPS	Sewage Pumping Station

Discharge to	River Catchment
Shill Brook	Windrush
Bledington Brook (Source to Evenlode)	Evenlode
River Dikler	Windrush
Evenlode	Evenlode
Share Ditch (UTO)	Windrush
Windrush	Windrush
Thames	Windrush
Shill Brook	Windrush
River Thames	Ock
Chadlington Stream	Evenlode
Evenlode	Evenlode
Blue Brook	Evenlode
Hanborough Stream	Evenlode
Halfacre Brook	Windrush
Evenlode	Evenlode
Eaton Hastings Ditch	Windrush
Heythrop Stream	Evenlode
Faringdon Brook	Windrush
Evenlode	Evenlode
Westcote Brook	Evenlode
Cornwell Brook	Evenlode
Slade Barn Stream	Windrush
Cornwell Brook	Evenlode
Leach	Windrush

Little Compton Stream	Evenlode
Wadley Stream	Windrush
Longborough Stream	Evenlode
Dorn	Evenlode
Littlestock Brook	Evenlode
River Evenlode	Evenlode
Four Shire Stream	Evenlode
Windrush	Windrush
River Leach	Windrush
Un-named tributary of River Dorn	Evenlode
Limb Brook	Windrush
Groundwater	Windrush
Taston Brook	Evenlode
Windrush	Windrush
Harcourt Brook	Windrush
Tributary of River Cherwell	Cherwell
Cherwell	Cherwell
Groundwater	Windrush
Colwell Brook	Windrush
Glyme	Evenlode

their treatment capacity through a combination of catchment growth and capital scheme can be offset by optimising the effluent stream ;  
at efficient way to continue meeting compliance with our discharge

nal Environment Programme
tal Programme
lanning Period (AMP5: 2010-2015; AMP6: 2015-2025)
orks
ion

Past Investment (AMP5: 2010-2015)	Past Investment Cost (£) (AMP5: 2010-2015)
Aston Bampton Rd SPS AMP5 Rehabilitation of the existing 150mm diameter uPVC rising main	£61,231.00
No large schemes	N/A
AMP5 Network reinforcement projects for Land of Station road and Roman way	£98,861.00
AMP5 Process upgrades to inlet and storm capacity	£750,239.00
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
AMP 5 - Major upgrade works at STW	£5,168,276.00
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
Wastewater Quality Project with NEP5 driver for revised Phosphorous consents in AMP6	3,022,564.00 Costs Attributable to entire programme across multiple sites
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A

No Large Schemes	N/A
	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
Wastewater Quality Project with NEP5 driver for revised Phosphorous consents in AMP6	£1,589,339.00
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
Moreton in Marsh STW Wastewater Quality AMP6 New Ammonia consent	£1,369,880.00
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
Project to upgrade Treatment capacity to allow compliance with the new AMP5 quality consent	£1,441,800.00
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
No Large Schemes	N/A
AMP 5 - Major upgrade works at STW incl storm tank capacity increase	£5,092,004.00
Wastewater Quality Project with NEP5 driver for revised Phosphorous consents in AMP6	£3,022,564.00

th, climate change and urban creep.  
and utilising redundant assets that might be on site.  
ge consents.

<b>Future investment (AMP7-8)</b>	<b>AMP6 Costs (£) (DMC - Excluding Health &amp; Safety)</b>	<b>AMP7 Costs (£) (DMC - Excluding Health &amp; Safety)</b>	<b>Flow to Full Treatment Min (l/s)</b>
WINEP Flow to Full Treatment (FtFT) upgrade in AMP7	11,238	12,818	23
No large schemes	66,105	-	4.5
WINEP Flow to Full Treatment (FtFT) upgrade in AMP7	132,218	-	-
No Large Schemes	22,182	12,051	Under EA review
No Large Schemes	-	49,053	-
No Large Schemes	22,720	429,628	16.2
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
none	85,968	857,348	115
No Large Schemes	242,629	193,049	Under EA review
No Large Schemes	-	-	4.3
No Large Schemes	-	326,831	18
Go to Green flow increase project in AMP7	333,671	145,964	64
Go to Green flow increase project in AMP7	343,711	33,707	50.52
No Large Schemes	13,335	196,566	7.3
No Large Schemes	13,780	-	4
No Large Schemes	8,158	-	-
No Large Schemes	5,648	-	-
WINEP Increase in storm capacity & Siphon replacement	290,470	-	68
WINEP stom holding capacity upgrade in AMP7	187,906	55,610	17
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	81,702	29,008	24

WINEP storm holding capacity upgrade in AMP7	-	-	3.1
	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
WINEP storm holding capacity upgrade in AMP7	7,371	-	13.7
WINEP Flow to Full Treatment (FtFT) upgrade in AMP7	419,006	15,878	Under EA review
Part of the WINEP scheme in AMP7	-	-	1814m3/d
WINEP Storm holding capacity upgrade in AMP7	48,726	60,779	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
Go to Green flow compliance project in AMP7	284,849	31,964	10.4
	-	-	-
WINEP Low Phosphorus scheme in AMP7	22,268	1,301,790	2.5
No Large Schemes	7,065	-	-
No Large Schemes	42,179	-	-
No Large Schemes	75,320	-	Under EA review
WINEP Low Phosphorus scheme in AMP7	-	84,244	17.5
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
No Large Schemes	-	-	-
AMP7 - Increasing FtFT. Project expected to be completed by March 2024.	828,497	901,969	240
No Large Schemes	1,144,624	367,897	36.6

<b>4,741,346</b>	<b>5,106,154</b>
------------------	------------------

CSO capacity: 47 l/s

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**Extract of Thames Water convictions 2011 - 2021**

<b>Event Name</b>	<b>Event Date</b>	<b>Court</b>	<b>Magistrates or Crown</b>	<b>Date of hearing</b>	<b>Fine</b>
EA v TWUL - Didcot STW	18-Apr-13	Aylesbury	Crown	22-Mar-17	£800,000.00
EA v TWUL - Littlemore SPS	01-Feb-13	Aylesbury	Crown	22-Mar-17	£800,000.00
EA v Thames Water - Hinksey/Seacourt Stream	23 - 27 July 2016	Aylesbury	Crown	19-Nov-21	£4,000,000.00
EA v Thames Water - Idbury Brook	09-Aug-15	Oxford	Crown	21-Dec-18	£2,000,000.00
EA v TWUL - Cassington / Battener Brook	05/09/12- 11/09/12	Oxford	Magistrates		£18,120.00

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## UPDATES – Carbon Action Plan, Pathway to Carbon Neutral by 2030

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/tslaufqh/carbon-action-plan.pdf>

### 1.0 Council Offices, Property and Sites

**Carbon account 2021/22:** Work has begun on the Council's carbon account for financial year 2021/22. Carbon emission factors are updated by BEIS each year and published in July, meaning the carbon account is usually completed by the end of the summer. The results are published in the climate action biannual report to Full Council and as part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

**Council offices:** Decarbonisation and sustainability strategies have been developed for Woodgreen and Elmfield offices focusing on reduced energy and water use, renewables and increased access to forms of active and low-carbon travel. The opportunity to incorporate energy and sustainability measures at the Council offices is being considered as part of the Agile Working Strategy – currently a work in progress. There are also CO<sub>2</sub>e savings with staff reducing their commuting and the costs that they themselves incur. Whilst it's difficult to accurately calculate the carbon impact of staff commuting to and from work by vehicle - as vehicles will vary by size, fuel type, emissions and efficiency, not all staff work full time and some travel to different offices - a high level estimate based on distance from home address to main office location (usually the Publica office closest to home) can be calculated. This indicates that if all WODC/CDC/FODDC Publica staff did one return journey it would equate to just over 10,000 miles which is equivalent to a total 3,480 kg/CO<sub>2</sub>e (based on an average for diesel and petrol vehicles). Allowing for some reduction based on a proportion of staff only working part time and therefore not travelling 5 days a week, a broad weekly estimate would be in the region of 15,000 kg/CO<sub>2</sub>e, which could equate to as much as 775t/CO<sub>2</sub>e each year, once staff leave is deducted. It is estimated that a move to agile working could see this figure reduced by 40 - 50%.

Further to the above activities, engagement and awareness raising with Publica and Council staff and Councillors continues to be carried out in the form of carbon literacy training and online resources and information disseminated via the Publica portal. More recently, Publica launched the Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) lease car, Salary Sacrifice Scheme with [www.nhsfleetsolutions.co.uk](http://www.nhsfleetsolutions.co.uk) which is designed to further incentivise staff moving to Electric Vehicles and ULEVs.

**Carbon Offsetting Strategy:** Work to develop a carbon offsetting mechanism is underway as evolving guidance for the Council in circumstances where service design will require an agreed mechanism for offset to achieve carbon-neutral status before 2030. This work is currently in its early stages and will come forward as a deliverable of the Recovery Plan during the course of the next twelve months.

## 2.0 Leisure Centres and Facilities

Energy assessment and decarbonisation reports, including Solar PV studies, have been completed for Carterton Leisure Centre, Witney ATP, and Carterton Pavilion. These were carried out to understand the full extent of potential measures needed: i) to improve the energy efficiency of the building (reducing energy demand); ii) to decarbonise the heating; and iii) to provide an on-site supply of renewable energy as power to a new heating and hot water system.

**Carterton Leisure Centre:** Carterton was selected as the first leisure centre to decarbonise out of the Council's leisure buildings because the main gas-fired heating system is approaching the end of serviceable life. In 2021/22, the Council went on to submit a £1,293,361 bid through phase 3 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, via the Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and secured funding for the decarbonisation of the leisure centre in 2022/23 financial year.

Recognised within the Council's PSDS 3 proposals was a need to complete a second and more detailed stage of assessment for the Leisure Centre ahead of any investment grade proposals being commissioned, giving the Council a full understanding of the detailed design required for a financially- and technically-viable heating system replacement with consideration to electricity infrastructure upgrades and the running costs to maintain and heat a building, once decarbonised. A stage 2 assessment was commissioned and detailed RIBA stage 3 design for Carterton Leisure Centre and Life Cycle Costing assessment completed which is now informing the business case which is currently in development, prepared for consideration ahead of being presented to Cabinet for consideration.

## 3.0 Council Vehicle Fleet, Machinery and Transport


**ESIP - the Environmental Services Innovation Programme:** focuses on efficiency measures which deliver CO<sub>2</sub>e savings. Initiatives have included, for example, Ubico reducing fuel consumption through driving awareness courses and in-cab technology which will, in turn, help to minimise missed collections. In addition, the programmes to remove the bring sites and review/implement a new approach for street litter/dog waste bins have also contributed positively to reducing fuel

consumption and deliver CO2e savings. The Council has also replaced older fleet vehicles with alternative fueled equivalents, such as the EV sweeper and EV supervisors inspection vehicle. 3 x new EV street cleansing vans are also in the process of being purchased which will mean that 3 x old diesel combustion vans at the end of their life can be removed from the fleet inventory.

Changes to ground maintenance proposed in the **Land Management Plans** are designed to generate benefits in terms of reducing fuel demand from Ubico vehicles, such as programmed relaxed mowing regimes which reduce the number of times the grass is cut.

**Council's waste service review:** Work is now underway to complete a waste service review which will consider environmental and CO2e impact. The outputs of an options appraisal will go onto informing waste vehicle fleet replacement plans. This work package remains on track to inform decision making processes and the climate team is working closely with the contracts team as part of the options review.

