

Tuesday, 11 April 2023

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EXECUTIVE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Executive which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 19 April 2023 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Executive

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

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

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

AGENDA

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 14)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 8 March 2023.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Executive.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Executive, on any items to be considered at the meeting.
4. **Participation of the Public**
Any member of the public, who is a registered elector in the District, is eligible to ask one question at the meeting, for up to three minutes, of the Leader of the Council, or any Member of the Executive, on any issue that affects the district or its people.

Notice, together with a written copy of the question, must be provided to Democratic Services, either by email to:

democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

or by post to:

Democratic Services, West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB,

Questions are to be received no later than 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting (e.g. for a Wednesday meeting, the deadline would be 2.00pm on the Friday before).

A response may be provided at the meeting, or within three clear working days of the meeting. If the topic of the question is not within the remit of the Council, advice will be provided on where best to direct the question.

The appropriate Executive Member will either respond verbally at the meeting or provide a written response which will be included in the minutes of the meeting.
5. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council or Members of the Executive.
6. **Ubico Business Plan 2023/2024 (Pages 15 - 40)**
Purpose:
To consider the Ubico Business Plan 2023-24 and any comments made by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan, subject to any comments the Executive wishes to make and those made by other Shareholder Councils.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

- a) Recommend that, subject to any comments it makes, the Ubico Business Plan 2023-24 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative of Ubico Limited and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the other Shareholder Councils and/or general editing.

7. **West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041** (Pages 41 - 112)

Purpose:

To summarise the outcome of the 'Your Voice Counts' Council Plan/Local Plan public consultation which ran from 24 August – 5 October 2022 and to agree a new timetable for taking the Local Plan through to submission and adoption.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

- a) Note the content of the report; and
- b) Agree to approve the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B.

8. **Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund** (Pages 113 - 116)

Purpose:

To adopt the Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/2024

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

- a) Approve a payment of £55 as detailed in paras 3.3 and 3.4 of this report; and,
- b) Delegate the distribution of surplus funds to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance

9. **Integrated Care Strategy for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB ICS)** (Pages 117 - 166)

Purpose:

To present the new Integrated Care Strategy for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) and seek Executive's endorsement of it.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

- a) Endorse the BOB Integrated Care Strategy

10. **Contracted Environmental Health Out of Hours Service** (Pages 167 - 172)

Purpose:

To end the contract for the Out of Hours Environmental Health Service

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

- a) End the current contracted out of hour's service

11. **Consideration of Local Authority Housing Fund Application (Pages 173 - 182)**

Purpose:

To confirm the preferred method of delivery of up to sixteen new affordable homes utilising the Local Authority Housing Fund Allocation previously approved by the Executive on 8 February 2023

Recommendations

That the Executive resolves to:

- a) Accept the proposal from Cottsway Housing to fulfil the requirements of the Local Authority Housing Fund on behalf of the Council in respect of the delivery of 16 additional affordable homes;
- b) Passport the funding received by the Council to Cottsway Housing underpinned by a funding agreement setting out the relevant grant terms;
- c) Request the Chief Executive to establish a regular strategic forum to allow the Executive Member for Housing to improve the strategic engagement with our largest Registered Social Landlord in the district. Requests officers to update the Executive on a regular basis on progress against delivery of these homes and subsequent use for other housing purposes.

12. **Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Pages 183 - 184)**

Purpose:

To consider recommendations from the Economic and Social Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny:

That the Executive be asked to:

- a) Request that officers include within the current review of the Local Plan specific policies in respect of Public Houses – Future after Closure taking account of specific conditions pertaining at the time a Public House closes such as a sequential test or alternate community use.
- b) Amend the title of the *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy* to *Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy*.

Recommendations of the Executive

That the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee be accepted.

(END)

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Executive

Held in the Carterton Community Centre, Marigold Square, Carterton OX18 1AX at 2.00 pm
on **Wednesday, 8 March 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham, Duncan Enright, Joy Aitman, Lidia Arciszewska, Dan Levy, Mathew Parkinson, Andrew Prosser and Geoff Saul.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer), Susan Sale (Monitoring Officer), Andy Barge (Assistant Director - Communities), Phil Martin (Assistant Director - Business Services), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director - Commercial Development), Max Thompson (Democratic Services Manager), Elise Chowdhury (Communications Officer), Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services), Barry Clack (Communications Officer), Mandy Fathers (Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service, Revenues & Housing Support) and Michelle Ouzman (Democratic Services).

Other Councillors in attendance: Alaa Al-Yousuf, Jill Bull, Ted Fenton, Natalie King, Norman MacRae MBE, Charlie Maynard, Martin McBride, Michele Mead and Rosie Pearson

11 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive, held on Wednesday 8 February 2023, were unanimously approved by the Executive, and signed by Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council.

12 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Carl Rylett.

13 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, stated that the last item of exempt business on the agenda had arisen as a result of a previous decision he had executed. Councillor Levy advised that he would take leave of absence when that item of business was heard.

14 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at the meeting.

Councillor Norman MacRae MBE rose on a Point of Order, (15.14 Questions Previously Asked), regarding a question which had been submitted prior to a previous meeting of the Executive that had not been answered.

Democratic Services committed to looking into this matter and responding to Councillor MacRae.

15 Receipt of Announcements

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Andy Graham, welcomed all attendees to the meeting, and thanked members of the public for attending. The Leader advised that this meeting was the fourth in the series of the Council's "Executive on Tour", having held previous meetings around the West Oxfordshire district in Charlbury, Chipping Norton and Woodstock.

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The Leader advised public attendees that Members of the Executive would remain in attendance after the meeting had finished, so that they could meet each other and answer any questions raised by residents.

The Leader further advised that the final two Agenda Items contained commercially sensitive information and details of a private nature, and as such, the meeting would be required to enter private session. The Leader informed attendees that this would be highlighted at the appropriate juncture.

After a round of introductions from other Executive Members and Officers present, the Leader was pleased to introduce Andrea McCaskie, who will, in due course, become the Council's Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer. Andrea will join West Oxfordshire District Council from the Peak District National Park Authority, and has previously worked and held senior positions at a number of different local authorities.

Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, advised attendees that the day of the meeting was also International Women's Day. Councillor Aitman highlighted that the theme for the day in 2023 was Equity, and that the campaign strived to create a more inclusive world for everyone. Councillor Aitman paid tribute to all female Members and Officers of the Council for their continuing hard work.

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change, reminded attendees of an event which would take place after the Executive Meeting, at the Council's main offices at Woodgreen in Witney, where Town and Parish Councils would come together for a Climate and Nature Recovery event. All attendees were encouraged and welcome to attend.

16

Service Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter Three

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report which provided details of the Council's operational performance for 2022-23 Quarter Three (Q3).

In debate, it was highlighted that there were certain factors that had contributed to the detail contained within the service report, such as current levels of inflation, the 'cost of living crisis' and the effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Councillor Levy stated that there were actions plans in place to address the shortfalls contained within the report.

Councillor Levy added that significant work had been executed in the management of the Witney hotel, which was being used for safe accommodation of refugees that had arrived in the area. This was ultimately akin to the work of the Home Office.

The issue of fly tipping was also highlighted during the debate, and that the reporting tool 'Fix My Street' was not working as desired, and that redirection to the Council's website was the default action. Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment committed, in response, to writing to Councillor Ted Fenton regarding this matter.

Councillor Mathew Parkinson, Executive Member for Customer Delivery, added that the Customer Services area had seen a noticeable improvement in its service output and call response times, even with the increased call volumes regarding the implementation of Voter ID ahead of the upcoming Elections in May 2023. Councillor Levy paid tribute to the work of the Council's Electoral Services team for their work in this area.

Councillor Parkinson and Councillor Norman MacRae MBE both highlighted the ease of reporting a missed waste collection, and that it is far more efficient for residents to go online and report a missed collection, rather than the traditional method of calling the Council's

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customer services department. Online reporting enabled residents to obtain a receipt of acknowledgement, rather than a verbal assurance, which provided an audit trail should there be a need for one.

Councillor MacRae highlighted that some waste collection vehicles fall foul of inclement weather, and that their efficiency decreases in time of inclement weather conditions. Councillor Arciszewska further committed to write to Councillor MacRae with details on the provision of newer, modernised and more efficient waste collection vehicles for the district.

Councillor Levy proposed that the Executive note the 2022/23 Q3 Service Performance Report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the 2022/23 Q3 service performance report.

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Financial Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter Three

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report which provided details of the Council's Financial Performance at the end of Quarter 3, 2022/23.

In debate, it was highlighted that much of the detail within the report would have been detailed at the Budget Council meeting in February 2023, and that the detail had also passed through the Finance and Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting which also took place in the same month. As with the Service Performance Report, attention was drawn to external pressures being felt in terms of resourcing. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the Council does not charge for car parking in the district (except for enforcement action where appropriate), which was a contributing factor to shortfalls seen in the report, however the Executive were keen to remind attendees that there was no plan to introduce charging. Trade Waste income was also on the rise, and the Executive highlighted the work of officers in this particular area.

Parking enforcement for off street parking would remain under the jurisdiction of the District Council, with Oxfordshire County Council being responsible for enforcement in other areas, including issuing of littering fixed penalty notices. Recruitment issues were highlighted, with emphasis being given to no temporary staff being in place to ease the burden on resourcing shortfalls.

A timetable of the review of parking enforcement resourcing would be brought to the Executive in June.

There was an overspend under Democratic Services for the provision of Honorary Alderman badges, which were ready to be presented as appropriate.

Attention was drawn to the perceived lack of advertising around the work of the Executive and the Council. For example, it was suggested that there was little advertisement of the Executive on Tour meeting series, and that more advertisement could have seen higher levels of public attendance.

Attention was also drawn to the shortfalls in income surrounding land charges and surveys. Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, pointed out that there was stiff competition from the private sector in this matter.

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Councillor Levy proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the Financial Performance 2022/23 Quarter Three report.

18 Flood Management Service Review

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment, introduced and gave an overview of the report which provided the Executive with a structured summary of the Flood Management Service review, the areas explored, relevant findings and a proposed way forward that will not only meet current but future challenges facing the District and its residents regarding the risk from flooding.

In debate, the Executive, along with Councillor Norman MacRae MBE, were keen to praise the work of Laurence King, the Council's Lead Flood Risk Management Officer in this area, and to commend him for the work he has undertaken. Many members had spoken in the past regarding the contribution of his work in the area. Particular attention was given to the work of Officers who were working in liaison with Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The County Council, along with Witney Town Council were currently seeking to recruit volunteers to act as flood wardens, as part of a trial in the area.

Phil Martin, Assistant Director for Business Support Services, highlighted that Oxfordshire County Council was the lead flood authority locally. Resourcing issues had played a major role in the shortcomings of both Thames Water and the Environment Agency, and the Council was meeting with them on a monthly basis to address a wide range of issues that arose from this subject.

Councillor Arciszewska proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the outcomes of the review;
2. Agree the recommendations outlined within the report.

19 Review of Community Grant Schemes

Councillor Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, introduced and gave a detailed overview of the report, which proposed a new approach to community grant funding, better aligned to the outcomes intended from the Council Plan, and the fostering of greater community engagement & involvement.

In debate, Members in attendance stated that this review was welcome and asked whether new tranches of funding would go ahead as planned. Reference was made to the report that new applications for Facilities Grants would not be considered until January 2024.

The issue of Town and Parish Council funding was also highlighted, with an example of Kencot Parish Meeting not having the funds that they had previously desired for the provision of a bucket swing to be installed in a play park. A further example was given to a local education setting which did not have the desired funds for an ecological project.

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Attention was also drawn to the fact that local community groups, such as Women's Institute (WI) did not have a social media presence due to internet connectivity, so it was perceived that some community groups may miss out of work surrounding the project, which was deemed to tie in to perceived shortfalls in advertising.

Help would be provided through 'SpaceHive' and the overall Community Grant Schemes to counteract issues that communities face in grant applications.

The Assistant Director for Communities committed to confirming the number of 'tranches' and would clarify as appropriate with the Leader of the Opposition.

Reassurance was also given that the project was 'good value for money', and this was backed up by feedback received by the Executive Member from others who had experience in the area.

Councillor Aitman proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Introduce a new approach to revenue grant funding from 2024/25, aligned to four lots and supported by three year service level agreements;
2. Agree the four lots as:
 - a. Improving our natural environment and the access to it, so that we enable physical and mental wellbeing and cohesive, connected communities;
 - b. Taking action towards the climate and ecological emergencies, so that we reduce carbon footprints and encourage nature recovery;
 - c. Increasing community resilience and amplifying the voice of the seldom heard, so that we take action on issues most important to our residents and their needs, such as access to food, supporting young people and cultural provision;
 - d. Providing residents with high quality, independent housing advice, welfare and debt advice services, so that they are empowered to tackle their problems and we support those who are unable to deal with difficult circumstances on their own;
3. Request officers to consider potential outline allocations within each of the lots and report back on proposals;
4. Agree that the community revenue grant funding awarded in 2022-23 be awarded again in 2023-24 to the same recipients and at the same level to allow a managed transition;
5. Approve civic crowdfunding as an alternative to community facilities grants and make up to £120,000 available to pledge against proposed projects;
6. Agree the proposed procurement route to appoint 'SpaceHive' as the Council's civic crowdfunding platform provider on a three year contract;
7. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Members for Stronger Healthy Communities, Planning and Sustainable Development, Environment, and Climate Change to agree the type of projects to be supported and the pledge criteria for crowdfunding;

8. Approve the allocation of £25,000 to increase the Council's grants capability, as described in the report.

20 West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan Addendum

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report, which considered an addendum to the West Eynsham SDA masterplan, produced by the four main landowner/developers in response to further engagement with third party landowners.

In debate, it was highlighted that the report was before the Executive as a result of amendments to the Masterplan, which had arisen from land owners in Eynsham claiming that they had not been consulted on the Masterplan. Developers in the area had since consulted with the land owners, and these had formed the amendments for consideration at the meeting.