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Cabinet: Wednesday 22 June 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 10</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Council Priorities and Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Four</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk">dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officers</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: (01993) 861658 Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a>  Elizabeth Griffiths, Deputy Chief Executive &amp; Chief Finance Officer Tel: (01993) 861188 Email: <a href="mailto:elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk">elizabeth.griffiths@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>This report provides details of the Council's financial and operational performance at the end of 2021-22 Quarter Four (Q4)</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Annual Statement of the Council Plan 2020-24 Annex B – Service Dashboards</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Annual Statement of the Council Plan and 2021/22 Q4 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.
- 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. Following the surge in the Omicron variant in November 2021, the government announced the move back to Plan A on the 19 January 2022; and staff were no longer being asked to work from home and face masks were no longer mandatory. On 24 February 2022, the government confirmed the ending of domestic legal restrictions for Covid-19 including the legal requirement to self-isolate. Staff were reminded to be cautious and retain the good habits learned over the last 20-24 months, especially as infection rates were high.
  - ii. The rising energy prices and higher cost of living is affecting householders, in particular those on low incomes. The Council has started to administer the £150 council tax rebate for homeowners in bands A-D, and those more vulnerable residents in Council Tax bands E to H.
  - iii. The Council's business rates collection figure (in year) continues to be affected by the cumulative impact of Covid-19 on businesses. The Government supported certain businesses with extended retail relief during the year, and the Council recently received £2.27m of Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) to be distributed to those businesses that are not eligible for the extended retail relief but have been affected by Covid-19. In addition, the Council administered 1252 Omicron mandatory grants to businesses (mainly leisure and hospitality) totalling £1,325,051 during Q4;
  - iv. In addition to supporting the Syrian and Afghan Resettlement programmes, the Council is standing with Ukraine. A special email address has been set up as dedicated point of contact to help deal with the volume of enquiries. The Council is supporting the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme in which people in the UK will be able to sponsor/host a Ukrainian individual or family. The Council is working with the County Council to ensure that sponsoring households' properties are inspected and the necessary safeguarding checks are completed; and together with Asylum Welcome, they are providing support for sponsors and guests. Currently, 87 sponsors have been registered in the District.
  - v. One hundred and fifty-six affordable homes reached practical completion in Q4, totalling 378 for the year, well ahead of the target of 274. The success of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal schemes is becoming apparent with 80 homes completed in

Q4 on the Housing 21 affordable extra care scheme at Chipping Norton, and two Cottsway schemes in Carterton and Bampton that have been funded by Growth Deal are expected in the next quarter providing homes at social rent. An additional 17 homes were completed at Cottsway's site at Upavon Way, Carterton, which is part of a larger all-affordable site that is due in Q1 2022/23.

- vi. The Planning team returned to full capacity in Q4 including the two additional posts that the Council approved in August 2021, and is having a positive impact on planning determination times and caseloads.

## 2. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

2.1. A comprehensive update of progress towards delivery of the Council Plan 2020-24 and Covid-19 Recovery Plan during 2021-22 can be found at **Annex A**. Some of the highlights are presented below:

- The Council's [broadband rollout project with Gigaclear](#) was formally completed in December 2021. WODC and HM Government each invested £1.6m in the project, contracting Gigaclear to connect 4,788 of the most rural premises in West Oxfordshire with Fibre to the Premises broadband. The Council's investment levered a further £6.7m funding from Gigaclear to extend the network resulting in access of a total of over 12,000 properties in the District to ultra-fast broadband as a result of the project.
- The Council successfully bid to Homes England for a 3 year Housing Development and Community Facilitator to enable housing delivery of Salt Cross Garden Village. The post holder is focussing on projects developing community led housing and self-build housing at the Garden Village.
- The Council successfully bid to the government's PropTech fund for £125k to develop a new digital engagement platform that makes readily available information on community infrastructure and developer contributions that exist (or can be created) into a single, accessible and visually engaging repository.
- Four thousand responses have been received from young people across the District to a survey that will inform the West Oxfordshire Youth Needs Assessment. This will inform a comprehensive understanding of the priorities of young people in order to ensure that future services and infrastructure provision meets their needs and that the significant impact on young people in terms of their education, employment options, development opportunities and social skills can be mitigated against.
- Five-year Biodiversity Land Management Plans for twelve Council-owned natural green spaces have been developed, consulted on and subsequently embedded within Ubico's contract renewal 2022 as cost-neutral changes.
- Working in partnership with Cottsway Housing and benefitting from Growth Deal Funding, the Council has worked to enable redevelopment of 49 units for affordable social rent which were no longer fit for purpose at two sites: 18 units at Lavender Place, Bampton and 31 units at Blenheim Court, Carterton.
- An award of £78k from the government's 'Brownfield Land Release Fund' has been made to the Council which will unlock a Council owned site in Chipping Norton for eight affordable net-zero carbon custom built homes. A planning application is forthcoming for the homes and associated sustainable amenities including e-vehicle club with car charging points.

### 3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 3.1. During Q4, performance continued to improve in some key areas such as benefits and planning. The Council has previously been made aware of the issues caused by a lack of capacity due to both high workloads as a result of both internal (improvement work /new systems) and external factors (Covid-19 related, economic) and vacant posts in some services which has affected service delivery during the year. These issues have been addressed by an injection of additional resources, in particular over the last six months to support services to reduce the backlog of work. There are early signs that performance in the Benefits service is returning to more normal levels which should be evident in the next quarter.
- 3.2. Concurrently, improvement work and programmes are on-going. The Planning service's improvement programme has already delivered significant improvements in the validation of applications, and a new planning checklist, designed to improve the quality of applications submitted, is being created. The launch of the OpenPortal will in time reduce workloads in the Revenues and Benefits service as well as Customer services, as more residents/clients are able to self-serve. In addition, the implementation of In-Cab technology in September 2021 is continuing to reduce the number of missed waste bins, and work to embed the technology is expected to deliver further improvements over the coming months.
- 3.3. Some of the performance indicators that have fallen short of their targets are considered below together with rectifying actions:

- Processing times for all three Benefit indicators showed significant improvements at the end of Q4. The average days to process Council Tax Support (CTS) new claims improved by six days, while the average days to process changes for CTS and Housing Benefit, improved by 10 days and 8.5 days respectively. The increase in processing times was primarily due to high workloads related to the increase in Universal Credit claims since the start of the pandemic (with much of the New Claims time delays beyond our control), the implementation of the new benefits system, Covid-19 related work, and supporting the administration of discretionary housing grants to the most vulnerable residents in the District. The backlog of work that was created following the implementation of the new benefits system was exacerbated by a software failure that prevented the automatic upload of changes of circumstances. A partial fix was applied nationally, but still required some cases to be processed manually; and was finally resolved in January 2022.

Resolution: Additional resources were brought in during Q3 to deal with the backlog and support the service; and a recovery plan is being developed to improve performance. The OpenPortal was officially launched in January 2022 and clients are now able to start self-serving. Other benefits of the new system are increased automation and better monitoring of workflows and individual workloads which will help the service to actively manage resources and identify any training requirements.

Although it will take time for the system to be fully exploited, the initial signs are promising with performance starting to return to previous levels.

- Both the in-year Council Tax collection rate and Business Rates collection rate continue to be lower than the pre-Covid years. The Council collected 96.3% of council tax due in the

year, one percentage point lower than the previous year; while the in-year business rates collection rate was over one percentage point up on the previous year at 93.4%.

The pausing of recovery action during 2020-21 and waiting for Magistrates courts to re-open for liability order hearings resulted in recovery action only recommencing in August 2021 which will have affected the collection rates. Overall, there are relatively few options available for the recovery of business rates and the process is lengthy, as shown by the extended time taken to recover last year's non payment.

Resolution: Many businesses have been supported by extended retail relief and a range of mandatory and discretionary grants including the Omicron mandatory grant in Q4. Extended retail relief will continue through 2022-23 at a relief of 50%, and for those businesses that are not eligible for extended retail relief and have been impacted by Covid-19, there is £2.27m in Covid-19 additional relief fund (CARF) to support them. A large proportion of these businesses have already been identified although the window for applying will remain open until September 2022. These businesses will have their business rates accounts credited which will help to reduce the debt owed in 2021-22.

Some homeowners will receive a council tax rebate to help with the rising cost of living. This process started in April 2022, and the rebate will be administered via their bank accounts or other means, rather than as a credit on the council tax account.

The service is continuing to support homeowners and businesses; sending out reminders, phoning and emailing to encourage them 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. There is a dedicated team in place for the recovery of rates who are up to date on cases so all possible steps have been taken.

- The number of missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections has improved for a second consecutive quarter in spite of some staffing issues related to high rates of Covid-19 infection, and relatively high levels of waste due to home working. Some collection rounds had to be postponed due to Storm Eunice which resulted in some pockets of missed bins when re-scheduled, but the use of In-Cab technology is likely to have reduced the impact (implemented on 29 September).

Resolution: The service reports that the number of missed bins is continuing to reduce, and that crews are fully trained up to use In-Cab technology. However, further work, supported by Ubico Management is being undertaken to embed the system and ensure it is fully utilised so that any training issues can be identified. The new technology is expected to improve efficiency in service delivery including reducing the number of misses by providing crew members with assistance to find all of the properties on their particular round.

#### 3.4. Some service areas have performed well or are showing improvements including:

- The Council's customers are highly satisfied with services delivered by phone, with over 98% of customers responding positively.
- Through the Council's policies and partnership working, 156 affordable homes reached practical completion in Q4; 97 for affordable rent and 59. In addition to the 80 completed on the Housing 21 scheme, and 17 at Upavon Way, Carterton during the quarter; 12 were completed in East Carterton (Bloor), 10 in West Witney (Persimmon), nine in Burford

Road, Minster Lovell, and seven in Witney Road, Freeland. The forecast for 2022/23 is healthy at 336 completions subject to changes in programme; and no Registered Providers have indicated issues with delivery due to a shortage of materials at this point.

- Overall, planning performance has started to improve. The percentage of applications determined within eight weeks or an agreed timescale achieved its target in March 2022. High workloads in line with the national trend combined with a number of vacant posts had resulted in a lower level of performance. The team has now reached full capacity with all vacant posts filled including two additional posts, which is having a positive impact on officer caseloads, but also reflects the build up of a small backlog of applications awaiting registration/validation. The validation team has already delivered good improvements in the time from receipt to validation, with further improvements expected when the new planning checklist and guidance to applicants to improve the quality of applications submitted, is implemented. Other plans include implementing the next phase of the Enterprise software to improve case management, as well as exploring how customer contact can be improved using customer services 'champions' embedded within the planning service who can also support case officers.
- Residual waste per household has reduced over the last six months with the final lifting of restrictions. Households produced 379 kg each during 2021-22 compared to 405 kg in the previous year but remains higher than the pre-Covid year (369 kg). In order to highlight the importance of reduce and reuse before recycling, the Council has been running a comprehensive communications programme throughout the year which included ensuring that all our leaflets and promotions are up to date and operational changes are communicated widely as well as supporting key national recycling and waste campaigns, including the Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) Recycling Week last September, and the Food Waste Action Week in March 2022. In addition, the Council is a member of the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership, and has just embarked on a programme of promoting food waste participation in low performing areas which will be followed up by door knocking at the end of May 2022. Increasing food waste participation is important for the environmental benefits it brings, and will also improve the Council's recycling rate.
- There was a net reduction in Long Term Empty homes over six months, with 170 properties removed from the Long Term Empty list, and 163 added. A three month rolling action plan is in place, and includes tackling some of the complex cases (property on LTE levy, accounts in arrears, and unresponsive owner), and contacting those householders whose properties are about to slip into LTE status or an increased levy.

3.5. The service dashboards are attached at **Annex B**.

#### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1. None

#### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

5.1. None

#### **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

6.1. None

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1. None



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# COUNCIL PLAN ANNUAL STATEMENT

## **April 2021 - March 2022**

Our vision is to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future through:



**1. Climate Action**

Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.