Councillor Levy proposed that the second recommendation on the report's front sheet be amended to refer the matter to Overview and Scrutiny Committee ahead of further consideration by the Executive at a future meeting.

Councillor Levy proposed that the Executive agree the recommendations as amended.

This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report; and
2. Request that the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider this item and provide any comments, before it is re-considered by the Executive.

21 Council Tax Premiums - Second Homes

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave an overview of the report which considered proposals to implement a Council Tax Premium on second homes.

In debate, it was highlighted that there was a significant community and societal value to the proposition although the idea had not yet been formally approved by central government. A premium on second homes would potentially over compensate for paid services such as lower waste collections and community 'wear and tear' for properties that were not primary residencies. The anticipated council tax premium on second homes would pave the way for societal and financial protection for some of the most rural communities within the district.

In debate, attention was drawn to a lack of funding received by the Council from "Airbnb" properties, that the full tax receipt will increase as part of a second homes premium, and that short term lets should pay Council Tax, but were not mandated to. This proposition and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been deemed to have been brought forward before legislation had been introduced. Other authorities, such as one in Wales had licensing schemes in place already to limit the number of holiday lets and short term let properties. It was confirmed that a reason for early introduction was to allow Officers sufficient time to put preparatory work in place ahead of the legislation being passed. Home owners had 12 months' notice of the introduction. The Executive stated that this work allowed the Council to be 'on the front foot' ahead of the anticipated introduction of legislation.

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Councillor Levy proposed that Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Geoff Saul, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the report and agree in principle to the implementation of charging 100% premium for second homes, and reducing term for applying charge for empty properties form 2 years to one year, subject to the emerging legislation being passed;
2. Instruct officers to bring a further report back to the Executive when the legislation has been passed, providing detail on the legislative implications and proposed implementation.

22 Business Rates Relief 2023/2024: Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Scheme

Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, introduced and gave a brief overview of the report which considered a scheme of rate relief for retail premises as outlined by the Government in the Autumn Statement of 2022.

The Executive stated that many were concerned about the knock on effects to small businesses as a result of ongoing and rising costs, such as energy & the cost of living crisis, and this scheme would go a long way to help them address issues faced.

Councillor Levy proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Geoff Saul, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report;
2. Endorse the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Scheme, detailed in Annex A of the report;
3. Delegate Authority to the Assistant Director for Resident Services to award such relief.

23 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Update

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced and gave an overview of the report which provided an update on the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in West Oxfordshire.

In debate, it was noted that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, introduced by central government, had taken the decision to abolish 'CIL' and replace it with a National Levy. The Executive stated that work must continue on the Levy in its current form and that it would take some time for the transition to take effect. The Council was commissioning a viability study, which would feed into the Council's work on its update to the Local Plan in 2041, and encourage affordable, quality homes within the district.

Councillor Saul proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Prosser, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the report;

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2. Agree that new viability evidence is commissioned to inform both a draft CIL charging schedule and the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041.

24 Waste Service Review and Update and Ubico Contract Extension

Ahead of this item of business, Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, reiterated to those in attendance that if was anyone wished to refer to information contained within the private document pack, the meeting would first have to agree to enter private session.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment, introduced the report which updated the Executive on the Council's waste service review, and the Ubico contract for waste, recycling and associated collections, services, street cleansing & grounds maintenance services.

Councillor Arciszewska gave a detailed overview of Ubico as a 'Teckal' company and how, as a whole, how it carried out its business on behalf of district councils, offering good value for money on services provided.

In debate, a question was raised as to whether or not a 'brake clause' be added into Ubico's contract after 1 year with the Council, and it was consequently confirmed that the Council does have a brake clause and could terminate the contract with 12 months' notice. It was also highlighted that there was a further additional income receipt of approximately £2 million from green waste collection.

Attention was also drawn to the fact that previous report versions of the waste service review had not been completed, and had not been subject to scrutiny from the appropriate committees of the Council. Officers confirmed that this was making reference to the service review report and that briefings had taken place. The Council's Chief Executive confirmed that this was a separate work stream.

Councillor Arciszewska proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Endorse the proposal contained in the report;
2. Recommend to Council that the current contract with Ubico is extended until 31 March 2026.

25 Exclusion of Press and Public

Councillor Graham proposed that Executive agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining exempt items of business on the basis that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. This was seconded by Councillor Mathew Parkinson, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to:

1. Exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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26 Waste Service Review Item 14 - Appendix C - Value for Money Assessment

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which provided an update of the value for money assessment.

Councillor Graham proposed that the Executive note the content of the Waste Service Review Value for Money Assessment. This was seconded by Councillor Mathew Parkinson, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Note the content of the Waste Service Review Value for Money Assessment.

27 Section 13A Discretionary Council Tax Appeal

Ahead of this item of Business being heard, Councillor Dan Levy, Executive Member for Finance, left the meeting room at 3.32pm whilst the item of business was heard.

Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues, introduced the report and gave an overview of the consideration by the Executive of a S13A Discretionary Council Tax discount appeal application.

The Executive debated the rationale for the appeal and what steps were being taken by the appellant to address the financial issues they were facing. The Executive noted that whilst payment provisions were being discussed with the appellant, the value of debt owed to the Council would still rise during the next final year. Officers advised that the appellant would be signposted to Citizens Advice to aid their recovery.

Councillor Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the refuse the appeal on the advice of Officers. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.


Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Refuse the appeal for Council Tax Section 13A Discretionary discount submitted under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Meeting closed at 3.39 pm

CHAIR

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 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – WEDNESDAY 19 April 2023</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2023-24</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Scott Williams – Business Manager, Contracts Email: scott.williams@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the Ubico Business Plan 2023-24 and any comments made by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan, subject to any comments the Cabinet wishes to make and those made by other Shareholder Councils.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Ubico Business Plan 2023-24</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p>That Executive Resolves to:</p> <p>a) <i>Recommend that, subject to any comments it makes, the Ubico Business Plan 2023-24 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative of Ubico Limited and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the other Shareholder Councils and/or general editing.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity • Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>The following people have all been consulted on this report and the detail contained within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Andy Graham • Councillor Lidia Arciszewska • Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee • Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee • Senior Council Officers

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), is a shareholder of Ubico Limited, a teckal company designed to deliver environmental services, offering better value for money than commercial contracts.
- 1.2. The teckal model enables councils to commission services without the costs associated with an EU procurement process. Ubico delivers environmental services on behalf of the council at a price which reflects the actual cost of service provision, but in doing so holds no assets, and so the depot it operates from, the vehicles it uses to perform the services and the waste and recycling containers which are provided to residents, are all owned by the authority. This ensures that the shareholders have full control over high value expenditure.
- 1.3. As part of the establishment of Ubico, a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council approval to ensure that shareholder councils retained an element of control over their company.
- 1.4. The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine. For each partner council this is the Leader of the Council. To assist the Leader in reaching her decision the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee have reviewed the Draft Business Plan.
- 1.5. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and The Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee have reviewed the business plan presentation directly from Ubico and their comments will be verbally given to the Executive at the meeting.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The Business Plan provides the vehicle to carry forward and address the issues identified by the Ubico Shareholder Councils. The 5 year vision developed by the Ubico Board of Directors in 2020 identifies the following priorities:
 - Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
 - Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
 - Using technology to drive operational efficiency
 - Understanding our communities' needs
 - Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services
- 2.2 Ubico's 2023/24 business plan and 5-year vision is built around four key pillars:

People

We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.

Operations

We will deliver high quality services, which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.

Climate

We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.

Business Development

We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.

- 2.3 In support of the councils service related and financial priorities, Ubico is continuing to work in partnership with Publica and the Council as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) which is bringing forward opportunities to deliver better services to residents, reduce the effect services have on the climate and environment, and capture efficiency and financial savings for all partners. This will therefore further support the business plan. During the last year ESIP has delivered the following:

- In-cab technology that has helped maintain a high performing waste and recycling service (Over 99% collection rate) and makes it easier for residents to report missed collections
- A new process for residents to purchase green waste licences of which 90% are now procured on-line
- Community recycling sites removed, reducing the level of fly tipping
- Litter bin review and replacement programme completed and every parish and town has new dual waste bins
- Purchase of a new electric road sweeper to support the council's climate change strategy

- 2.4 One of the Directors will attend the Cabinet meeting and be able to answer and questions.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. To meet the company's Members' Agreement to approve the business plan.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with the Ubico Business Plan as the budget has already been approved. Ubico has committed to supporting the council deliver savings through the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) to support its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with The Members' Agreement for Ubico Limited.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. There are no specific risks in adopting the Ubico business plan. The council is a shareholder of the company and has already committed to a 2 year contract extension which began on 1st April 2022, and which reaffirmed its commitment to Ubico.
- 6.2. If the Council does not approve the plan there is a risk that the company will not be able to support some of the activities necessary to deliver the savings set out in the council's MTFS or its corporate priorities.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. The Cabinet is free to make comments in relation to the plan, but proposed amendments will need to be agreed by the other shareholder councils.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. None



2023/24 Business Plan

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1. Business Overview

1.1. Introduction

Ubico delivers high quality front line environmental services for our shareholder councils, which support and improve our local communities to remain clean, green and pleasant places to live and work. The company has grown significantly in its first 10 years of operations, with our eighth local authority shareholder joining as a partner in 2021.

We set out a new five-year vision for the company in 2021, and in 2023/24, the third year of this vision, we will build on the successes already achieved. Particular areas of focus will be around our people, carbon reduction, digitisation and collaborative working.

Ubico's most valued resource is its committed, dedicated and experienced workforce and we must ensure we continue to attract and retain staff with the knowledge and skills required to deliver excellent quality services. Recently, external to Ubico, low unemployment rates, salary inflation and general inflation have created additional challenges to both staff retention and staff recruitment. A salary benchmarking exercise undertaken in 2022 will be revisited in 2023 as it is vital that we continue to evaluate and understand the scale of these challenges and the potential risk to quality service delivery and identify options to mitigate these risks if necessary. We will also look to develop further in the areas of staff attraction, retention and upskilling.

Climate and carbon reduction activity will continue to have a strong emphasis, where we will seek to further improve our carbon reduction activities and support our partners to achieve their carbon goals. Digitisation of our processes remains a pivotal activity, driving innovation and serving as a platform for further development in the future. Our size and geographical coverage places the company in a strong position to explore innovative collaborative and cross boundary opportunities to deliver greater value to our shareholders, and we will continue working with them to progress these opportunities. We will also continue to present proposals for business development and wider partnership working for shareholder consideration.

1.2. Our shareholders

Ubico is a wholly-owned local authority company with eight shareholders, Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.



1.3. Quality and safety at our core

Health, safety and compliance remain our number one priority and we are committed to driving continuous improvement in these areas. This is demonstrated through our ongoing achievement of industry-recognised accreditations, including ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 for our Health and Safety Management and Environmental Management Systems respectively. We are committed to building a positive health and safety culture which is evident in all our activities and services, and is driven by our Safety, Health, Environment and Quality team. Our internal compliance function is committed to providing assurance to all our stakeholders and is vital in the organisation's commitment to maintain high standards of compliance and to seek continuous improvement.

In 2023/24 we will remain committed to improving our health and safety performance, in particular around the area of vehicle accidents. We will continue to support our staff through the ongoing provision of health and wellbeing support and advice, which we have recently strengthened through the introduction of our employee engagement app. We will continue to investigate further opportunities provided by the app to improve employee support even further, building on the strong provision already in place.

Our internal training provision affords us the flexibility to deliver targeted health and safety training, which is specific to our activities and delivered at a time and pace to best support our teams. We will seek to further strengthen this offering through increased trainer hours, and effective support and administration of this important division.

1.4. Our core services



Refuse collections



Food waste collections



Garden waste collections



Recycling collections



Trade waste and recycling collections



Recycling centre management



Recycling and bulking transfer



Street cleansing



Building and public convenience cleaning



Grounds maintenance



Fleet management and maintenance



MOT and taxi testing

1.5. Our values

deliver quality
be safe
do the right thing
care for our environment
work together

1.6. Governance and risk management

1.6.1. Governance

Good corporate governance and the continued professional development of the board of directors and the senior management team is fundamental to the effective operations of the company. In 2023/24 we will continue to ensure appropriate competency standards and qualifying criteria are applied to all directors and follow the spirit of the UK Corporate Governance Code. At all times, the company will remain open, transparent and accountable. The board and its members will operate as a cohesive team, with its priority at all times to further the aims, goals and values of the company, whilst always having risk and risk management at the forefront of discussions.

Ubico's board of directors comprises three executive directors, four non-executive directors from local authority shareholders, and three independently appointed non-executive directors including an independent chair of the board. The independent non-executive directors will complete their first three-year term of appointment in 2023, with all three seeking re-appointment to their roles, offering the board stability, continuity of knowledge and resilience.

The board is supported by two sub-committees, a Risk and Audit Committee and a Governance and Nominations Committee. These committees support the board in key governance areas, for example, better understanding of business risk, and ensuring the processes to mitigate risk are effective and there is compliance.

As a company, we regularly review our policies, procedures and governance arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose, represent good practice and meet all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, with key policies routinely scrutinised and signed off by the board of directors.

As the company grows, new criterion for reporting is met, and for the year 2021/22 the company was obliged, for the first time, to include carbon performance reporting in its Statement of Annual Accounts, and to produce and publish on its website a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement. The production of these reports, and the delivery of any associated activities required to meet prescribed standards, will continue, becoming routinely embedded in the company's governance processes.

An internal audit plan is completed annually with Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) continuing to deliver Ubico's audit services throughout 2023/24. A full annual audit plan is agreed by the board. The findings and the full audit reports are shared with the full board of directors for review and oversight, and progress against action plans arising from the audits is monitored by the risk and audit committee and reported to the board.

External audit of the company's accounts is determined by our shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

1.6.2. Risk management

Risk management is a core principle of effective corporate governance and is also a key contributor to a sound internal control environment. Ubico continues to seek and adopt recognised best practice in the identification, evaluation and cost-effective control of risks and opportunities to ensure that these are managed at acceptable levels. Our strategic risk management objectives include board and senior management setting a 'tone from the top' on the level of risk we are prepared to accept - our 'risk appetite'. We maintain a strategic approach to risk management in order to make better informed decisions and use risk management to enable consistent appraisal of options and improved flexibility/agility in delivering change. We are committed to developing leadership capacity and skills to ensure understanding of the risks facing the company and how we manage them, and to integrate risk management into how we run Ubico business/services. Overall, we aim to develop a culture of well-measured risk taking throughout Ubico, including strategic, programme, partnership, project and operational risk.

1.7. 2022 Headline Performance

Pillar	Measure	2021 Goal	2021 Achievement	2022 Achievement	2026 Goal
People	Vacancy fill rate (advertisement closed to acceptance)	<1 month	84.08% fill rate Time to hire 2.4 months	85.02% fill rate Time to hire 1.9 months	<1 month
	Annual training budget utilisation	80% of annual training budget	80.08% (Apr to Dec)	100% (21/22)	100% of annual training budget
	Conformance to mandatory training to schedule	>90%	New starters >95%	New starters >95%	>95%
	Staff turnover	<14% attrition	9.62% (20/21)	13.4% (21/22)	<10% attrition
Operational Excellence	Service KPIs - Missed bins (per 100,000 collections)	<0.05 %	0.073%	0.0807%	<0.05 %
	Fleet compliance	Fleet Audit Scores >90%	92.37% average	92.76% average	Fleet Audit Scores >95%
	RIDDOR occurrence	<12 per year	6	11	<9 per year
	Deliver to set budget	Within 5% set budget	-6.4% (20/21)	-3.1% (21/22)	Within 3% set budget
Climate	Reduced carbon emissions	Benchmark in 2021/22	Carbon reduction strategy in place Baseline work in progress (consultant engaged to advise on methodology)	Emissions from activities from fuel consumption: CO2e 6,237t	Sophisticated measures in place across transport, buildings and key activities
Business Development	% Service coverage of core services to existing shareholders		82.61%	82.61%	95%

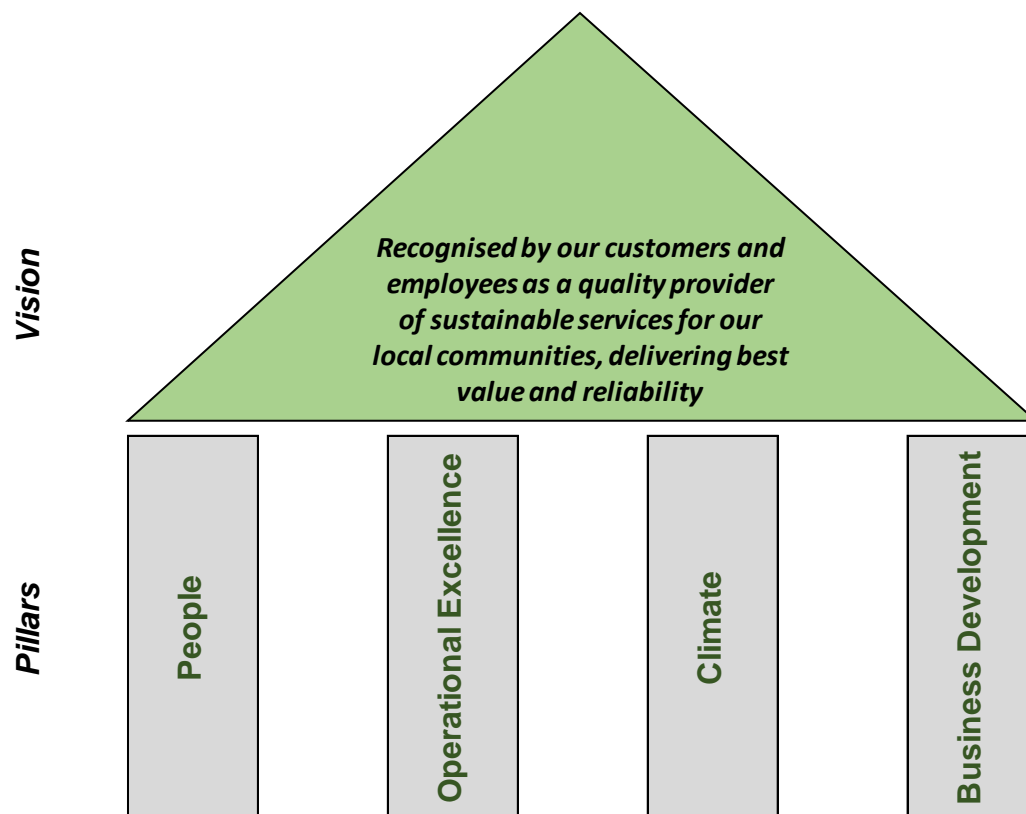
1.8. Our five-year vision (2021-2026)

Recognised by our customers and employees as a quality provider of sustainable services for our local communities, delivering best value and reliability

Through:

- Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
- Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
- Using technology to drive operational efficiency
- Understanding our communities' needs
- Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services

1.9. Strategic Pillars of our vision



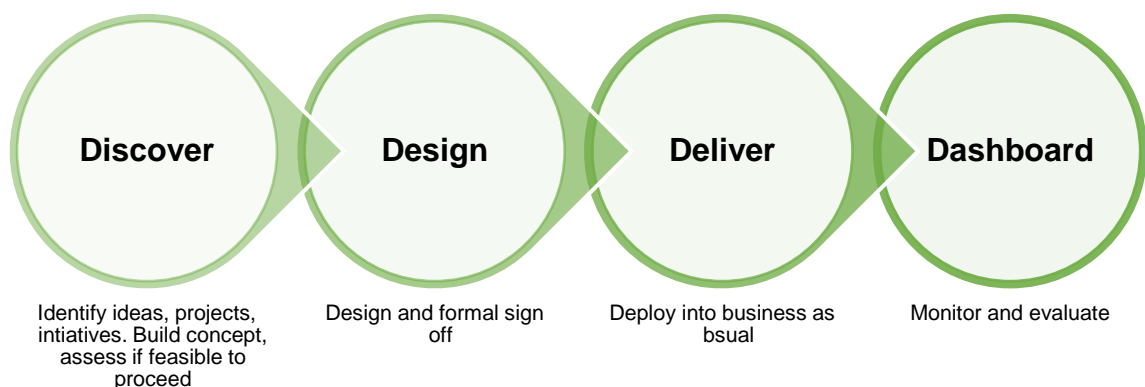
2. Business Plan 2023/24

Ubico's 2023/24 business plan is built around our four key pillars:

People	Operational Excellence	Climate	Business Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. <p>We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.

2.1. Project lifecycle

We have adopted a project lifecycle with four phases; Discover, Design, Deliver and Dashboard, and these can be seen alongside the activities outlined in this business plan. This aids in identifying the stage of each project or initiative and assists with long term planning and mapping, and resource management.

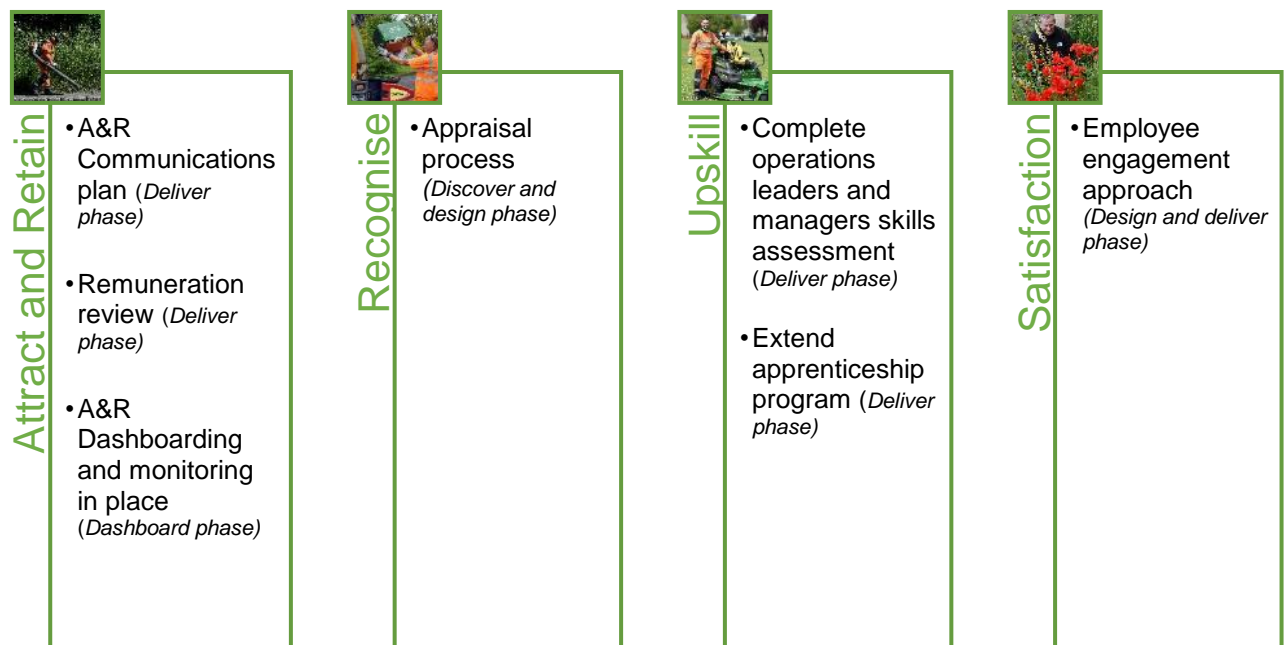


2.2. People Pillar

We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.

2.2.1. 2023/24 Focus areas

There are four focus areas in our business plan for our People pillar for 2023/24 - Attract and Retain, Recognise, Upskill and Satisfaction.



2.2.2. 2023/24 Activity

It is imperative that Ubico remains an attractive employer, attracting and retaining staff with the right skills and experience, and ensuring they are valued, supported and recognised for the excellent work that they do. In 2023/24 we will have a strong focus on our people, building on and developing from key activities achieved in recent years.

Our Communications Strategy has a strong focus on improving our market presence and enhancing our reputation in order to attract strong candidates to apply for our vacancies, as well as significant activity around supporting and ensuring strong engagement with our existing employees. In 2023/24 we will continue to enter sector awards to promote the excellent work of the business; we will seek to improve the promotion of Ubico and its impact with our partner councils through their communication channels, and we will improve

communications awareness and knowledge in our management teams. We will continue to encourage sign up to our employee rewards app which offers numerous benefits for our staff, including discounts at many popular retailers, access to support around money and managing personal finances, an online health portal containing an online library of health and wellbeing information and access to our employee assistance programme. It is also an excellent platform for employee engagement and communication, and we will continue to share company updates and messages through the app as well as through our more traditional communication channels, and we will expand our use of the app to include employee engagement questionnaires and surveys.

In order to continue to deliver safe, compliant and relevant services for its shareholders, Ubico must offer a package that is competitive and attractive in the marketplace, both to retain current, loyal employees, as well as to attract new ones when required. In 2023/24 we will revisit the salary benchmarking exercise undertaken in 2022/23 to ensure Ubico remains competitive and attractive for both existing and new employees. We will reconcile the findings with our current terms and conditions to ensure early identification of any structural gaps which could risk the ongoing effectiveness of service provision.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of our activities around attraction and retention, we will introduce a dashboard of relevant KPIs, which will be reviewed regularly and lead to an action plan for ongoing or future focus areas.

A methodology will be proposed to the senior management team for a suitable new appraisal process for the company, which will then be trialled with a small sector of the workforce. Skills assessments will be completed for operations leaders and managers, and we will identify priority upskilling for individuals or specific roles.

In recent years, we have significantly strengthened our apprenticeships offering which has led to an increase in the number and variety of apprenticeships offered by the company. However, we do not consider that we have met our potential in this area and see this as a focus area for ongoing improvement. In 2023/24 we will improve our publicity around our apprenticeship opportunities, review our training offer to include apprenticeships as part of the reward and recognition package where appropriate, and further increase the range and number of apprenticeships we offer across the business.

2.2.3. People risks and mitigations

Area	Risk	Mitigation
Attract	We are unable to create packages that are competitive in the marketplace.	Continue to improve reward and recognition schemes, staff engagement and the support we provide. Assess market conditions and review with shareholders as required. Monitor interest in vacancies, vacancy fill rate, attrition rate.
Retain	We do not meet our potential in our apprenticeships offer.	Improve our publicity around apprenticeships, increase the range on offer.
Upskill	Inadequate capacity in in-house training team.	Increased trainer resource/hours available, effective support and administration put in place.
	No formal company-wide appraisal or development programme in place.	Ongoing development of the training function, skills assessments in place for priority roles, appraisal process designed.
Satisfaction	Employees are dissatisfied and leave the company.	Continuous improvement around staff support and engagement. Consider expansion of benefits offered both via our employee engagement app and outside it.

2.3. Operational Excellence Pillar

We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.

2.3.1. 2023/24 Focus areas

There are two focus areas in our business plan for our Operational Excellence pillar for 2023/24 - Performance and Quality.



Performance

- Digital Transformation (In-Cab, Dashboarding, Operations Management) (*Deliver phase*)
- Fleet Management System Review (*Discover phase*)



Quality

- Ubico Communications Plan Implemented and Measured (*Deliver & dashboard*)
- Ubico 5 year financial plan (*Deliver phase*)
- Ubico Business Intelligence Dashboard (*Discover phase*)

2.3.2. 2023/24 Activity

The activities identified in our Operational Excellence pillar support Ubico in providing high quality, safe and compliant services, harnessing continuous improvement and innovation wherever possible.

2023/24 will see the ongoing program of digital transformation continue apace, with large workstreams dedicated to introducing an in-cab technology system which is standardised across the company, in line with the partner-agreed roadmap.

Our fleet management system, introduced to standardise internal fleet processes, maintain high compliance standards and improve reporting, is due for renewal or extension in 2024 and we will undertake work to define our fleet management needs ahead of any procurement decision.