**2. Healthy Towns and Villages**

Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.



**3. 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.



**4. Strong Local Communities**

Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.



**5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population**

Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.



**6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance**

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

## Introduction

Two years have passed since the launch of the [West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2020 – 24](#) in January 2020 when the Council embarked on delivering the projects defined as a means of achieving the **Council Plan vision** to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future through delivery of the following priorities:

1. **Climate Action:** Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity
2. **Healthy Towns and Villages :** Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better well being for everyone
3. **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
4. **Strong Local Communities:** Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities
5. **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 households making their home in West Oxfordshire
6. **Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance:** Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

During this period and in tandem with delivering the Council Plan, efforts initially pivoted towards responding to the sudden challenges posed by the pandemic, principally supporting West Oxfordshire residents, its business and economy, and community and voluntary sector and latterly to developing the West Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery Plan through cross-party engagement and delivering the Themes of this plan: Economy, Community, Climate and Council, Service Delivery & Finance.

This agility and ability to adapt to the unprecedented pandemic, reflects well on the Council and its staff and demonstrates that they have remained true to the vision in the Council Plan to be 'fit for the future'. The Covid-19 Recovery Fund invested by the Council to deliver the Covid-19 Recovery Plan has had the dual benefit of making a meaningful contribution to Council Plan delivery due to the close alignment of these Themes with the six Council Plan Priorities. The Covid-19 Recovery Plan has provided the Council with a helpful framework for ensuring that the wide ranging impacts of the pandemic have been mitigated against.

The Council undertook a wide range of activities, providing support to individuals, charities and communities throughout 2021-22 which included:

- Working closely with NHS colleagues to:
  - Host and resource 3 x 'walk in' vaccination centres based in the Welch Way Office, where boosters as well as 1st / 2nd Jabs were given to 12-15s & 16 plus. Just under 8,500 vaccinations were given
  - Set up and manage a community symptom free testing site in Carterton – just under 1800 test carried out and 800 kits handed
  - Facilitate the establishment and running of the Covid test site that was based in Woodford Way Car Park
  - Support the running of a vaccination centre in Elmfield for vulnerable children
  - Operate a Community Collect Scheme for test kits from the Welch Way Office– over 1,000 handed out

- Supporting the local Test and Trace scheme in Oxfordshire – Over 640 visits carried out as well as undertaking over 230 requests for desktop checks
- Co-ordinating the operation of the Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) in Carterton
- Provided a dedicated support Hub with Resident Support Workers in place to respond to calls from residents in need and provide complex support, help with food, signposting and referrals, conducting 844 Test and Trace support calls and 324 contact tracing visits
- Funding support:
  - Distribution of funding (£44,850) to all food groups in the District
  - Distributing food support through the Household support fund (£100,000) to residents in need through Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire.
  - Administration of the extended Winter Support Grant, working closely with Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire
  - Additional food support for those in temporary accommodation
  - Provision of additional food support to those receiving the Test and Trace payment
  - Securing £40,000 for a grants programme for West Oxfordshire community food projects administered by Good Food Oxfordshire
  - Securing and allocating Contain Outbreak Management funding (£103,450) towards:
    - APCAM and the Help Hub for Mental health services for young people and families
    - Volunteer Link Up for vaccination transport support
    - Citizens Advice for an additional debt and welfare adviser
    - Reducing the risk to provide domestic abuse training for community groups and professionals
- Offering free training to VCS including food groups, which covered topics such as governance, GDPR, vision writing, working with volunteers etc
- Provision of emergency food parcels to vulnerable families
- Actively supporting local community groups and helping to develop food groups.

This Annual Statement details progress against each of the 6 Council Plan priorities and achievements against the aims of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan. It should be read in conjunction with the [WODC Annual Monitoring Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021](#). The AMR is structured around the 6 Council Plan priorities, setting out progress against the Local Plan as the strategic development framework for the District. By priority, an outline of the current district context in terms of background/contextual information and what has happened during the AMR period is provided. Facts and figures are used to illustrate the Council's progress/patterns of change against a number of indicators – such as carbon emission reductions, numbers of affordable homes delivered, visitor numbers to leisure centres, and local workforce structure.

## Climate Action: Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity

### Covid-19 Recovery Theme: Climate

The Council has been working on its commitment to proactively respond to the climate and ecological emergency as set out in its Carbon Action Plan (the Pathway to Achieving Carbon Neutral by 2030) and Climate Change Strategy through a wide ranging work programme. The work has been further supported by 3 fixed-term posts resourced through the Councils Covid-19 Recovery Fund: Carbon Action Plan Officer, Biodiversity and Countryside Land Management Officer and a Development Management Sustainability Officer. These posts have added capacity and expertise to complement existing capacity to take action towards addressing the climate and ecological emergency identified as a priority in the Council Plan and Recovery Plan. An overview of deliverables over the 2021-22 year are provided below.

- The [WODC Sustainability Standards Checklist](#) was launched in May 2021, providing a framework of standards for assessing planning applications against in terms of their sustainability on a range of criteria relating to water use and flood risk; biodiversity; green and active travel; aligning with net-zero carbon; sustainable construction; and materials and waste. From launch until 31 March 2022 66 major and 26 minor planning applications have been assessed against the criteria and a focus has been given to raising the sustainability of development proposed. To further embed the benefits of assessing planning applications against sustainability criteria, the Validation Checklist against which all planning applications are checked prior to registration and determination has been updated to require submission of a Sustainability Statement demonstrating how the sustainability measures are met.
- Landscape and biodiversity assessments of 12 key WODC owned sites has been undertaken, informing the production of five year [Land Management Plans](#) for each with a view to restoring and improving the existing natural habitats and biodiversity of the sites and/or creating new wildlife habitats to increase their ecological value. The LMP's are designed to achieve multiple benefits as a result of changes to the way the land is maintained, improving natural capital assets across the Council's estate including carbon storage, flood management and pollination.
- Delivery of two externally funded projects to improve energy efficiency in private rented properties, providing energy efficiency assessments and guidance to landlords to implement improvements to energy efficiency. In a further contribution towards improving energy efficiency of homes and those at risk of fuel poverty in the District, the Council continues to fund the Better Housing, Better Health service, providing low income households access to grants for energy efficiency improvements, and a further range of Fuel Poverty Grants for those on means tested benefits to make essential energy efficiency improvements. In the latter half of 2021 – 22 34 assessments were undertaken and 5 energy-efficiency installations were completed.
- In November 2021 the Royal Assent of the Environment Act mandated a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%, with the aim of ensuring development, and/or land management leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. [The Interim Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance for Developers and Ecological Consultants](#) was updated in July 2021 providing guidance to developers to ensure that sufficient information is submitted to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre continues to support WODC to screen biodiversity metric calculations submitted to ensure that they achieve a Net Gain for Biodiversity. In the 2021 – 22 period 13 applications were submitted with Biodiversity Net Gain calculations. Of these, 2 secured a Biodiversity Net Gain on site and 1 offsite, with 9 pending a decision and one application being refused.

- WODC continued to play an active role on the [Oxfordshire Nature Partnership](#) which has the purpose 'to radically enhance nature, its positive impact on our climate and the priority it is given, helping to make Oxfordshire an exemplar county for people and nature to thrive'. This strategic forum exists to guide nature recovery in an integrated way to produce multiple benefits for local people, the economy and the environment. At a County level WODC also sits on the [Environment Advisory Group of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership](#) which exists to embed critical environmental thinking across the Future Oxfordshire Partnerships and to link closely with the Oxfordshire Nature Partnership. At a cross county level WODC sits on the [Cotswolds National Landscape Board](#) and [the Oxford to Cambridge Arc](#) to represent West Oxfordshire's environment in this wider strategic context.
- The Council commissioned the [Witney Flood Investigation Report \(January 2022\)](#) into the floods at Christmas 2020 to inform understanding of the event. WODC works collaboratively through an informal agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority), undertaking flood investigations, enforcement and consent functions on behalf of the LLFA for West Oxfordshire. It has been confirmed that an updated flood risk model for the River Windrush and its tributaries through the town is to be carried out by the Environment Agency which will be informed, in part, by the findings of the Witney Flood Investigation Report.
- WODC continues to partner others through the Windrush and Evenlode Catchment Partnerships. This approach aims to build better functioning river catchments by:
  - Recognising catchments as interconnected systems
  - Working in partnership to tackle multiple challenges together
  - Harnessing natural processes wherever possible
  - Capitalising on opportunities for solutions on a catchment scale

Under the Thames Water Smarter Catchment Initiative, a £3million fund has been made for the [Evenlode Catchment Partnership](#) for delivery of projects between 2020-25 focussing on: water quality and advocacy; landscape, habitat and biodiversity; natural flood management; and education, access and recreation.

## Healthy Towns and Villages: Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone

### Recovery Theme: Communities

The value of adopting a 'Healthy Place Shaping' approach in new and existing developments is highlighted in the Council Plan. In February 2022 the Council further expressed their commitment to this by passing the motion that *'Each Member commits to being a champion for Healthy Place Shaping (HPS) utilising the core principles (and the tools available to them) to influence and underpin all aspects of their work. To recognise that within their role as Members, their commitment is crucial to the organisation of HPS. Actively encouraging/challenging one another, officers, Parish and Town Councils to use HPS approaches, to influence future decisions for council services, ensuring that they have the best possible outcomes for the health and wellbeing of all residents of West Oxfordshire.'*

Healthy Place Shaping activity falls under three branches:

- Community Activation – connecting local people and community groups, schools and businesses to enable them to enjoy healthier lifestyles and create activities, facilities and services which make their communities healthy, resilient and sustainable
- Built Environment – ensuring homes, streets and other buildings are healthier, people can easily access green spaces, and are enabled to cycle, walk and socially interact in order to improve health and wellbeing
- New Models of Care – re-shaping and developing local health, wellbeing and care services, and the infrastructure which supports people to achieve physical and/or mental health benefits.

Examples of the Healthy Place Shaping approach being put into action by the Council are:

- The Built Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy reached its final draft stage in March 2022, informed by an audit of current indoor leisure facilities stock across the District and Sport England modelling leisure facility need against projected population growth. Stakeholder consultation was also undertaken, including a Focus Group looking at the scope for a relocated Windrush Leisure Centre ('Windrush 2') and a residents' online survey to inform the required facility mix for any new Windrush 2. This activity has sought to address the current, latent and unmet need for built leisure facilities across West Oxfordshire. Following adoption of the Built Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy, an associated Action Plan will establish a programme of delivery for the Strategy.
- Consultants have produced a Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan for the District that provides robust justification for the provision of outdoor playing pitches and sport facilities that meet the needs of existing and future residents and visitors to West Oxfordshire. It also provides the evidence required to help protect playing fields to ensure sufficient land is available to meet existing and projected future pitch requirements. This important document will form part of the evidence base for the forthcoming Local Plan Review by ensuring that existing facilities are the most appropriate in terms of quantity, quality and location and gives consideration to how to best meet the additional needs generated by planned housing and economic growth. Furthermore, the Strategy identifies a number of sites for development to meet the District's need for Playing Pitches.

## **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**

### **Recovery Theme: Economy**

The economy of the district has been greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and a reframing of efforts to address recovery and renewal of the economy has been the focus over the last year, as set out in the Covid-19 Recovery Plan. This is in addition to making progress on the actions identified in the Council Plan, for example the roll out of the Electric Vehicle Charging Point programme and early consideration toward a Masterplan and Station Travel Plan for Hanborough Station. This dual approach to proactively addressing the short and long term challenges facing the local economy is described below.

The Council's Covid-19 Recovery Fund resourced 2 full time posts to increase capacity for supporting local businesses impacted negatively by the pandemic and associated restrictions, recognising the acute impact of these on town centres and employers. Specific initiatives to counter this impact include:-

- A Welcome Back Fund allocation of £195k has been invested across the District to support the safe return to the high streets and help build back better from the pandemic. A range of public realm improvements (e.g. better signage, amenity landscape and seating) and promotional activity and events benefitted Witney, Burford, Carterton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Eynsham and Long Hanborough. These were delivered in partnership with local Town and Parish Councils, Wake up to Woodstock, Marriots and Woolgate Shopping Centres and local businesses.
- The Council used Welcome Back funding to procure the LoyalFree 'place promotion app' to support local businesses. The app is connected to a platform that any town centre retailer in the district can use to promote offers, discounts and loyalty schemes. The scheme has been promoted through the 'Love West Oxfordshire' campaign and helps footfall across town centres by encouraging repeat purchases, discounts and other offers as well as listing events and interactive trails to entice new visitors to West Oxfordshire. To date there are 3015 users of LoyalFree and the app has promoted 290 businesses.
- The Council has been working with other districts and Makespace Oxford on the Oxfordshire-wide [Meanwhile in Oxfordshire Project](#). The purpose of the project was to try and fill selected vacant units in our high streets with a variety of offerings to mitigate the negative impact of empty units. A number of premises were considered as part of this, but, positively and in a sign that the local economy was recovering, did not proceed because long term tenants were found. The Guildhall in Chipping Norton has been successfully taken on by the project and is filled partly by the [Chippy Larder](#), thus making a meaningful contribution to addressing the issue of food security in the town, with the remaining space available as a co-working space and small offices.
- In the fourth quarter of the 2021-22 year the Council distributed 1,252 one-off grants of up to £6,000 on behalf of government to businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors to counter impacts of the Omicron variant of Covid-19. The total distributed was £1,325,051. The Council also used

part of its Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allocation to run a 'Business Growth Support' scheme (BGS) which provided one to one advice sessions and cash grants to 86 businesses. The advice sessions were delivered by OxLEP.

The value of the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) was specified in the Council Plan as a means of improving public realm in our town centres and an action to be taken towards achieving a vibrant district economy. Under the roll out of the [Park and Charge Oxfordshire](#) project into West Oxfordshire, a total of 32 electric vehicle charging points serving 64 parking bays have been installed in five of the Council owned car parks at: Woodford Way in Witney; New Street in Chipping Norton; Black Bourton Road in Carterton; Hensington Road in Woodstock and Back Lane in Eynsham. This contributes to delivering Electric Vehicle Infrastructure at sites in Council ownership and also to meeting the ambitions of the Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy to reach a target of 7.5% of local authority managed car parks providing Electric Vehicle charged spaces by 2025. A 7.5% target is equivalent to 263 charged parking bays in Council owned car parks across the District. The 64 bays delivered under Park and Charge Oxfordshire represent 24% of this target. This, alongside public realm improvements, will enable town centres to evolve to meet the changing expectations of resident shoppers, businesses and visitors alike.

Hanborough Station was identified in the Council Plan as a focus for partnership effort to secure new and upgraded infrastructure to increase use of sustainable transport and improve connectivity. WODC and Oxfordshire County Council are now jointly commissioning the preparation of a Station Masterplan and Station Travel Plan (STP) in order to identify and deliver improvements to Hanborough Station, including consideration of accessibility improvements to the station. The bespoke STP will bring about a range of outputs including consideration of 'stewardship' issues, acting as a vehicle for change and planning a 'legacy'. The exercise will take a 'community led' approach to tap into local knowledge, enthusiasm and making use of local skills to help develop a robust rationale for investment. It is anticipated evidence will be gathered to understand:

- The profile of new developments and existing populations
- Stated preferences of travel
- Key routes and data of the locality/visitor patterns
- Scope for alternative travel such as cross promotion of the Liftshare scheme

Improved infrastructure at Hanborough Station will also benefit the 40 hectare Salt Cross Science and Technology Park allocated in the Local Plan which is in close proximity to the station. The delivery of the Salt Cross Science Park is a key ambition of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy and will make an unprecedented contribution to the economic development of West Oxfordshire.

Turning to broadband infrastructure, the Council's [broadband rollout project with Gigaclear](#) was formally completed in December 2021. WODC and HM Government each invested £1.6m in the project, contracting Gigaclear to connect 4,788 of the most rural premises in West Oxfordshire with Fibre to the Premises broadband. The Council's investment levered a further £6.7m funding from Gigaclear to extend the network resulting in access of a total of over 12,000 properties in the district to ultra-fast broadband as a result of the project.

## Strong Local Communities: Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities

### Recovery Theme: Communities

Two years into the pandemic and the importance of the Council Plan 'Strong Local Communities' priority has not diminished. The dynamic and inspiring community sector response across West Oxfordshire to the challenges introduced by the pandemic has provided a strong foundation from which to further develop a range of approaches to support the district's communities. The Council committed in the West Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery Plan to taking an active role in improving the health and wellbeing of its communities, investing resources in two particular strands of activity:-

*Wellbeing Hubs:* research with 48 community organisations and statutory service providers has been undertaken to explore the scope of and potential model for hubs as a means of providing a mix of services in partnership with other service providers, including advice, housing and welfare support for the community either through networking or co-locating or embedding staff in a local area. This research has been complemented by an asset mapping exercise to understand fixed buildings and greenspaces available in primary settlements alongside people/community groups.

Three models have been identified: Model 1: A Building, Model 2: A Person or People and Model 3: A Connected Way of Working. A 12 month 'test and learn pilot' of Model 2 has been funded with the appointment of a 'Carterton Hub Worker', in partnership with Carterton Connects, who is based in the Carterton Family Centre to connect people with services and providing advice. Similarly, a 'Community Builder' has been put in post for Witney Central focussing on supporting the community on the Smiths Estate. Finally, the Council has implemented Model 3 by facilitating the Witney Forum, bringing together local organisations and statutory services in Witney to share information and network. 50 organisations are in contact through the forum. This meets the Council Plan aim to 'help build resilience in communities with more effective joint working and intelligence sharing.'

*Active Lives:* the Council identified the need for a focus on helping people, especially those who are alone or with long term health conditions, to improve levels of physical activity in light of severe restrictions on movement by the pandemic. This reduced mobility was identified as a risk factor leading to physical decline, the consequences of which could lead to additional burdens on the NHS and which the Council seeks to mitigate against. A dedicated person centred activity programme called 'Move Together' has been offered to all residents who have shielded during the pandemic. A targeted 'Go Active Get Healthy' project has also been offered to help people with diabetes manage their condition through greater levels of activity.

Beyond these two strands of activity, the Council's Response Hub, established at the outset of the pandemic in March 2020 has been able to extend its reach with the appointment of staff funded through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to provide direct support and signposting to those residents requiring assistance and a specialist outreach function to further develop relationships between the Council and neighbourhood response groups and other voluntary and community sector partners.

A Youth Needs Assessment is underway to develop a comprehensive understanding of the priorities of young people in order to ensure that future services and infrastructure provision meets their needs and that the significant impact on young people in terms of their education, employment options, development

opportunities and social skills can be mitigated against. 4,000 survey responses have been received by young people which are being categorised into themes. Focus Groups will be held to explore these themes further to provide a robust evidence base for the Youth Needs Assessment.

Moving to activity not emanating from the Covid-19 Recovery Plan, attention has been given to longer term planning for the District's communities and their infrastructure needs in the years ahead as the Strategic Development Areas identified in the Local Plan, and smaller sites, are delivered to ensure that existing and incoming residents benefit and that the approach promotes social integration and cohesion. The Council successfully bid to the government's PropTech fund for £125k to develop a new digital engagement platform that makes readily available information on community infrastructure and developer contributions that exist (or can be created) into a single, accessible and visually engaging repository.

The benefit of this platform is that it will enable communities to better understand and interrogate local community infrastructure priorities. It will present:

- What development is proposed for their local area
- What infrastructure improvements have already been provided or are proposed to be provided as a result of new development in their local area
- The overall process of developer contributions including how they are negotiated, the differences between Section 106 legal agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy
- How to put forward suggestions for infrastructure improvements needed locally (eg by being able to drop a pin on a map or plot out a new pedestrian or cycle route which would benefit the community)

A further commitment to working with partners to promote West Oxfordshire as a visitor attraction (whilst protecting its essential character) is made in the Council Plan. Given the significant contribution the visitor economy makes to West Oxfordshire communities, it is evident that there is a particularly acute need for support to recover and renew in the wake of the pandemic and the Cotswolds Tourism team have been working directly with tourism businesses to enable adaptation by improving their online capabilities. Partnership work with Wake up to Woodstock, the Witney Chamber of Trade and local businesses has focussed on enhancing destination marketing of Witney and Woodstock through [www.cotswolds.com/witney](http://www.cotswolds.com/witney) and [www.cotswolds.com/woodstock](http://www.cotswolds.com/woodstock)

Options for encouragement of sustainable tourism practices within the visitor economy have been investigated. The Sustainable Tourism Survey elicited 60 responses from local businesses and demonstrates a strong interest in improving the sustainability of their businesses.

The Council is also committed to supporting, through the distribution of grants, voluntary and community activity and partnership actions which help to progress delivery of the Council Plan and thereby benefiting West Oxfordshire communities. In the 2021 – 22 year £187,851 was granted to 15 organisations and/or projects and detail of these can be viewed on pages 279 – 298 of the [Cabinet Paper - March 2022](#).

## 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

### Recovery Theme: Communities

In October 2021 the Council formally adopted the [West Oxfordshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document](#) (AH SPD) which will steer the successful delivery of West Oxfordshire Local Plan Policy H3 'Affordable Housing' by providing detailed guidance on the delivery of affordable housing in West Oxfordshire for the Council, developers, housing providers and local communities. The AH SPD is now a material planning consideration.

Local Plan Policy H3 requires the provision of on-site affordable housing as part of larger market housing schemes of 11 or more units varying by location from 35% - 50%. In addition, smaller market housing schemes of 6-10 units within the Cotswolds AONB are required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the District. The policy also addresses the issue of housing mix and the provision of affordable housing in rural areas including through rural exception sites. By providing additional guidance on the implementation of these requirements, the AH SPD seeks to set out a range of options and requirements to secure delivery of successful affordable housing schemes across the District that meet the housing needs of our changing population.

Options for delivery are presented including criteria for identifying qualifying sites; the size of affordable homes needed, the preferred tenure mix, rural exception sites and self and custom build schemes. Delivery is addressed through requirements relating to design criteria, accessibility and adaptability, space standards, zero carbon homes and modern methods of construction. Specific delivery mechanisms are articulated including housing options for the Armed Forces and also Key Workers and Community Led Housing.

In 2021-22, 378 new affordable homes have completed in the District, far greater than the Local Plan identified average annual need of 274. Of this total, 241 are affordable rent and 137 are shared ownership. These are located in Freeland, Minster Lovell, Chipping Norton, Carterton, Burford, Long Hanborough, Woodstock, Witney, North Leigh and Bampton. It is anticipated that this target will again be exceeded in 2022-23 with a non-binding forecast of 336 completions.

Schemes of particular note which meet the housing needs of our changing population, as required by this Council Plan priority include:

- Delivery in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, and with the use of Growth Deal Funding, of 80 extra care affordable homes in Chipping Norton.
- An award of £78k from the government's 'Brownfield Land Release Fund' has been made to the Council which will unlock a Council owned site in Chipping Norton for eight affordable net-zero carbon custom built homes. A planning application is forthcoming for the homes and associated sustainable amenities including e-vehicle club with car charging points.
- In partnership with Cottsway Housing and benefitting from Growth Deal Funding, the redevelopment of 49 units for affordable social rent which were no longer fit for purpose at two sites: 18 units at Lavender Place, Bampton and 31 units at Blenheim Court, Carterton.