We recognise that communication is central to the delivery of our services and priorities, and want to ensure that our priorities, objectives, values and ambitions are understood by our shareholders, communities, workforce, partners, and other stakeholders. To further underpin our progress, we must continue to effectively communicate and engage with our diverse range of external and internal stakeholders. In 2023/24 we will undertake a perception survey with our stakeholders to identify areas of strength and opportunities for continuous improvement. We will strengthen our external communications by appointing a board communications champion, and we will consider opportunities to speak at events and conferences.

We aim to provide strategic longer-term cost projections to all partners for their individual contracts. This will enable a better understanding of cost commitments when aligned to residency profiles, service level commitments and climate target aspirations, with a view to then combining our plans be able to create a company five-year financial plan to better support our strategic aims.

We will continue to develop the measurement of our progress against our strategic goals and recognise the need for sound business intelligence to be able to react and adapt to change and give a higher assurance of success. We will develop the measures and metrics required to create a business intelligence dashboard for our management teams together with a roadmap for the creation of the means to collect, record and report on those metrics.

2.3.3. Operational Excellence risks and mitigations

Area	Risk	Mitigation
Performance	Digitisation projects do not meet plan.	Program structure enables progress monitoring at appropriate levels, allowing early identification and escalation of risks, and intervention to mitigate. Detailed project plan in place, required resource in place and fully funded, with appropriate skills to deliver to requirements.
Quality	Inflationary cost pressures.	Continue to highlight potential areas of cost pressure as early as possible in both budget setting processes and monthly forecasting reports. Ensure partners are aware that Ubico do not hold contingency funding.
	Information gaps, concerns over data security and/or the cost of data collection devalue planning and information reporting initiatives	Risk that the cost of collecting the data required to provide data insights is prohibitive or the data is not directly available may undermine the drive for insight to drive value. The mitigation is to have clarity of data needs, combined with pragmatism over the means to collect data and the appropriate skills in place to build requirements 'right first time' in a secure manner. We will look to leverage partner capabilities but to date we are having to build a capability within which takes time and has more risk of failure.

2.3.4. Procurement Activity 2023/24

In 2023/24 we will complete procurement activity to allow contract award as follows:

Further to procurement activity undertaken in 22/23, contracts will be awarded for the supply of:

- PPE and uniform
- Static compactor service and maintenance
- Occupational Health
- Pest Control
- Cleaning and grounds products
- Site fire and security contracts

Award contract extensions or undertake new procurement activity and award a contract for the supply of:

- Weed Control Operations (covering Cheltenham & Cotswold)
- Vehicle Telematics
- Employee Rewards and Engagement App
- Waste management route modelling software
- Insurance Services
- Confidential waste disposal services

Undertake new procurement activity and award a contract for the supply of:

- Mobile Phones
- Fleet Maintenance - Downs Road
- Fleet Tyres
- Insurance Brokerage Services
- Workshop Overalls Cleaning
- Fleet Framework - Liquid Fuels - Diesel
- Liquid Fuel - Supply of HVO
- Textile Recycling
- Learning Management System (activity deferred from 22/23)

2.4. Climate Pillar

We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.

2.4.1. 2023/24 Focus areas

There are two focus areas in our business plan for our Climate pillar for 2023/24 - Our Environmental Impact, and Supporting Partners with their Impact



Our Environmental Impact

- Measure our energy use (*Design and deliver phase*)
- Design carbon dashboard (*Design phase*)
- CI Programme Q1-4 (*Discover and Design phase*)



Supporting Partners with their Impact

- Work with partners to capture and evaluate climate opportunities (*Discover and design phase*)
- Design process for capturing partner climate opportunities (*Discover and design phase*)

2.4.2. 2023/24 Activity

Ubico's carbon strategy recognises two strands of activity:

- Ubico owned carbon reduction activities that are within the gift of the company to deliver.
- Shareholder sponsored activity which requires approval and funding from our shareholders.

Building on work undertaken in 2022/23, we will continue to measure our emissions, and design a carbon dashboard for ongoing measurement and monitoring of our carbon performance. This dashboard will be a key input into identifying new carbon projects.

In 2023/24 we will continue to work in close partnership with our shareholder partners to deliver carbon reduction and climate beneficial initiatives. We will seek to increase Ubico's involvement with both individual climate offices and wider partnership climate forums and will design a process to capture and evaluate partnership climate opportunities. In some of our depots and offices, we face the challenge of not having access to information around our specific energy usage, and we will work with our council landlords to overcome this issue and get accurate reporting in place. We will seek to understand any requirements or opportunities within the buildings that we occupy, and we will produce individual options strategies for partners on fleet CO₂ / CO₂e reduction.

2.4.3. Climate risks and mitigations

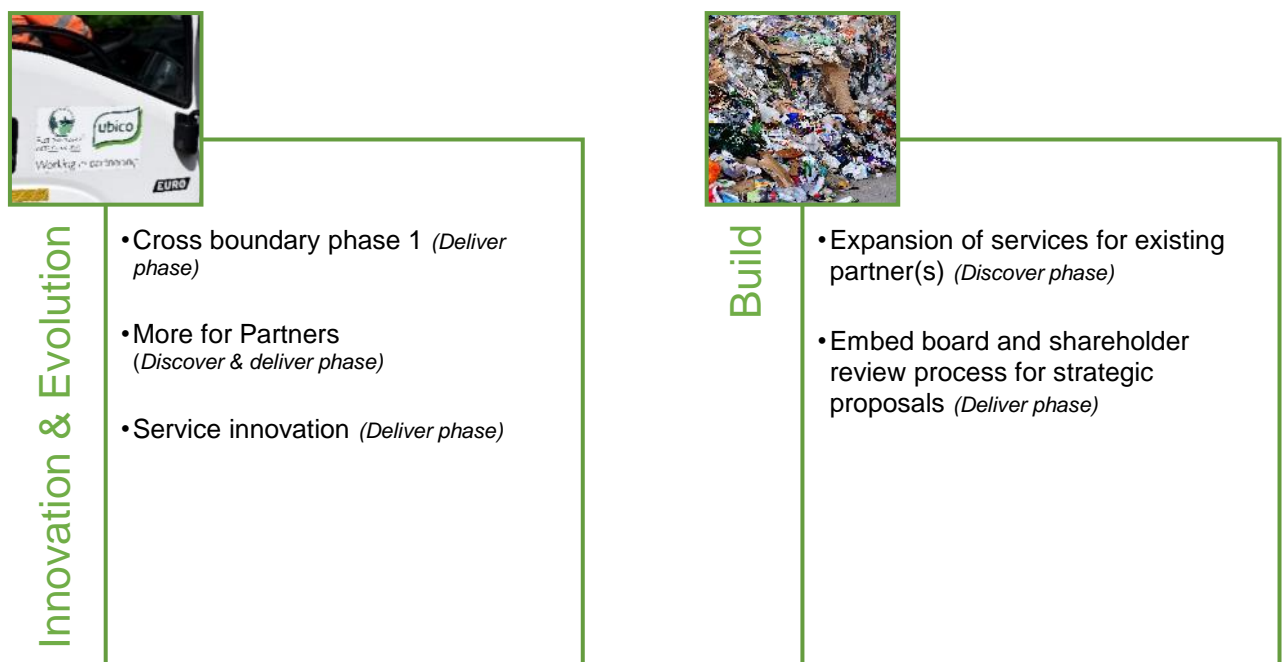
Area	Risk	Mitigation
Our Environmental Impact	Emissions from fleet remain high due to ageing fleet or fuels chosen.	Alternative fuel vehicle options identified on fleet replacement programmes; replacement strategy agreed with partners.
	Inability for Ubico to access energy usage details for the buildings it occupies.	Close partnership working with our council landlords to ensure Ubico's energy usage can be separately identified and is available for Ubico to report on.
Supporting Partners with their Impact	Ubico is not consulted on decisions which could impact carbon emissions, or the success of our carbon reduction initiatives.	Ubico invited to attend key meetings, both with individual partners and in wider partnership forums to ensure our input or impact on our activities is considered.

2.5. Business Development Pillar

We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.

2.5.1. 2023/24 Focus areas

There are two focus areas in our business plan for our Business Development pillar for 2023/24 - Innovation and Evolution, and Build.



2.5.2. 2023/24 Activity

Further to presentations to partners in 2022/23 to understand appetite and direction around cross boundary and collaborative working proposals, we will design a roadmap for this activity, identifying key strands of work, outlining any additional resource requirements, and highlighting priority activity. We will also continue to support partners with any service (re)design or innovation projects and will continue to support the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) in partnership with the three partners involved in that programme.

We will continue our work begun in 2022/23 exploring opportunities for delivering services to shareholder partners which build on our existing capabilities. The feasibility exercise begun

last year evaluating the options and benefits of Ubico extending its activities beyond recycle handling and bulking and into the downstream haulage or reprocessing activity will be concluded and presented to shareholders for consideration. We will continue to work with partners to evaluate high level options for strategic depot locations across our operational areas to inform partner decision making, where necessary.


Ubico delivers operational environmental services, and our vision sees us delivering as many of our core services as possible for our current shareholder partners. From 2024 we will be expanding the services we deliver for Forest of Dean District Council to include waste, recycling and street cleaning services and will begin the mobilisation for this change in 2023/24. We will also continue to evaluate any other opportunities to extend the range of services provided to each of our partners, within our core service portfolio.

An area we aim to develop in the coming year is the progression of strategic ideas and projects which arise outside those identified in the business plan, for which we require shareholder authorisation. To address this, we will embed a new process where projects will have clear information requirements and approval flows with board and the shareholders to simplify and accelerate decision making and delivery.

2.5.3. Business Development risks and mitigations

Area	Risk	Mitigation
Innovation & Evolution	Cross boundary or collaborative working proposals are not endorsed by all partners.	Proposals adjusted to reflect the opportunity should only some partners wish to proceed. Suitable governance arrangements put in place at outset to ensure risk (or benefit) is allotted fairly.
	Expectation of delivery beyond that which can be achieved with available capacity.	Roadmap drawn up and agreed, highlighting priority activity and any additional resource requirements. Additional round routing capacity necessary for service redesign projects included in 23/24 budgets.
Build	Leadership capacity to manage an expanding portfolio.	Focus on core environmental services where we are skilled and experienced.
	Expectation of delivering strategic proposals without requisite skills or capacity.	Detailed shareholder consultation and full understanding of shareholder risk appetite and commitment ahead of commencement of any project.

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 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 19 APRIL 2023</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2041</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Carl Rylett Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development Email: carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Andy Barge, Assistant Director Communities Email: andy.barge@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To summarise the outcome of the ‘Your Voice Counts’ Council Plan/Local Plan public consultation which ran from 24 August – 5 October 2022 and to agree a new timetable for taking the Local Plan through to submission and adoption.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Your Voice Counts Consultation Summary Report - April 2023 Annex B – Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update - April 2023</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the content of the report; and b) Agree to approve the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B.
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>

Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>The report provides an overview of the previous public consultation which took place from 24 August – 5 October 2022 the purpose of which was to help inform the scope of both the new Local Plan and Council Plan.</p> <p>The Local Plan will be subject to further public consultation with Town and Parish Councils and other key stakeholders as part of the Regulation 18 plan preparation stage. There will also be a statutory 6-week consultation at the formal Regulation 19 stage, prior to submission for examination. Anticipated dates for consultation are set out in the LDS update attached at Annex B.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

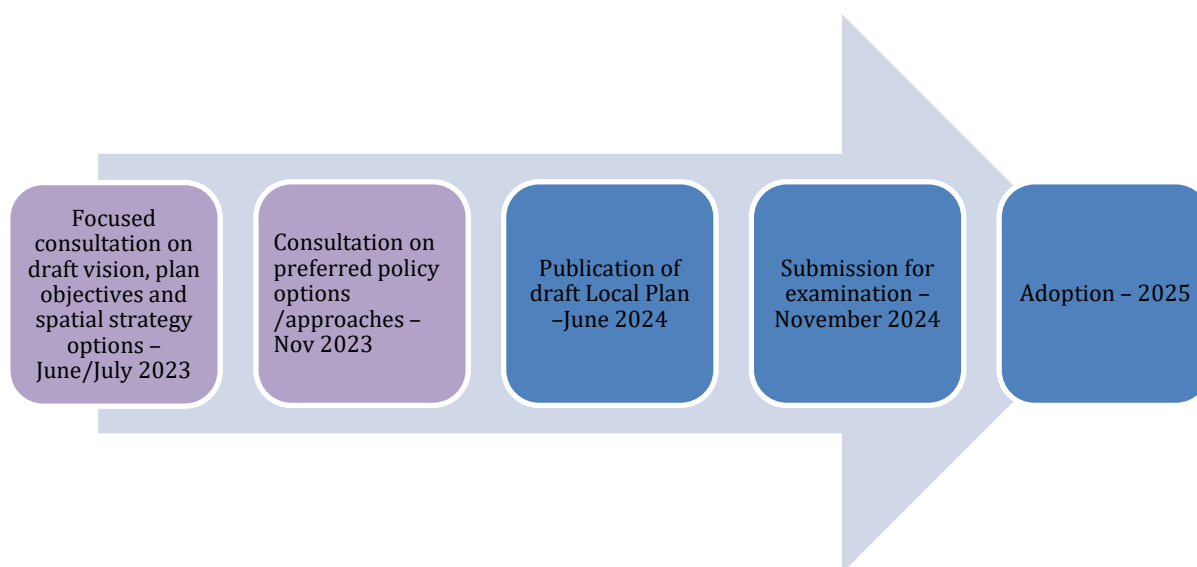
- 1.1** Members will be aware that the District Council has committed to a review of its current Local Plan which was adopted in September 2018. The new Local Plan will cover the 20-year period 2021 – 2041.
- 1.2** To kick off that process, an initial 6-week consultation - ‘Your Voice Counts’ - took place last year, the principal aim being to seek early feedback on potential plan content and priorities.
- 1.3** The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the consultation responses received and to set out a new timetable for taking the Local Plan forward to submission and adoption.

2. ‘YOUR VOICE COUNTS’

- 2.1** The ‘Your Voice Counts’ consultation ran for a period of 6-weeks from 24 August – 5 October 2022. The consultation was a joint exercise, designed to inform both the new Local Plan and Council Plan.
- 2.2** The consultation had a strong digital focus using the District Council’s new commonplace engagement platform <https://yourvoicecounts.commonplace.is/>
- 2.3** This was supplemented by two face-to-face workshop events held with Town and Parish Councils and key stakeholder groups on 5th September and 20th September 2022 respectively.
- 2.4** The primary purpose of the consultation was to seek initial feedback on 6 potential ‘areas of focus’:
 - Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
 - Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive communities
 - An enhanced natural and built environment
 - Attractive, accessible and thriving places
 - Meeting the housing needs of all
 - A vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy
- 2.5** Attached at Annex A is a summary report which provides an overview of the main issues raised through the consultation.
- 2.6** Officers intend to make the consultation summary report publicly available to ensure that all those who took part, and any others who are interested, have a good understanding of the main points raised. It will be used to directly inform the remaining stages of Local Plan preparation including further engagement with Town and Parish Councils and other key stakeholders as set out in Section 3 below.

3. LOCAL PLAN 2041 – THE ‘ROUTE MAP’ TO ADOPTION

- 3.1 The preparation of a Local Plan essentially falls into two main stages.
- 3.2 The first stage is the ‘Regulation 18’ *plan preparation* stage during which local authorities seek views on the general subject matter of their Local Plan i.e. what issues / topics the plan should focus on. Often this stage involves the consideration of different options and alternatives.
- 3.3 The second, formal stage is the ‘Regulation 19’ *publication* stage when the local authority publishes what it considers to be a ‘sound’ plan i.e. the version which it intends to submit for independent examination.
- 3.4 The initial ‘Your Voice Counts’ consultation outlined above was the first step in the Regulation 18 plan preparation stage, seeking initial views on the potential content of the new Local Plan.
- 3.5 The valuable feedback received has given the Council a good understanding of local priorities and ambitions. This has already helped to shape the Council Plan (2023 – 2027) which was approved in January 2023 and will now help to inform the structure and content of the new Local Plan.
- 3.6 Looking forward, the route map to adoption of the new Local Plan is expected to comprise two more periods of stakeholder engagement during the Regulation 18 plan preparation stage followed by a statutory 6-week consultation at the formal Regulation 19 stage. The anticipated timing for these stages is illustrated below.



- 3.7 The focused consultation planned for June/July 2023 will draw on the previous ‘Your Voice Counts’ consultation and set out a series of draft local plan objectives that once agreed, will help to guide the policies and land allocations that follow.

- 3.8** The consultation will also seek views on different ‘spatial strategy’ options for what the overall pattern of development might look like in West Oxfordshire in the period to 2041 (e.g. concentrated in certain settlements, more dispersed etc.).
- 3.9** The consultation will also include a ‘call for sites’ exercise through which respondents will be able to put forward ideas for specific parcels of land across the District. Officers already have a good baseline understanding of potential housing and employment sites with many of these already having been submitted directly to the Council for consideration or through the (now abandoned) Oxfordshire Plan 2050 process.
- 3.10** This further call for sites exercise will help to identify any additional housing and employment sites that haven’t yet been put forward as well as providing respondents with the opportunity to suggest sites for other important uses such as strategic green space and renewable energy provision.
- 3.11** Subsequent to this, a further stage of informal stakeholder engagement will take place in November 2023 when views will be invited on a range of preferred policy options/approaches. The purpose of this stage will be to start firming up on the likely policy content of the new Local Plan including why certain approaches may be preferred over others.
- 3.12** Subject to the outcome of these two further informal consultation stages, the Council should then be in a position to publish its final Regulation 19 pre-submission draft version of its new Local Plan in June 2024, with a view to submitting it for examination in November 2024. Depending on the progress of the examination, adoption would then follow sometime in the second half of 2025.
- 3.13** This overall timeline is reflected in the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B. The LDS has also been updated to reflect the current position on a number of other planning policy documents including the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1** Subject to consideration of this report, the ‘Your Voice Counts’ consultation summary report will be made available to all stakeholders and the updated LDS will be made publicly available.
- 4.2** It is anticipated that the proposed focused consultation on draft local plan objectives and spatial strategy options will be brought back before Members in June.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1** The District Council could choose not to progress with an update of the Local Plan. However, local authorities are required to keep plans up to date, typically reviewing them every 5-years or so.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The preparation and adoption of a new Local Plan has significant financial implications with provision for this having been made through the District Council's budget setting process.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The report raises no direct legal implications. The Local Plan will be prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and when considered at examination, the appointed Planning Inspector will determine whether or not the District Council has fulfilled those requirements.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** The report presents no significant risks.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1** The preparation of the new Local Plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** The climate and ecological emergencies are anticipated to form a central component of the new Local Plan and the policies contained therein.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** None.

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

‘Your Voice Counts’

Consultation Summary Report



April 2023

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. The ‘Your Voice Counts’ Consultation**
- 3. Feedback on Local Plan Potential ‘Areas of Focus’**
- 4. Other general issues arising**
- 5. Stakeholder Events**
- 6. Next Steps**

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Landowner/Developer Site Submissions

Appendix 2 – Summary Notes from Town and Parish Council Event 5 September 2022

Appendix 3 – Summary Notes from Key Stakeholder Event 20 September 2022

1. Introduction

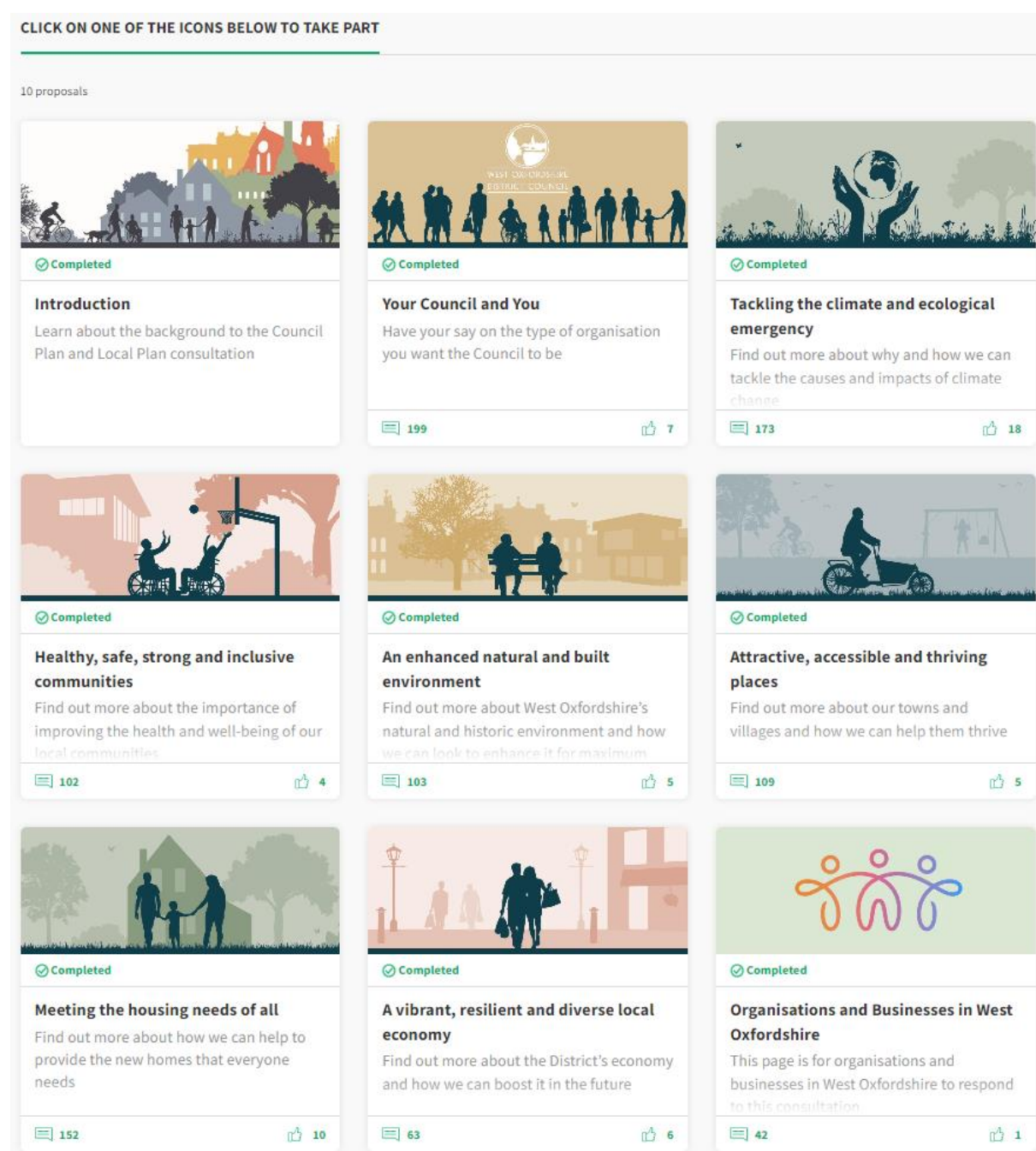
- 1.1 The District Council is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan and last year ran an initial 'scoping' consultation seeking early views on what topics the new plan should be looking to focus on.
- 1.2 The purpose of doing this was to ensure that the plan is concise and locally relevant rather than being excessively long and simply repeating national policy.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary overview of the consultation in terms of how and when it took place and the main issues that were raised.
- 1.4 The report has been made publicly available and the findings will be used to inform the subsequent stages of Local Plan preparation.

2. The 'Your Voice Counts' Consultation

- 2.1 The Council's 'Your Voice Counts' consultation ran for a period of 6-weeks from 24 August – 5 October 2022. The consultation was a joint exercise, designed to inform the development of both the Council Plan¹ and the new Local Plan.
- 2.2 The consultation was predominantly digitally-led, using the Council's dedicated engagement platform 'commonplace' <https://yourvoicecounts.commonplace.is/>
- 2.3 Figure 1 overleaf shows the structure of the consultation which comprised a series of questions based around the following 'areas of focus':
 - 1. Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
 - 2. Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive communities
 - 3. An enhanced natural and built environment
 - 4. Attractive, accessible and thriving places
 - 5. Meeting the housing needs of all
 - 6. A vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy
- 2.4 To help inform the Council Plan, a number of questions were also posed under the topic of 'Your Council and You' allowing respondents to put forward views on what sort of organisation they would like the District Council to be.

¹ The Council Plan was adopted in early 2023

Figure 1 – Consultation Structure on Commonplace



2.5 Respondents were asked whether they agreed with each potential area of focus and then more specifically for views on potential measures which the new Local Plan might look to introduce under each such as zero carbon buildings and affordable homes.

2.6 Some examples of the consultation questions are shown in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2 – Example Question on Reducing Carbon Emissions and Requiring Net Zero Carbon Development

How important is it to you that the Council seeks to reduce carbon emissions from existing buildings through retrofitting and require net zero carbon with high standards of energy and sustainability in all new developments?(5 being most important, 1 being least)

5

Very important

4

3

2

1

Not Important

Figure 3 – Example Question on Affordable Housing

How important is it to you that the Council seeks to deliver an increase in the number and range of affordable homes and ensure that all new homes are affordable to run in the long-term? (5 being most important, 1 being least)

5

4

3

2

1

- 2.7 Comments were able to be put forward in writing or alternatively by recording a ‘voice note’.
- 2.8 Section 3 of this report provides an overview of the main issues raised under each of the 6 main areas of focus.
- 2.9 Respondents were also able to make any general comments they wished to and the main issues raised are summarised in Section 4.
- 2.10 In overall terms, the digital consultation attracted a good level of response, with Figure 4 below showing the overall data.

Figure 4 – Numbers of visitors, respondents, contributions and news subscribers



- 2.11 To complement the digital consultation, two face-to-face workshop events were held, the first of which was with Town and Parish Councils on 5 September 2023 and the second held with a number of key stakeholder organisations on 20 September 2023.
- 2.12 Section 5 of this report provides further detail of these two events.

3. Feedback on Local Plan Potential 'Areas of Focus'

- 3.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the main issues raised under the 6 main 'areas of focus' that formed the basis of the consultation.
- 3.2 For ease of reference, these are set out in the same order as they appeared in the consultation itself.

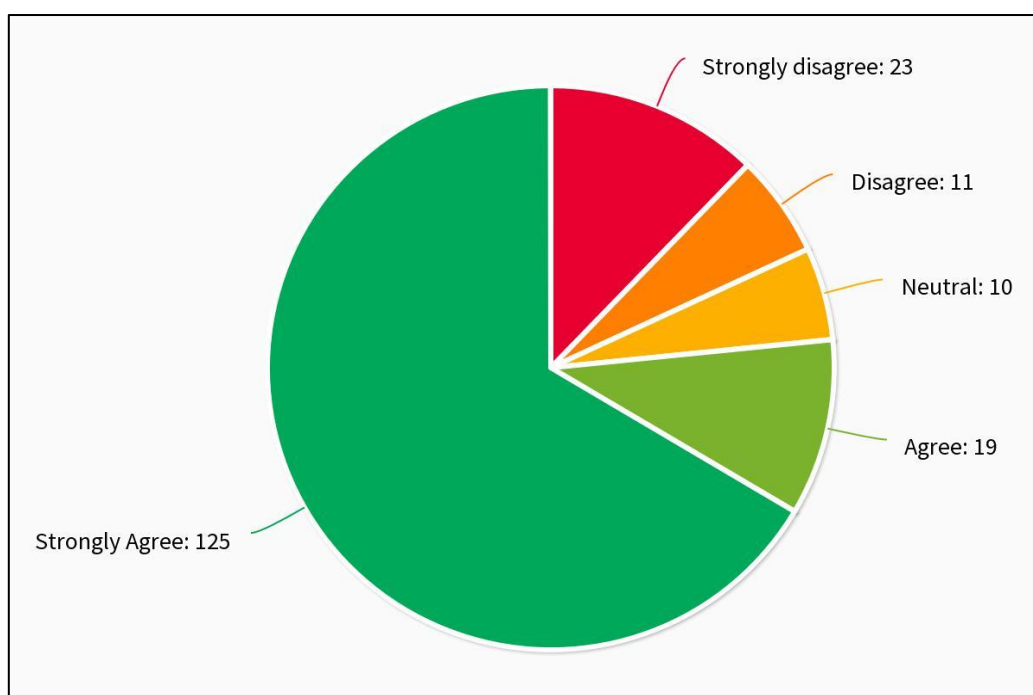
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency



To what extent do you agree that 'tackling the climate and ecological emergency' should be an area of focus for the Local Plan?