- In partnership with Registered Provider Heylo Housing and the Oxfordshire Growth Deal, the Council has benefited from Heylo Housings ability to negotiate bulk purchase of new homes from developers for use as shared ownership housing. 43 properties have been secured with 32 of these sold and 11 in the process of completion.

The rollout of the 'Blenheim Approach' in partnership with Blenheim Estate continues apace. This innovative 'affordable rent' housing model seeks to deliver affordable housing available at between 60 – 80% of market rental costs. It is the intention of Blenheim Estate to retain ownership of the rental properties so they can be held in perpetuity for local people, especially those within the key worker categories. At the Park View development in Woodstock, 11 affordable homes have been delivered out of a total of 150, with completions set to increase substantially in 2022-23.

In addition to this the Council is exploring a range of housing products for existing and upcoming developments to broaden the range of Low Cost Home Ownership products on these. These include Rent to Buy, Build to Rent and Discount Market Sale and First Homes which are defined in the AH SPD on pages 14, 15 and 16 respectively. A number of Rent to Buy properties are scheduled to come forward at the Milestone Road site in Carterton and 4 properties as First Homes at Discount Market Sale are being developed in Long Hanborough. The [Pre-submission Area Action Plan for Salt Cross Garden Village](#) includes a Policy 24 'Build to Rent' (at page 174) in support of Build to Rent proposals coming forward at Salt Cross Garden Village.

Within the West Oxfordshire Local Plan there is a requirement for sites of over 100 homes to provide suitable self-build/custom finish plots. Self-build is also promoted through a Council maintained [self-build register](#) which can be accessed on the Council website and additional guidance is provided in the aforementioned Affordable Housing SPD. Policy 25 'Custom and Self-Build Housing' contained within the Pre-submission Area Action Plan for Salt Cross Garden Village supports delivery of this specialist type of housing within the site and demonstrates the Council's commitment to support this alternative type of housing as a means of meeting the housing needs of our changing population. A successful bid was made to Homes England for a 3 year Housing Development and Community Facilitator to enable housing delivery of Salt Cross Garden Village. The post-holder will focus on projects developing community led housing and self-build housing at the Garden Village.

The Council continues to pursue opportunities for working in partnership with legacy landowners to accelerate delivery of affordable housing in the district. The AH SPD invites those landowners (particularly in smaller rural settlements) who are considering development as part of their long term legacy planning to engage with the Council to explore the scope for delivering affordable housing through rural exception sites. Furthermore the Council is collaborating with Parish Councils, Registered Providers and developers to bring forward smaller schemes to help meet local need for affordable housing.

The Council is also working proactively to address the issue of rough sleeping and in mid-2021 purchased the Old Court House in Witney to provide safe, flexible accommodation for adults who are rough sleeping or at risk of it. The property contains 15 units of high quality, self-contained bedsits. By being able to offer homeless clients direct access to accommodation at the Old Court House it mitigates the need to fund more costly B&B accommodation which is often out of area. This approach is much more cost effective to the council and beneficial to the client as they are placed close to existing support networks. A partnership with employment charity and social enterprise [Aspire](#) provides bespoke onsite support to assist residents to move on successfully at the right

time into long term accommodation and provides one to one support to ensure access to services including health, mental health and addiction agencies as well as employment, training/education opportunities

## Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council

### Recovery Theme: Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Achievement of the aforementioned 5 Council Plan priorities are dependent on the Council having a sound financial footing. Previous budgetary constraints have been amplified by the pandemic (greater draw on Council services, extraordinary service costs and lost revenue streams) and so the challenge of matching delivery ambitions to the Council's revenue stream makes this final Council Plan priority of delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council a key priority.

The WODC Recovery [Investment Strategy](#) 2020 – 24 starts from a premise that there is a significant funding gap that needs to be closed and capital investment is a major tool available to the Council to achieve this so long as it covers the revenue implications of that investment and makes an appropriate return. Capital Investment provides a route to delivering the ambitious programme of the Council set out in the Council Plan, with 6 delivery themes in the Investment Strategy defined as: · The provision of adequate and affordable housing · Green Energy & Carbon Reduction; · Delivering Infrastructure for Jobs & Economic Growth; · Reinvigorating Commercial Centres to ensure our economic vibrancy; · Maximising existing and new income streams from service delivery; · Developing a commercial culture to our decision making whilst retaining a public service ethos.

A £2.4million acquisition has been completed in the 2021 – 22 year of a commercial building in Carterton currently occupied by The Garden Trading Centre and was an opportunity to consolidate the land and buildings into single ownership. Further investment will be made to substantially improve the asset with repairs to the roof. The return is in line with the requirement that any investment generates a return in the order of 3.5% above the borrowing cost and thus makes a contribution towards closing the revenue funding gap set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Further detail of activity under the Investment Strategy can be found in the [Investment Strategy Report 2022-23](#).

Two areas of particular focus are the Agile Working Project (Office Rationalisation) and the Environmental Services Innovation Programme. The Council has embarked on an office rationalisation exercise to look at ways of generating revenue from Council owned offices. New office layouts have been proposed which reduce the office footprints by 40%, enabling vacated areas to be tenanted. This has been made possible by the adoption of an 'Agile Working Strategy' which requires staff to become 'hybrid workers', mixing the remote working that was the 'norm' during the pandemic with in office working. Additional benefits to this approach are an estimated 40 – 50% reduction in carbon emissions from reduced staff mileage and opportunities for enhanced 'work/life balance' for staff.

The Environmental Services Innovation Programme was launched in June 2021 with a focus on delivering efficiency measures relating to three criteria: service cost, performance and climate (including carbon savings/biodiversity impact mitigation). In the early phase of the ESIP, 39 lower level projects have been delivered eg in-cab digital waste management system (Yotta), rationalisation of dog waste/litter bins, change to grounds maintenance practices to mitigate wildlife habitat loss. The next phase of the ESIP for West Oxfordshire is the Council's waste service review which will consider environmental and CO2 impacts. An options appraisal will explore opportunities which may be brought about by cross boundary working and/or the sharing of a depot with a

neighbouring waste collection authority. The options appraisal will in turn feed into waste vehicle replacement plans in readiness for the Council's current Waste and Recycling Collection Contract with Ubico ending in 2024, and which coincides with the majority of the current collection vehicles being 7 years old and at end of life. Ahead of this, an electric waste vehicle was added to the Council's Waste Vehicle Fleet in 2021.

Turning to modernisation of Council service delivery, provision of digital options for businesses and residents as a means of offering more choice for accessing services has continued to progress in this second year of the Council Plan. Customers can access Council services more conveniently via a range of online self-serve tools, whilst still having access to an advisor on the phone or face to face if preferred. In Witney, this can be at the relaunched Customer Service Centre on Welch Way where Customer Services, Housing and Benefits Officers are based. The launch of [OpenPortal](#) in 2022 enables 24/7 online self-service of Council Tax and Business Rates accounts and the claiming of Benefits.

Central to the digitalisation of Council services is the Salesforce platform which has further evolved to meet a variety of service needs:-

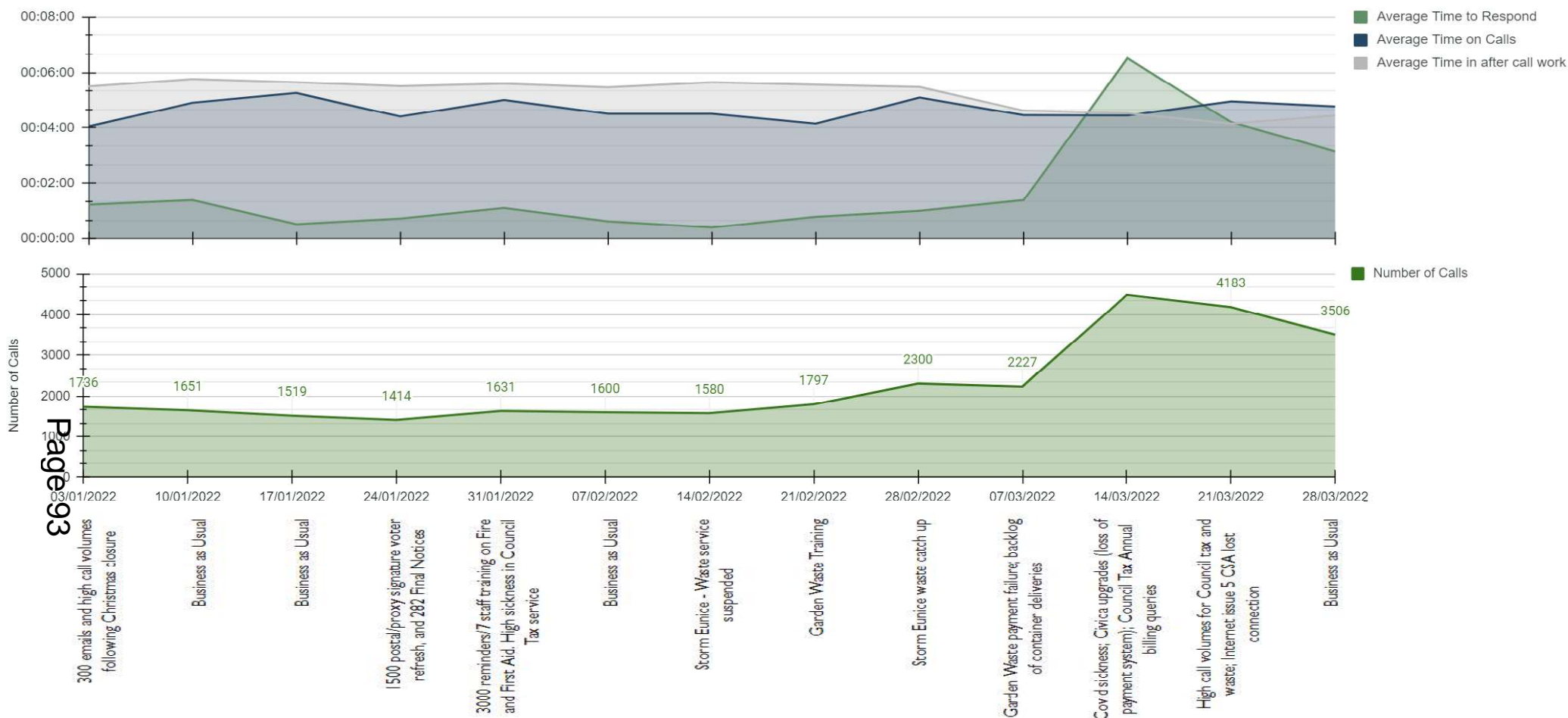
- Integration of Salesforce with a new digital Waste Management System (Yotta) to enable monitoring of bulky household, clinical and commercial waste as well as missed bin collections and replacement container requests. Ubico is able to access information updates via use of tablets in their service trucks on route.
- Platform enhancements to increase efficiencies through better transparency and case management, including the addition of high priority queues to expedite response rate to urgent queries
- Distribution of a variety of Covid-19 related business grants including: Additional (Covid-19) Restrictions Grant to previous applicants paid under the Restart: Strand 2 (Hospitality and Leisure) scheme, the WODC Business Growth Support Scheme and the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grants.

The aforementioned successful application for £125k of PropTech funding to establish a new digital engagement platform will enable the Council to greatly improve its digital engagement capacity through the establishment of a new digital engagement platform using software '[CommonPlace](#)'. This centralised, transparent and accessible web-based resource can also be downloaded as an app, enabling communities to better understand and interrogate local community infrastructure priorities and funding opportunities, as well as providing the means of submitting infrastructure priorities to the Council for their local area. The Council will benefit through improved engagement and knowledge sharing but via reduced resource burden as local communities will be enabled to 'self-serve' and establish information requirements themselves.