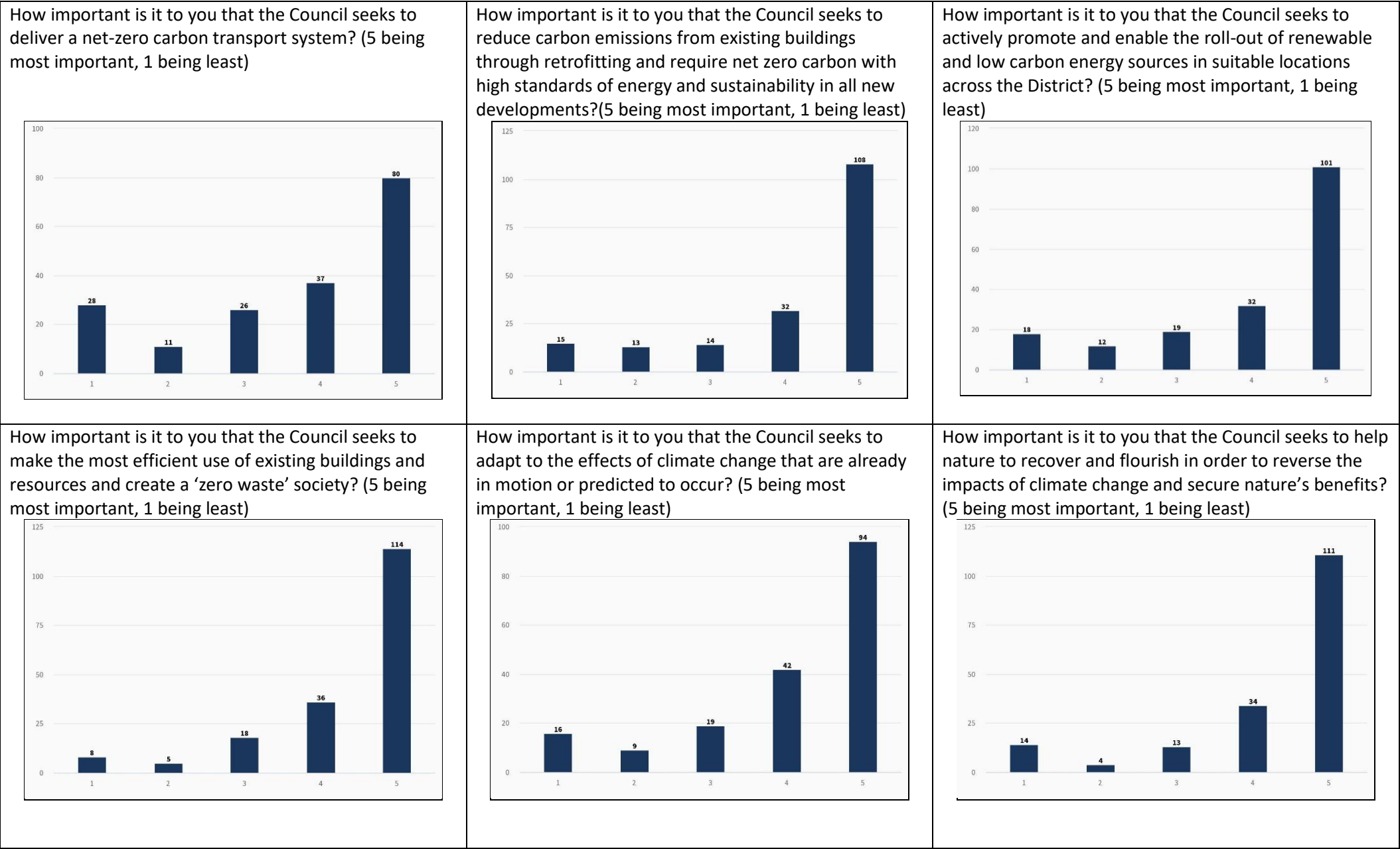
- 3.3 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 5 – Degree of support for whether 'tackling the climate and ecological emergency' should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



- 3.4 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.5 Figure 6 shows the survey responses received to each.

Figure 6 - Responses to individual questions relating to tackling the climate and ecological emergency



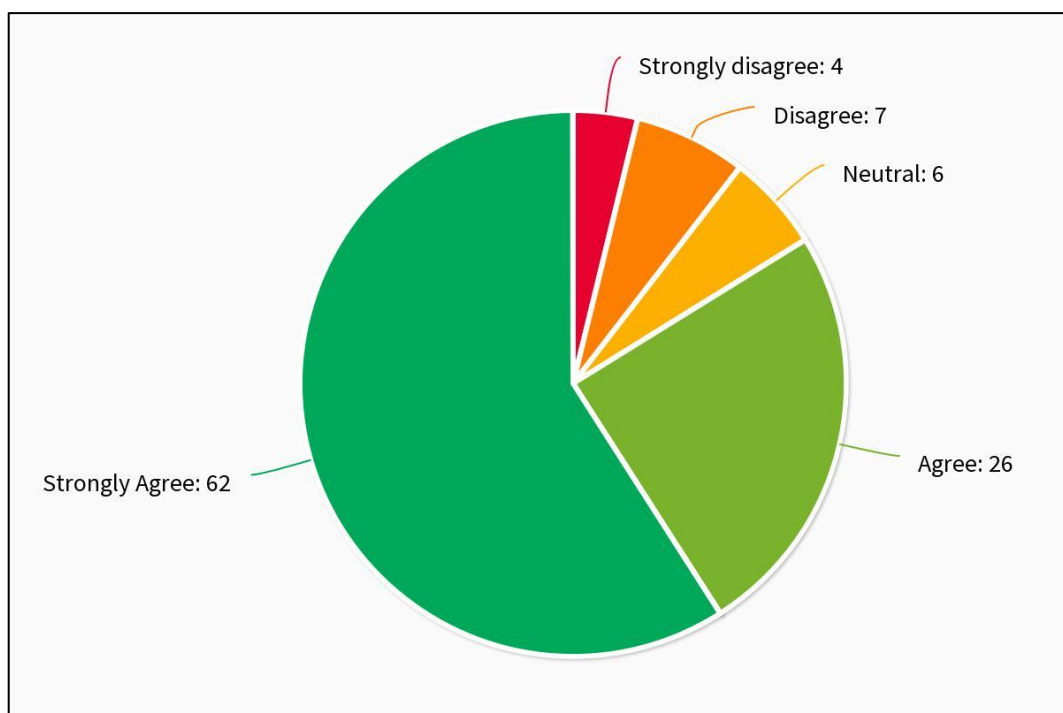
- Waste must be considered at all stages of development and the principle of the circular economy adopted;
- The plan must recognise the issue of ‘water stress’ and require appropriate water efficiency measures;
- All forms of flood-risk need to be taken into account;
- Renewable energy projects should benefit the local community;
- A need for more reliable and frequent electric bus services to reduce car use;
- The plan should emphasise the use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield sites, particularly agricultural land;
- Location of development is key to reducing car use – new development should be co-located with transport and mobility hubs;
- Concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods well supported;
- Co-locating new homes and jobs can make a significant contribution to producing a net zero carbon transport network;
- Design and layout of new developments should focus on energy conservation, reducing energy consumption and mitigate against the effects of climate change;
- EV charging points to be readily available including in public places;
- Important that the provision of renewable energy solutions does not bespoil the countryside;
- New development must make space for nature;
- The Council should seek to allocate sites for renewable energy - considered alongside network capacity and demand;
- Any such allocations should not be at unacceptable cost to the countryside and should be steered towards areas that have relatively low sensitivity to the type and scale of development being proposed;
- Need to carefully consider the issue of retrofitting renewable energy solutions on older and listed buildings;
- The policy response to the declared climate and ecological emergencies should not result in a further polarisation of growth at the main towns, and away from smaller settlements in rural areas.



To what extent do you agree that achieving 'healthy, safe and strong and inclusive communities' should be an area of focus for the Local Plan?

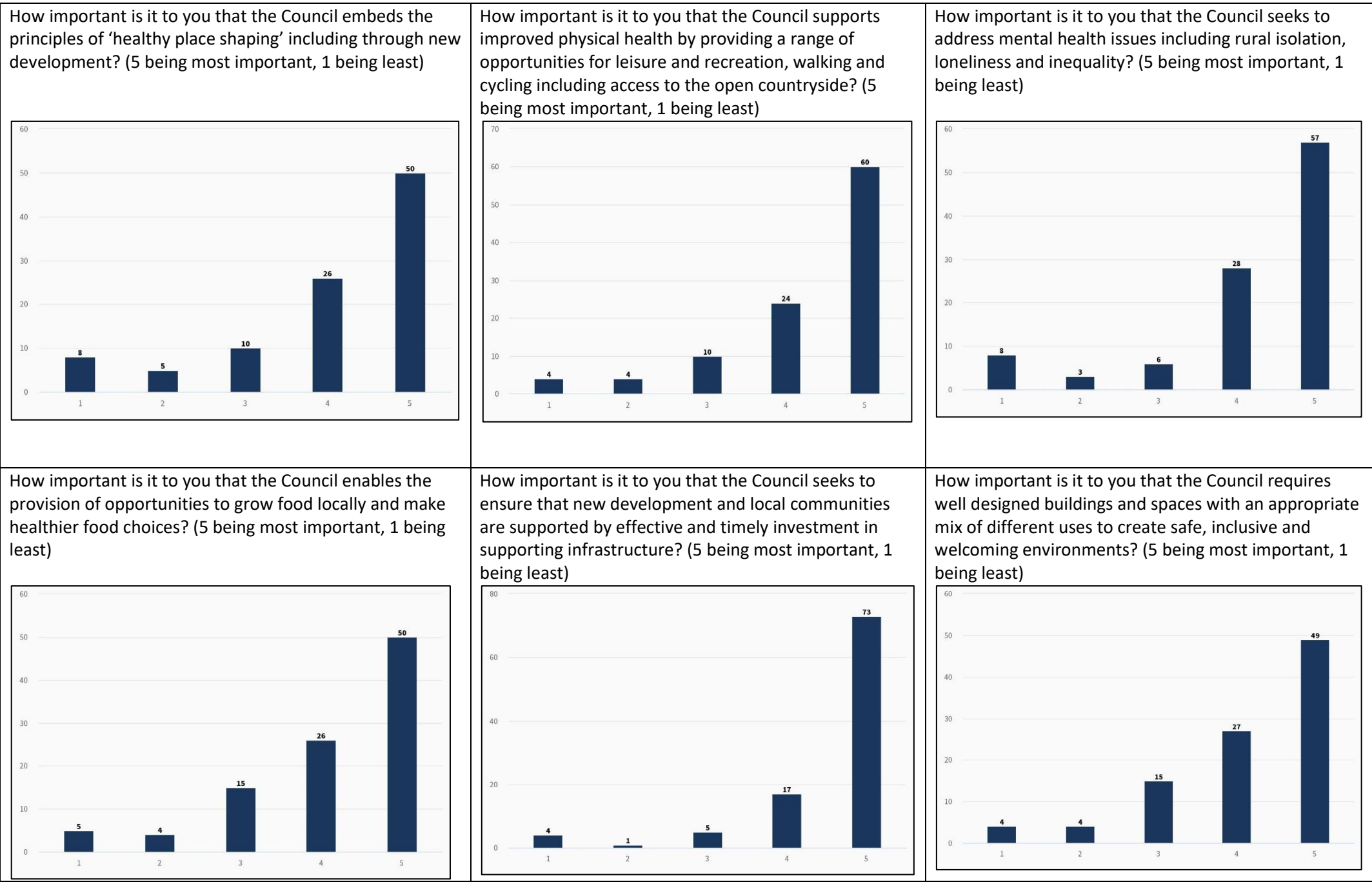
- 3.8 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 8 – Degree of support for whether achieving health, safe and strong and inclusive communities should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



- 3.9 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.10 Figure 9 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

Figure 9 - Responses to individual questions relating to healthy, safe and strong and inclusive communities



- Provision needs to be made for younger age groups e.g. involve schools in local food growing opportunities;
- Community activation measures are key to supporting healthy place shaping and should be incorporated;
- Important to consider the impact of new development on existing communities;
- The Council must follow through and ensure that developers provide what they need to, to support new development and mitigate the impact;
- WODC should work with business and commercial organisations to ensure they play a much stronger role in contributing to the health and prosperity of their local communities;
- The time to deliver water/wastewater infrastructure should not be underestimated;
- The plan must clearly define what is meant by 'healthy place shaping'.

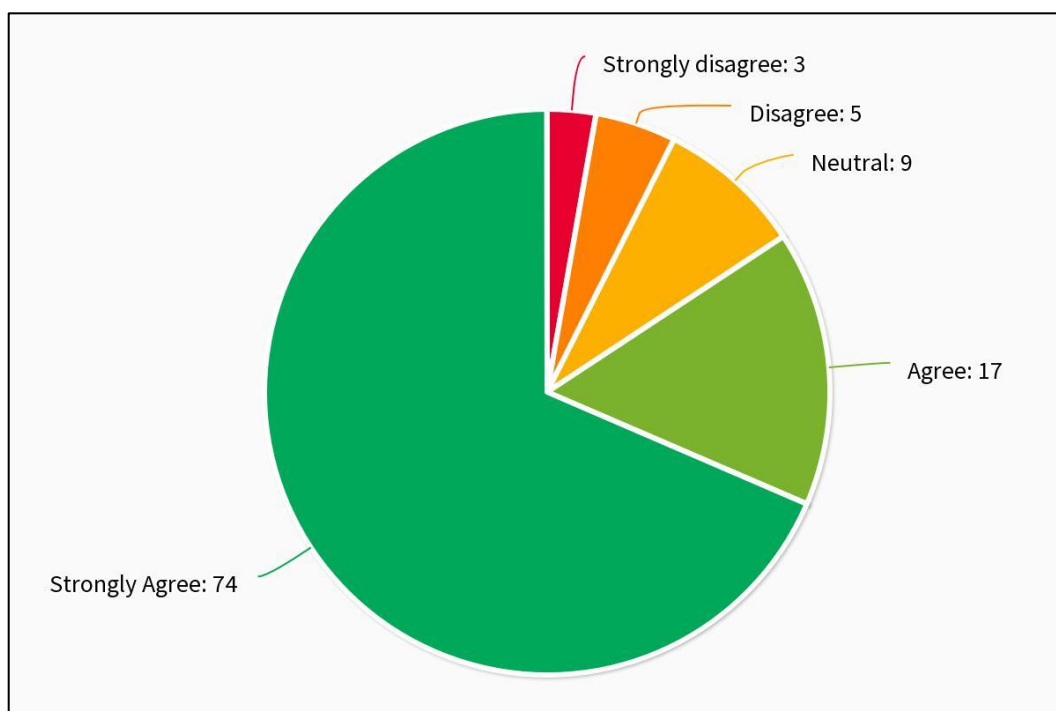
An enhanced natural and built environment



To what extent do you agree that achieving an enhanced natural and built environment should be an area of focus for the Local Plan? (5 strongly agree- 1 strongly disagree)

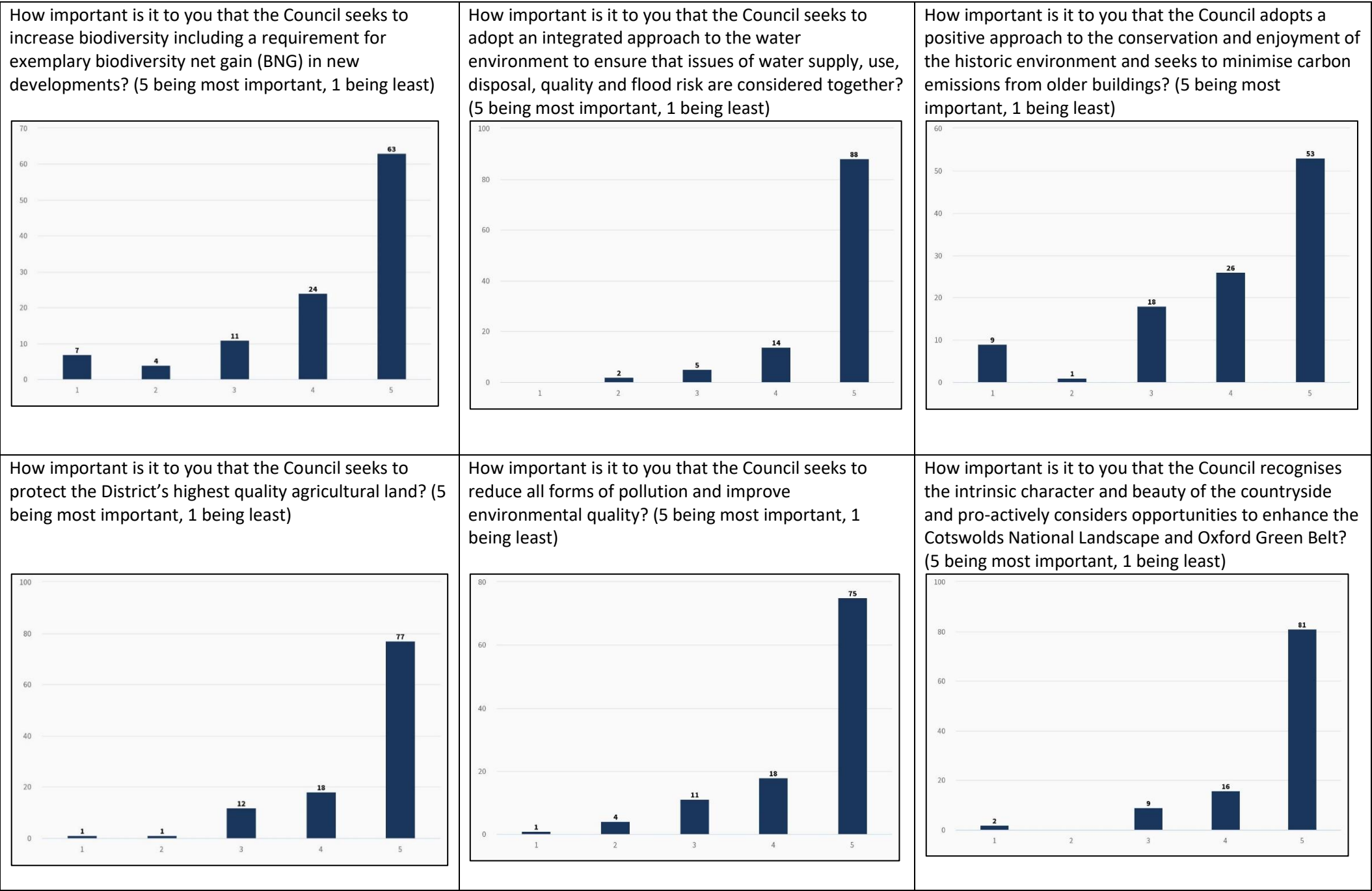
- 3.13 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 11 – Feedback on whether achieving an enhanced natural and built environment should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



- 3.14 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.15 Figure 12 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

Figure 12 - Responses to individual questions relating to enhancing the natural and built environment



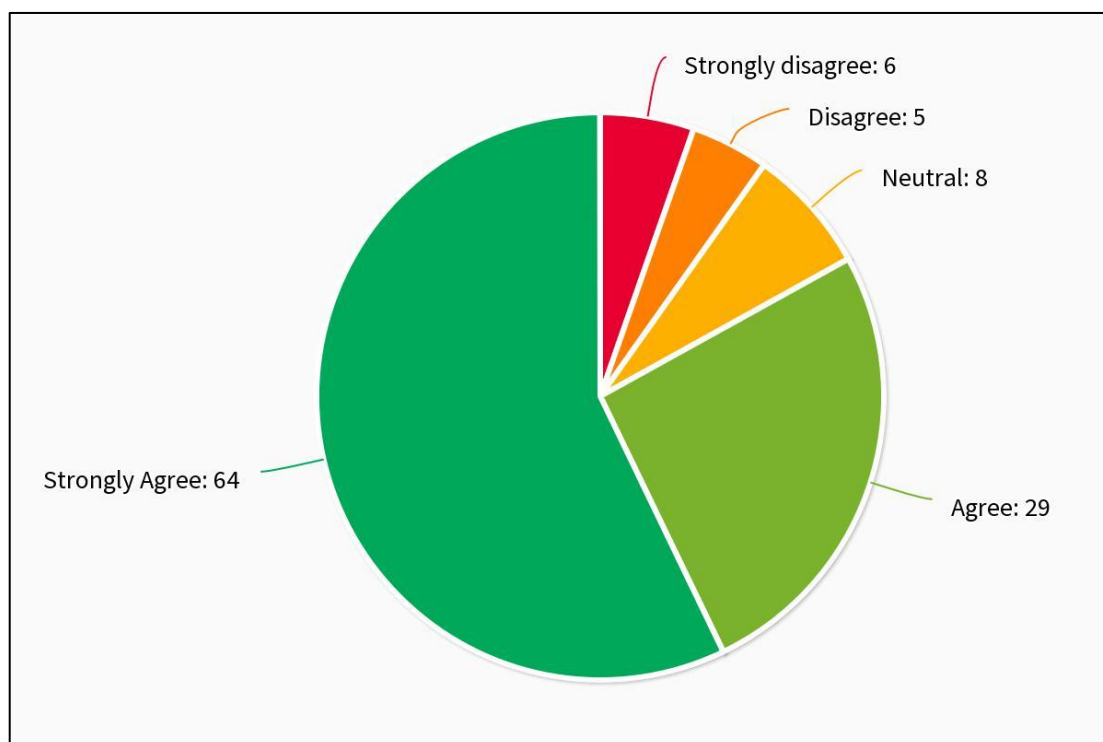
- New housing developments need to have more imagination and a rethink in how they are designed;
- The natural landscape of the District is a key asset and must be protected;
- A targeted and focused approach to biodiversity gain is needed e.g. could focus on management regimes, not just new planting;
- The plan could consider making specific allocations for new areas of biodiversity creation;
- Importance of protecting and managing areas of ancient woodland which are irreplaceable;
- All countryside needs to be protected – not just the AONB and Green Belt;
- Consideration should be given to development within the Green Belt due to its proximity to Oxford;
- The focus of biodiversity net gain should be financial contributions towards off-site provision;
- Any strategy must distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national, and designated sites;
- An enhanced natural and built environment is not incompatible with meeting requirements for growth;
- Need to avoid unnecessary use of lighting especially at times when it is not needed;
- Natural spaces should be designed to allow accessibility without damaging the natural conservation basis;
- This theme needs to consider not only built heritage but also assets with archaeological interest;
- Effective decision-making benefits from considering the natural and historic environment in an integrated way;
- An integrated approach is needed whereby climate change and heritage considerations inform a range of policies throughout the plan.



To what extent do you agree that the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places should be an area of focus for the Local Plan? (5 strongly agree- 1 strongly disagree)

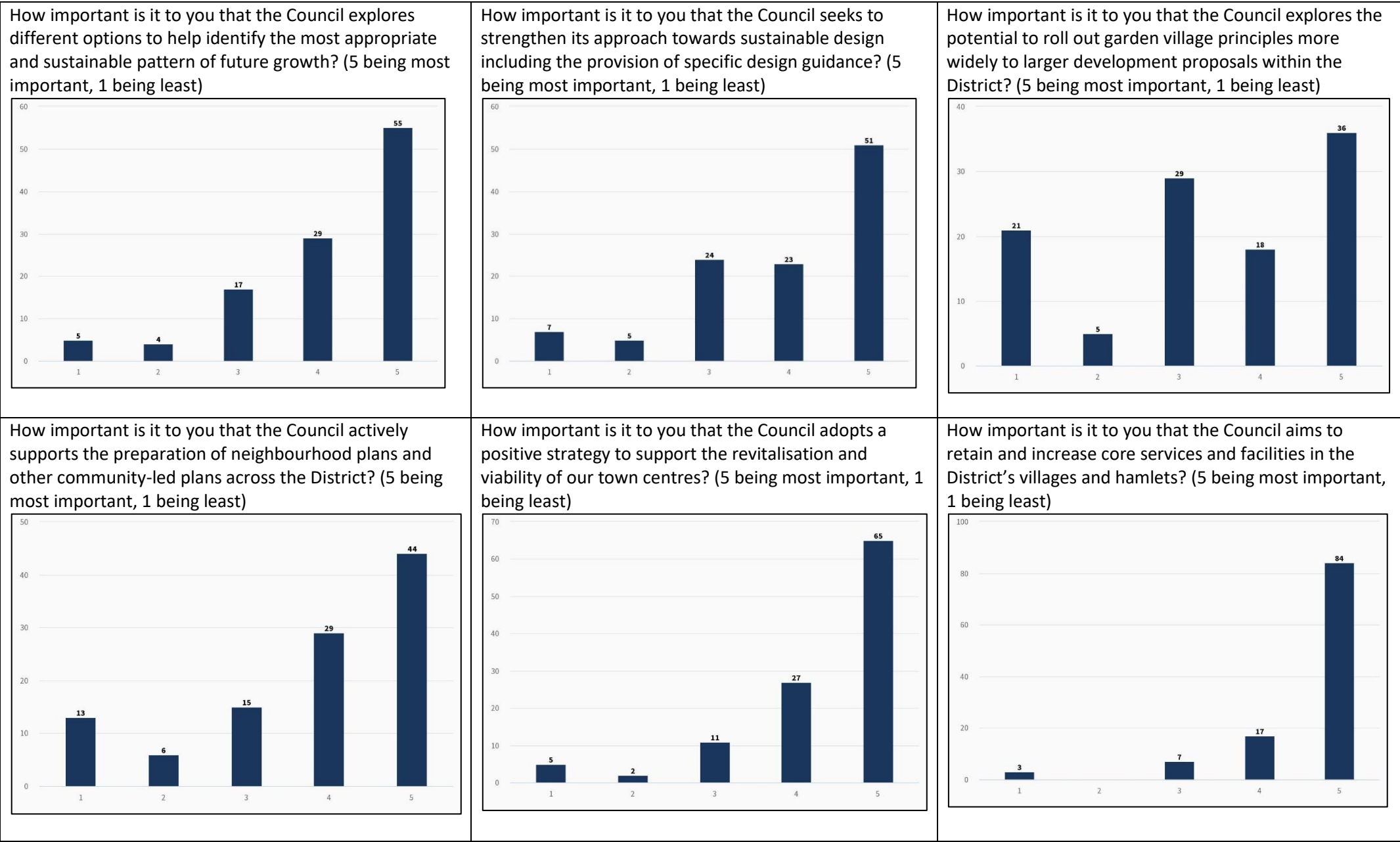
- 3.18 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 14 – Feedback on whether the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



- 3.19 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.20 Figure 15 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

Figure 15 - Responses to individual questions relating to the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places



- 3.21 The word cloud in Figure 16 illustrates the main 'phrases' which recurred in people's written responses to the questions above.