Satisfied

# Customer Services Quarter 4



Service delivery can be affected by a range of factors both within the service such as staff absence and in other services such as the implementation of new software which requires advisors to be trained up; as well as mass comms sent to residents /clients such as council tax reminders, garden renewals and election registration.

There was a spike in the volume of phone calls during the last three weeks of March, which related primarily to queries about garden waste renewals and council tax annual billing. An issue with the 3D secure authentication of the Civica Payment solution resulted in a number of failed customer payments. This issue affected all Councils who are using the Civica webpay solution. The ICT team immediately flagged up the issue with the company and an interim 'fix' was rolled out shortly afterwards. Due to the

disruption caused to residents a meeting was held with senior managers from Civica and a claim for compensation has been submitted. A permanent solution will be rolled out after the summer when a new 3D secure gateway is implemented.

Council tax annual bills generated from the new system resulted in additional calls. Although the wording was identical to last year's bill, the format was slightly different. Next year's annual bills will be revised to improve clarity.

During this busy period, 12 staff in the service contracted Covid-19 including nine advisors, some advisors temporarily lost IT connectivity during one lunchtime, and Civica scheduled a software upgrade during annual billing (outside of the Council's control)

which reduced capacity in the service while increasing additional/repeat calls.

It has been acknowledged that garden waste renewals coinciding with the annual CT billing creates a spike in call volumes which can be difficult to manage; the service will be reviewing the scheduling of garden waste renewals later this year, as well as collaborating with key service areas on the comms going out to residents/businesses and building a timeline of events to better manage the demand for Customer Services.

Note: The response time, on call time, and after call time data include data for West Oxfordshire specific staff and shared staff, based on a 60% - 40% split respectively. This arrangement helps to improve resilience in the service.

## Development Management Quarter 4

Average Planner  
Caseload

40

TARGET 50

Average Senior  
Planner Caseload

27

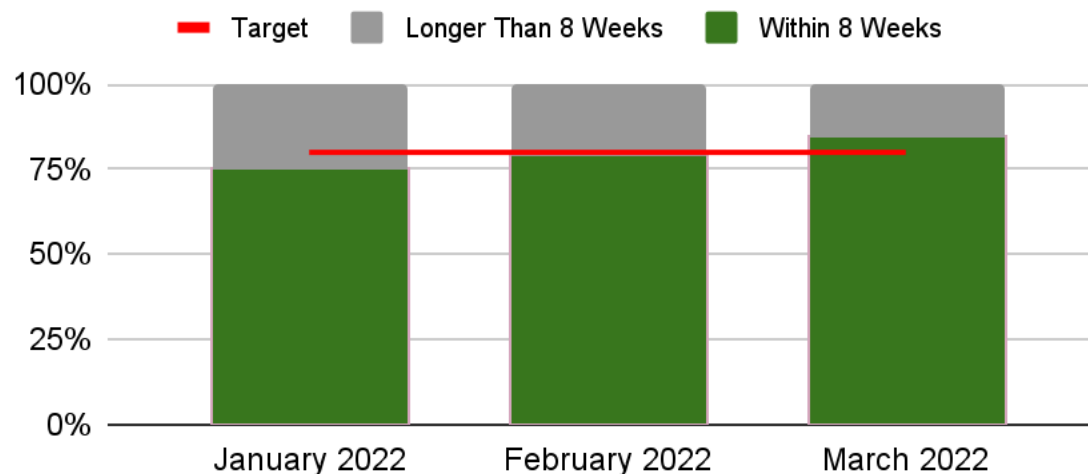
TARGET 35

Average Principal  
Planner Caseload

17

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

49

TARGET 50

Average Cases  
closed per Senior  
Planner in Quarter

19

TARGET 40

Average Cases  
closed per  
Principal Planner in  
Quarter

20

TARGET 25

Average days from  
receipt to  
validation

8

TARGET 7

Customer  
Satisfaction



90.5%

The central bar chart shows planning determination performance is gradually improving and exceeded its target in March 2022. The team has reached full capacity with all vacant posts filled including two additional posts, which is having a positive impact on officer caseloads. This has allowed the team to revert to their intended structure, ensuring that Principal and Senior Planners caseloads have decreased as a result of not trying to cover the work of vacancies in addition to their own complex caseload. Senior Officer closure rates have been impacted by a vacancy arising at the end of Q3, which was filled in March 2022.

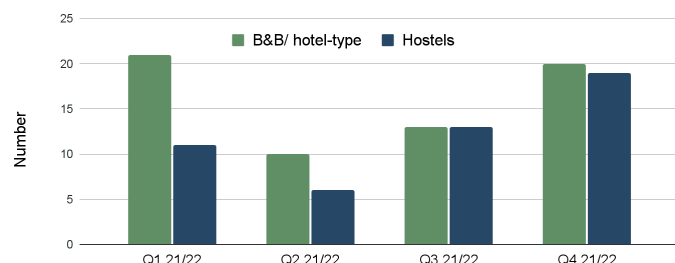
The decision to enter into a shared partnership arrangement for the technical administrative part of the service has paid dividends as nearly half of the team at West left during the first part of the quarter. The arrangements prevented the development of a large backlog of applications awaiting registration/validation. The average days from receipt to validation was impacted by a higher volume of applications in March, ending just outside of the target at eight days. It is expected to return to within seven days in the next quarter, as a result of filling vacancies in the planning admin team.



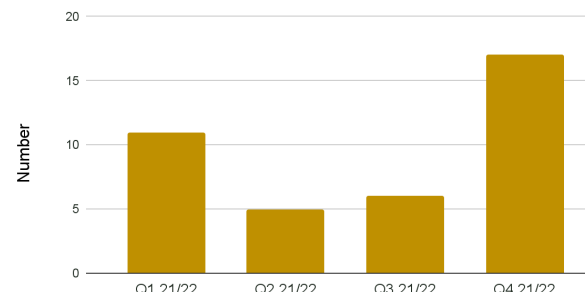
## Housing Quarter 4

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

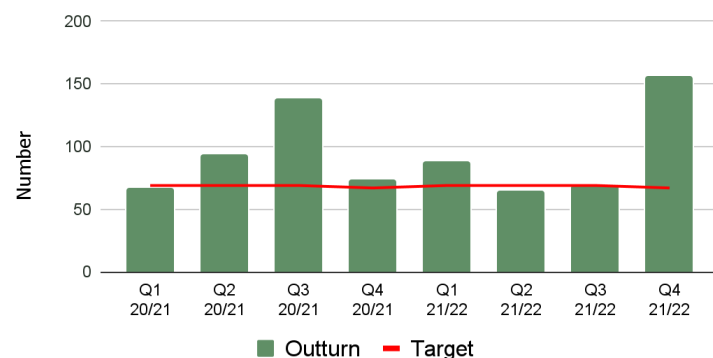


The number of successful 'move ons' from Emergency Accommodation to long term accommodation

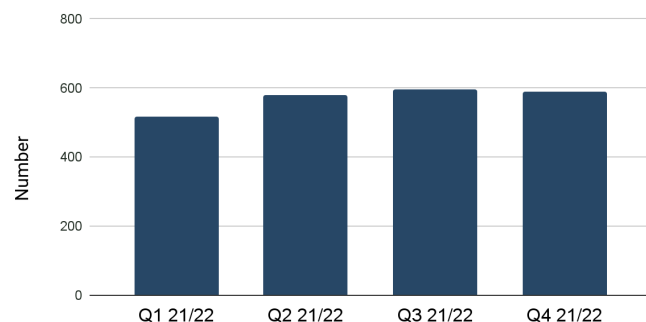


The number of affordable homes reaching practical completion

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



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



The number of people contacting the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness increased in Q3 and into Q4 due to the ending of Covid related financial incentives and the new Government request to accommodate all rough sleepers under Protect and Vaccinate directive in December 2021 in response to concerns surrounding the impact of the Omicron variant.

Going forward, the Housing Team is refocusing more resources on the Prevention approach with the recruitment of specialist Complex Needs officers as well as moving people on from emergency accommodation as quickly as possible using Specialist Temporary Accommodation officers who are able to offer dedicated support and bespoke solutions.

The availability of social housing stock however remains low, partially due to prevention measures in place to assist those affected by the financial implications of Covid and the increasing cost of energy to remain in their own home. Accessing the Private Rented Sector remains difficult due to affordability.

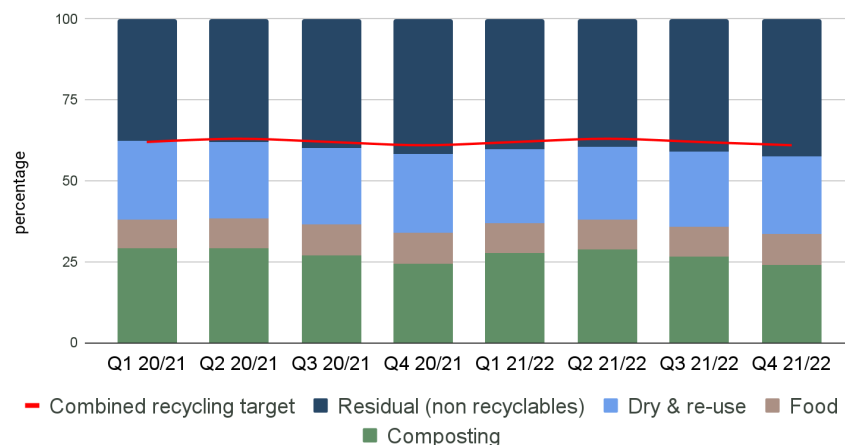
The lifting of the eviction ban on 1 October 2021 has resulted in an increase in both the number of families and domestic abuse cases approaching for assistance with their housing. During Q4, targeted provision for rough sleepers has been provided as part of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. Over the coming months, the Council will need to be mindful of potential future demand resulting from asylum dispersal and the impacts on services.

Through negotiation with developers, the Council is able to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing. 156 homes were completed for affordable rent and shared ownership making a total of 378 for the year, well ahead of the target. The success of the Oxfordshire Growth Deal schemes is becoming apparent with 80 homes completed in Q4 on the Housing 21 affordable extra care scheme at Chipping Norton. In addition, a range of proactive work is being undertaken to reduce the number of LTE properties in the District. The Council's Long Term Empty officer contacts property owners to offer advice on the options available to them, and during Q4 removed 170 properties from the LTE list, although 163 were added. A three month rolling action plan is in place to reduce the number of LTE properties

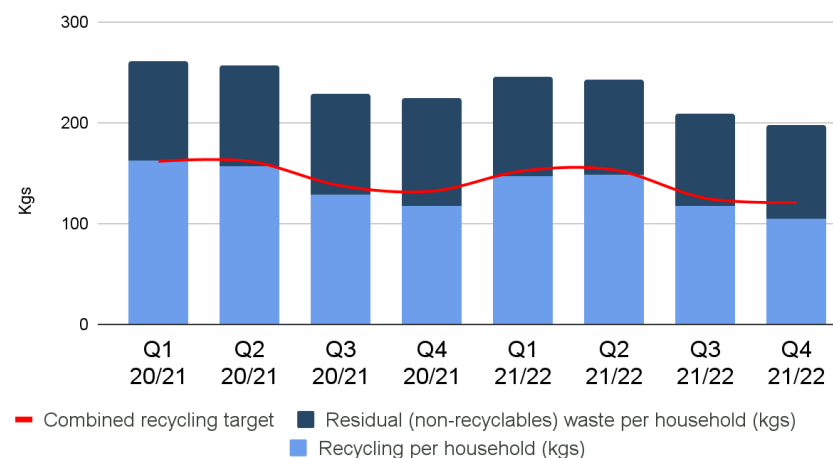


## Waste and Environment Quarter 4

(Cumulative) Household waste collected composition



Household waste collected per household



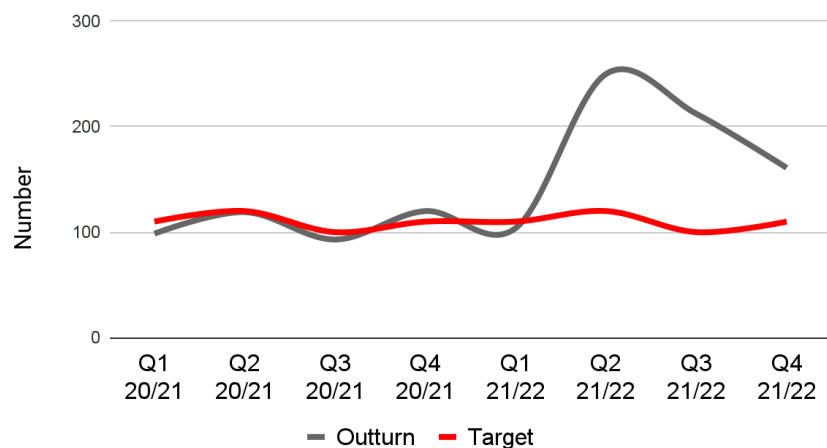
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The combined recycling for 2021-22 was 57.74%, and has varied by about half a percentage point over the last three years. All recycling streams (tonnages) have fallen compared to the previous year but are still higher than the pre-Covid year, in particular for the early part of 2021-22 when restrictions were just lifting. Residual waste per household has reduced significantly over the last six months.

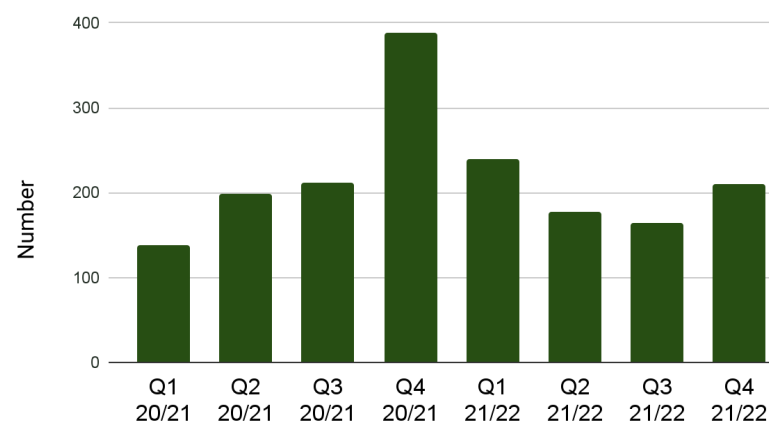
The number missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections is continuing to improve in spite of some staffing issues related to high rates of Covid-19 infection and relatively high levels of waste. The postponement of some rounds due to Storm Eunice resulted in some pockets of missed bins when rescheduled; the impact of which was reduced by the use of In-Cab technology. Further improvements are expected as crews are fully trained in the new technology and work to embed the system is taking place.

The number of fly tips peaked during the final national lockdown and have decreased which may reflect the lifting of restrictions. There was a small spike during Q4 which may relate to the 'Stay at home' message in response to the Omicron variant. As part of the budget 2022/23, Cabinet agreed to additional resources to increase enforcement activities around fly tipping and improving our response to issues raised. Work to recruit to the post has commenced.

Missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections

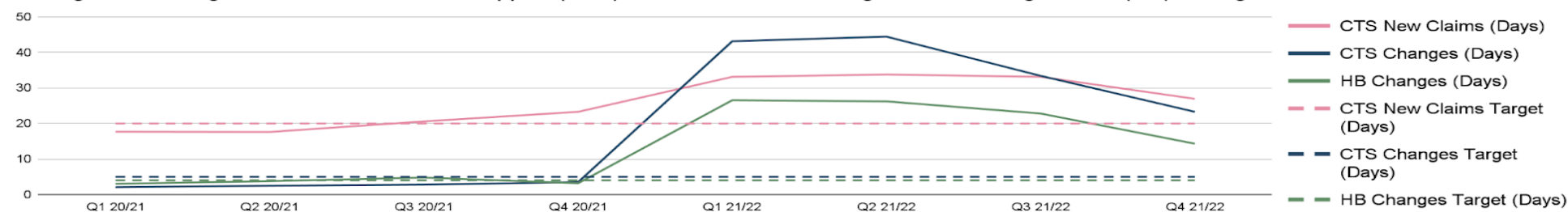


Number of flytips collected

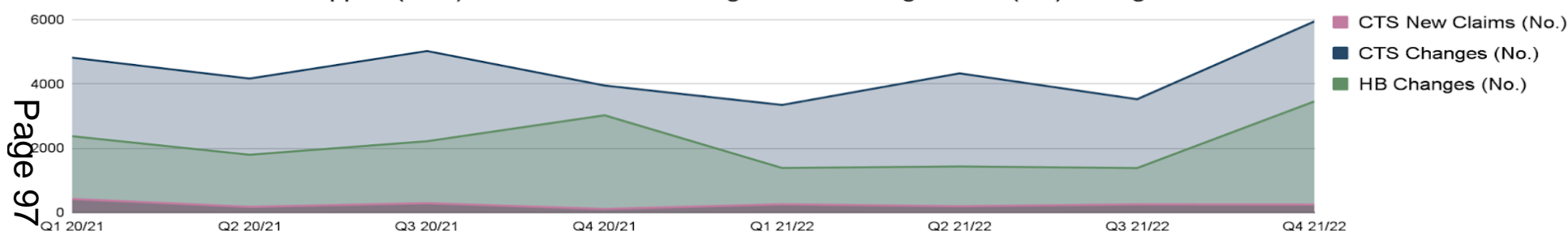


## Revenues and Benefits Quarter 4

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



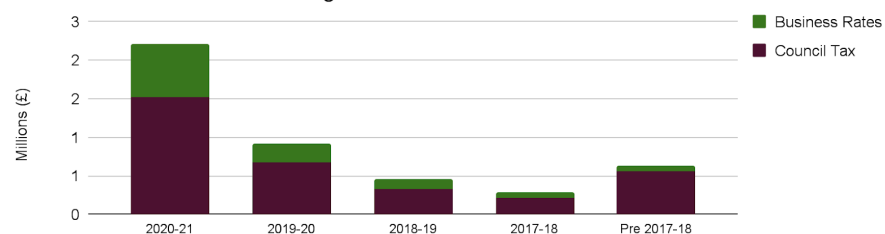
Number of Council Tax Support (CTS) New Claims and Changes and Housing Benefit (HB) Changes Assessed



21/22 Collection Rates

QTR	Council Tax		Business Rates	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
	6.1%	14%	16.3%	12%
YTD	96.3%	99%	93.4%	99%

Council Tax & Business Rates Aged Debt



Qtrly Aged Debt

% Change Council Tax

-27.2%

% Change Bus. Rates

-21.9%

Benefit processing times have improved over the last six months and early signs indicate we should see a return to more normal levels in Q1. The improvement was aided by an injection of additional resources and the resolution of a software failure following the implementation of the new benefits system. As usual, workloads increased during Q4 due to annual uprating which requires the re-assessment of every claim.

Both council tax and business rates collection rates have been depressed over the last two years due to the impact of Covid-19 on households and businesses, and the pause in recovery action (recommencing in August 2021) and delay in the re-opening of Magistrates Courts. During this time, the service has supported homeowners and businesses and encouraged them to make contact to discuss options. Government has recently announced a council tax rebate for some homeowners to help with the rising cost of living, and has made available a range of business grants throughout the pandemic including the most recent £2.27m Covid-19 additional relief; these businesses will have their business rates accounts credited which will help to reduce the debt owed in 2021-22. There is a dedicated team in place for the recovery of rates who are up to date on cases (following the pause); and reduced the previous years' council tax debt by £1.1m and business rates by £311k since the previous quarter.

## WODC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

VARIANCE TO BUDGET		£k		
Service Area	Original Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp.	Variance (under) / over
Democratic and Committee Services	953	927	961	33
Environmental & Regulatory Services	479	746	432	(44)
Environmental Services	7,088	6,925	6,893	(32)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	890	899	895	(3)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	1,802	1,819	1,772	(48)
Land, Legal & Property	863	807	776	(31)
Leisure & Communities	2,058	2,055	1,980	(76)
Planning & Strategic Housing	712	778	720	(58)
Revenues & Housing Support	895	749	790	41
Investment Property and Retained Services	(1,871)	(1,800)	(425)	(245)
<b>Total cost of services</b>	<b>13,868</b>	<b>13,905</b>	<b>14,794</b>	<b>(463)</b>
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(788)	(788)	(794)	(6)
<b>Cost of services before financing:</b>	<b>13,081</b>	<b>13,117</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>(469)</b>

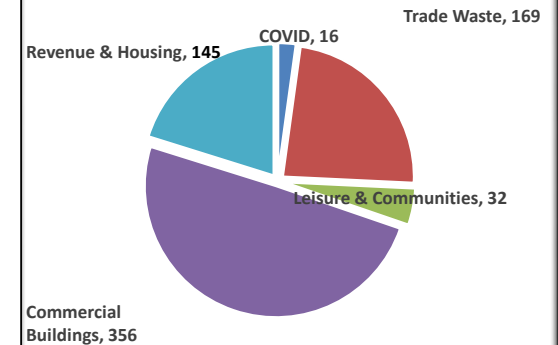
### AGED DEBT SUMMARY

	Mar-22	Dec-21	Sep-21	Movement vs. prior period		
Invoices	1,241	1,244	1,356	3	0%	↓
£k	718	1,093	1,426	375	52%	↓

#### Aged Debt Summary:

- Q4 position has improved versus Q3 with a significant reduction in total aged debt of £375,000.
- Our aim is to bring every case to a conclusion.
- A lot of effort has been successfully put into making sure that invoices do not become overdue by proactively liaising with customers. The success of this strategy is evidenced by an increase of 25% of invoices in Payment Plans vs Q3.

### AGED DEBT BY BUSINESS SERVICE

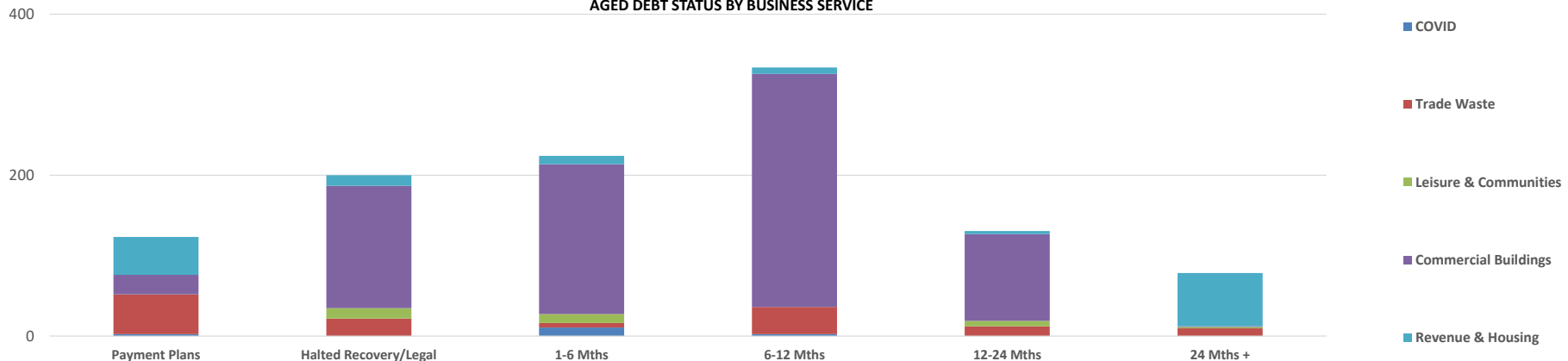


#### Overall Summary:

The Council faced continued pressure on income budgets in 2021/22 with in year reporting highlighting Car Parking and Land Charges. A prudent approach was taken in the 2021/22 budget with the inclusion of £1.8m of income contingencies against our Leisure Contract and Investment Properties. Investment Property rents performed above target by £249,563 aided by the purchase of additional units at Carterton Industrial Estate in Q2 and a material fall in bad debt necessitated a £212,000 reduction in Bad Debt provision.

Both of our major contractors - Publica & Ubico returned a contract refund to the Council at the end of the year, a great achievement against the backdrop of high inflation & fuel prices and the lack of agency workers, providing the Council with a benefit of £67,819 (Publica) and £137,278 (Ubico). Combined with Council Service areas controlling costs and additional grant income from the Government, the Q4 outturn position is very positive, giving the Council the opportunity to place surplus funds into earmarked reserves to offset unavoidable inflationary increases in 22/23.

### AGED DEBT STATUS BY BUSINESS SERVICE





**CABINET (EXECUTIVE) WORK PROGRAMME**  
**INCORPORATING NOTICE OF DECISIONS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE SESSION AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MAKE A KEY DECISION**

**June – September 2022**

*Published xx xxxxxx 2022*

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 Cabinet 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 Cabinet. 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 Cabinet are made available on the Council's website at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/meetings](http://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 Cabinet 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 £50,000 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 Cabinet, that decision will not be a key decision.

#### **Matters To Be Considered in Private**

The great majority of matters considered by the Council's Cabinet 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 all 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](mailto: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)	<b>Leader of the Council:</b> Policy Framework; Corporate Plan; Executive functions; Representation on Regional and National Bodies; Oxfordshire Partnership Board; Oxfordshire Growth Board; Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership; Oxfordshire Leaders; Publica & Ubico; Democratic Services; Communications; Legal Services; and Counter Fraud.
Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader)	<b>Economic Development:</b> Inward investment; Business Development; Visitor Economy; and Town and Village regeneration.
Dan Levy	<b>Finance:</b> Finance & Management; Council Tax and Benefits; Efficiency Agenda; Performance management of the Council; Asset management; Investment Strategy; and South West Audit Partnership.
Carl Rylett	<b>Planning and Sustainable Development:</b> Oxfordshire Plan 2050; 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	<b>Customer Delivery:</b> Parish and Town Empowerment; Equality and Diversity; Customer Services; ICT and services; Councillor Development; and Broadband.
Joy Aitman	<b>Stronger Healthy Communities:</b> Community; Community Revenue Grants; Voluntary sector engagement; Sports and Leisure facilities; Health and Safety; Public art; Facilities Grants; Community and Public Health; Healthy Communities; Accountable Member for Refugee Resettlement Programme; and Young People.

Geoff Saul	<b><i>Housing and Social Welfare:</i></b> <i>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.</i>
Lidia Arciszewska	<b><i>Environment:</i></b> <i>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.</i>
Andrew Prosser	<b><i>Climate Change:</i></b> <i>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.</i>


For further information about the above and all members of the Council please see [www.westoxon.gov.uk/councillors](http://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	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer	Consultation	Background Documents
Community Facilities Grants – 1 <sup>st</sup> Round 2022/23	Yes	No	Cabinet	June 2022	Cllr Aitman	Scott Williams		
Performance Monitoring Report Q4 – 2021/22	No	No	Cabinet	June 2022	Cllr Graham			
Cleaning & Maintenance of Public Conveniences	No	No	Cabinet	June 2022	Cllr Arciszewska	Mandy Fathers		
Acquisition of Amenity Land Langel Common	No	No – confidential annex	Cabinet	June 2022	Cllr Rylett	Frank Wilson	Local Community Group	
Sustainable Warmth – Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 and Home Upgrade Grant (HUG)	Yes	No	Cabinet	June 2022	Cllr Prosser	Ness Scott		
PSDS 3 Carterton Leisure Centre decarbonisation	Yes	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Prosser	Vanessa Scott		
Approval of revised draft Developer Contributions SPD for public consultation	No	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Rylett	Chris Hargraves	Initial public consultation held Nov – Dec 2020.	

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Likely to be Considered in Private (Yes / No)	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer	Consultation	Background Documents
Consideration of options for the future provision of legal services to the Council	Yes	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Graham	Giles Hughes		
Approval of funding for West End Link Study	No	No	Cabinet	July 2022		Chris Hargraves		
Oxfordshire Food Strategy	No	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Aitman	Phil Martin/Andy Barge (GM) Philippa Lowe (BM) Heather McCulloch (Lead officer)		
Review of Options- Hensington Road, Woodstock	No	No	Cabinet Council	July 2022	TBC	Claire Locke		
Agile Working project	Yes	No	Cabinet Council	July 2022	Cllr Graham	Phil Martin / Carl Jones		
Budget Monitoring Report Year End Outturn	Yes	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Levy	Elizabeth Griffiths		

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Likely to be Considered in Private (Yes / No)	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Cabinet Member	Lead Officer	Consultation	Background Documents
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 – Initial Issues and Scoping Consultation	Yes	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Rylett	Chris Hargraves		
Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update	Yes	No	Cabinet	July 2022	Cllr Rylett	Chris Hargraves		
Performance Monitoring Report Q1– 2021/22	No	No	Cabinet	Sept 2022	Cllr Graham			
Approval of upgrade to West Oxfordshire's public space CCTV provision and monitoring arrangements	Yes	No	Cabinet	Sept 2022	All relevant Cabinet Members	Andy Barge		
New Lease at Unit 1 Talisman Business Centre, Bicester	Yes	Yes	Cabinet	Sept 22	Cllr Enright	Jasmine McWilliams		

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b> <b>23 June 2022</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>Agenda Item No. 12</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>Committee Work Programme 2022/23</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Norman MacRae, Chair Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Email: <a href="mailto:norman.macrae@westoxon.gov.uk">norman.macrae@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Amy Bridgewater-Carnall, Strategic Support Manager Tel: 01993 861522 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To provide the Committee with an update on its Work Programme 2022/23.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p><a href="#">Annex 1</a> - Work Programme for 2022/23</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Committee notes the work programme, provides comment where needed.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>To enable the Committee to review its 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 May meeting the Committee gave consideration to the development of its Work Programme for the year having regard to the changes to the approach to scrutiny work adopted by Council on 22 October 2008.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1. Members are asked to consider the work programme, along with the Cabinet work programme, and decide if there are any items that they wish to scrutinise in particular.
- 2.2. Once considered, the Committee can decide whether to submit formal comments or recommendations to the Cabinet as they see fit.
- 2.3. In addition to the items contained in the Work Programme there will still be the opportunity to bring forward one-off reports and papers on particular issues of interest to the Committee but it will also be necessary to maintain a general overview of the ways in which external agencies are responding to community concerns. The inclusion of a standing agenda item for Members' questions also provides the opportunity to raise relevant issues.
- 2.4. Local Lead Flood Authority – update  
Laurence King attended the December 2021 and January 2022 and would hope to bring a full update at the meeting in June 2022.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **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, the Executive or any other Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council as it sees fit.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None.

June 2022

WP	Title	Format	Lead Officer / Cabinet Member	Next report / Anticipated Completion Date	Comments
1	Review of OCC Section 19 relating to the Christmas Floods 2020 – Witney Flood Update	Written report	Bill Oddy / Councillor Arciszewska	Laurence King / Phil Martin June 2022	3 February 2022, Committee reviewed and commented on the report.  Update on progress of recommendations due June 2022.
2	Ubico Electric Vehicle	Demo	Bill Oddy	June 2022	To provide the Committee with a demonstration of Ubico electric vehicle before the meeting, followed by a presentation and discussion at the meeting.
3	Annual Carbon Action Plan 2022/23	Report	Vanessa Scott / Andrew Turner Councillor Prosser	June 2022	To provide the Committee with a report on projects to be scrutinised during 2022/23.
4	Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) 2021-22	Report	Scott Williams / Louise Oddy / Councillor Arciszewska	June 2022	To provide the Committee with a presentation on the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) 2021-22 (Case Study), and benefits delivered by the Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme (Case Study).

Work Programme 2022/23 – Climate and Environment O&S

Annex I

5	Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Four	Report	Bill Oddy / Mary-Ann Forrest / Councillor Levy	June 2022	To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Q4 Performance Monitoring Report.
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**September 2022**

WP	Title	Format	Lead Officer / Cabinet Member	Next report / Anticipated Completion Date	Comments
1	Waste Service Review	Report	Scott Williams / Bill Oddy / Councillor Arciszewska	As required	
2	Annual Ubico update	Presentation	Beth Boughton (Ubico) / Councillor Arciszewska	Annually	
3	Witney Flood update	Update Report	Laurence King / Phil Martin / Councillor Arciszewska	Every committee	
4	Carbon Action Plan - I Project	Report	Vanessa Scott / Andrew Turner / Councillor Prosser	Every committee	
5	Air Quality Update	Report	Phil Measures / Councillor Arciszewska	As required	

**Previous months view - 2021 / 2022**

WP	Title	Format	Lead Officer / Cabinet Member	Next report / Anticipated Completion Date	Comments
1	Review of OCC Section 19 relating to the Christmas Floods 2020	Written report	Bill Oddy / Councillor MacRae	3 February 2022, Committee to review the report and comment.	The Cabinet member, Councillor MacRae and the Shared Principal Engineer Mr Laurence King attended the 2 December Committee meeting and gave updates. The draft report is due w/c 13 <sup>th</sup> December for tweaking, it will then be issued as final version to Frank Wilson and Councillor MacRae, then Scrutiny, then Cabinet.
2	Riparian Ownership and flood risk WODC owned land	Verbal update	Councillor MacRae / Laurence King	3 February 2022 Committee to review the report and comment.	Site visit occurred 5th August 2021. Report to be completed by mid-December. Report to be shared in late January.
3	Ubico 22/23 Business Plan themes	Presentation from Ubico	Councillor MacRae / Beth Boughton (Ubico)	3 February 2022	Beth Boughton from Ubico due to present in person.
4	Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Two	Written Report	Bill Oddy / Councillor MacRae	3 February 2022	Bill Oddy, Elizabeth Griffiths and Frank Wilson on hand for questions.

# Work Programme 2022/23 – Climate and Environment O&S

Annex 1

5	Air Quality Update	Verbal Update	Phil Measures	3 February 2022	Phil Measure to provide a verbal update
6	Governments initiative of zero recycle cost for residents	Verbal update	Councillor MacRae / Scott Williams	When there is news to share. Initiate began 2019 but is behind due to the pandemic, review beginning 2022	Verbal update due from Scott Williams when there is news to share. See link for current details: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-overhaul-waste-system">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-overhaul-waste-system</a>

Regular Reports	Frequency	Next Meeting Date
Update on Carbon Action Plan – Ness Scott and Councillor Harvey (Cabinet Work Programme number 3)	Every meeting	May 2021 onwards – to induct any new Members and verbal update.
Flood Prevention, Drainage & Sewerage Infrastructure Issues - Councillor MacRae / Laurence King	As required	Ongoing
Air Quality	Annual report	Phil Measures to give a verbal update at the Committee 3 February - see link: <a href="https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/noise-pests-pollution-and-air-quality/air-quality/">https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/noise-pests-pollution-and-air-quality/air-quality/</a>

## Suggestions for future workstreams:

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