Figure 16 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places



- 3.22 Key points arising included the following:

- Accessibility is vital – especially in rural areas;
- Enhancement of public transport is needed alongside improved opportunities for walking and cycling;
- Rural bus services should be restored;
- The pandemic demonstrated the strength of our local communities – we need this vibrancy to continue;
- Importance of local shops and services, particularly in rural areas – community shops should be supported;
- The pattern of future growth should steer development to the most sustainable locations, especially where there are good public transport links;
- Mixed-use developments help to promote social interaction and connections;
- The plan should require well-designed, high-quality public spaces which encourages their active usage and reduces fear of crime;
- Without some growth in rural areas, villages are at risk of stagnation;
- Greater sustainability of building design needed;
- Essential that new development is in step with the provision of supporting infrastructure;
- Important that smaller developments do not avoid obligations to provide or contribute towards supporting infrastructure;
- Need to address the increasing number of holiday lets – can this be restricted?
- Any new development must be proportionate in scale to the location in which it is proposed;
- Importance of maintaining housing delivery to avoid speculative development;
- Improved opportunities for self-build housing;

- A range of different development sizes should be provided – need to avoid excessive reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites;
- Consideration should be given to development opportunities within the Green Belt;
- The new Local Plan must define and protect a route for a new rail link from Carterton to Oxford;
- Multi-purpose buildings should be provided in villages and important services e.g. pubs, should not be lost;
- Maintenance arrangements in new developments should avoid excessive management charges for residents;
- The plan should encourage higher density developments in appropriate locations;
- Need to protect the historic character of the District which is what makes it such a desirable place;
- New homes to make appropriate provision for garden space;
- Emphasis should be on re-using land in urban areas and avoiding development on greenfield sites;
- Need care with town centre measures such as speed and vehicular restrictions – we need them to be inviting;
- A positive growth strategy is needed for our towns and villages;
- Heritage has the potential to make a significant, powerful contribution to delivering vibrant and sustainable places;
- Housing needs to be affordable, sustainable and attractive;
- Large developments destroy the cohesion of so many villages because of the strain they place on infrastructure;
- Design of new developments must take account of the need for easily accessible community spaces indoors and out;
- Too many recent new housing developments have ignored the Design Codes and Guides that WODC have previously published;
- Need to localise decision making through neighbourhood plans but they must add value over and above the Local Plan;
- The new Local Plan should take a much smarter approach to opportunities for villages to grow and thrive – reliance on windfall development is insufficient;
- A need for flexibility in our town centres, as they evolve to meet consumer demand, the marketplace and the structural changes influenced by Covid-19;
- Importance of tourism economy e.g. parking for motorhomes;
- Public spaces are vital to town centres.

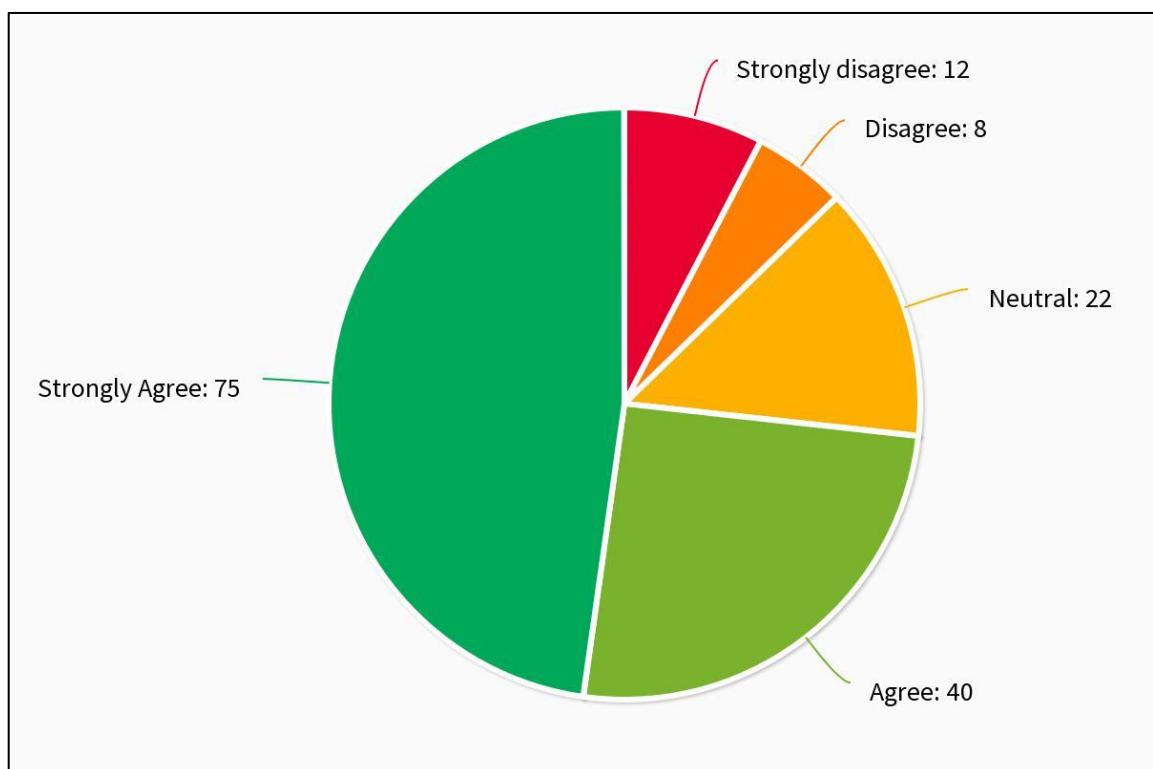
Meeting the housing needs of all



To what extent do you agree that 'meeting the housing needs of all' should be an area of focus for the Local Plan?

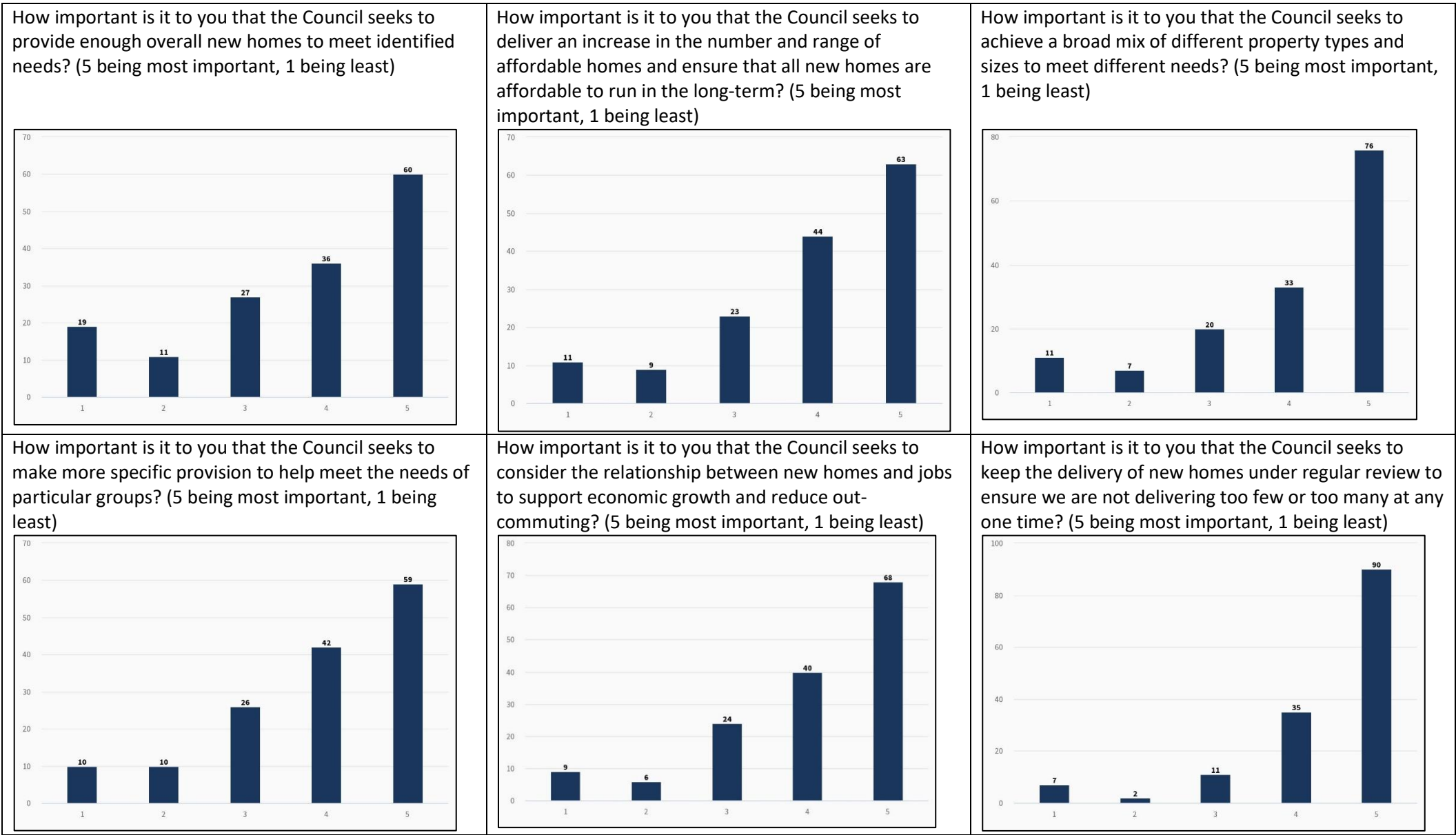
- 3.23 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 17 – Feedback on whether meeting the housing needs of all should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



- 3.24 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.25 Figure 18 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

Figure 18 - Responses to individual questions relating to meeting the housing needs of all



3.26 The word cloud in Figure 19 illustrates the main ‘phrases’ which recurred in people’s written responses to the questions above.

Figure 19 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to meeting the housing needs of all

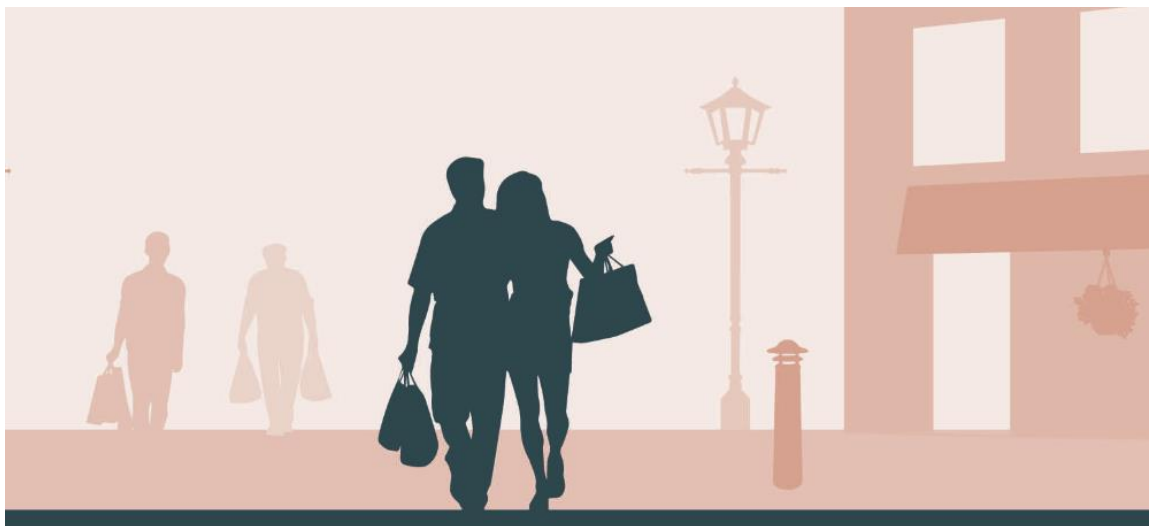


3.27 Key points arising included the following:

- Various site submissions put forward (see separate schedule at Appendix 1);
- Need to recognise the role of smaller windfall development sites;
- Plan must emphasise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings;
- Need to achieve genuine affordability of new housing and this affordability needs to be in perpetuity;
- Provide housing for key workers;
- The new Local Plan must set realistic targets that meet genuine local need but are not over-inflated by aggressive growth ambitions;
- WODC should be considering building its own housing stock;
- The plan should seek to make more efficient use of the current housing stock and opportunities from existing buildings;
- The plan should be promoting rural exception sites built to zero carbon standards;
- The plan must be based on robust evidence and seek to meet identified needs over the plan period;
- Policies need to take account of the needs of different groups with sufficient provision made (e.g. for the elderly) including through specific site allocations;
- Vital that we do not sacrifice green countryside, agricultural land and biodiversity unnecessarily on the basis of a drive for economic growth;
- Any strategic sites should be accompanied by realistic delivery rates and supported by smaller developments as appropriate;
- A mix of different sizes of site allocations are needed – smaller schemes can help avoid settlements becoming stagnant and avoid slow-rates of delivery associated with larger strategic sites;
- More affordable, smaller homes needed for younger people;
- Increased need for more flats/apartments to make the most efficient use of available land;

- Local Plan needs to be underpinned by robust evidence of housing need;
- Need to avoid homes being turned into holiday lets;
- Policies must address modern needs such as agile working including home working space/separation of work and living etc;
- We need balanced communities – not ghettoization;
- New homes need to be supported by better investment in supporting infrastructure – roads, schools, health, sewage etc;
- The plan should encourage more community housing, co-housing and community land trusts;
- New homes need to be where jobs are located so as to minimise out-commuting;
- Affordable housing needs to be located where public transport, walking and cycling are realistic options;
- Priority should be given to re-purposing existing buildings;
- The current local plan commitment to meeting a proportion of Oxford’s unmet housing need should be carried forward into the new Local Plan;
- The new Local Plan will need to deal with any past under-supply from the current Local Plan;
- Further discussions will be needed with the other Oxfordshire local authorities in respect of any further unmet need arising from Oxford City;
- Essential that the cumulative requirements placed on new development does not render it unviable;
- Oxford City should be doing more to meet its own housing needs;
- Vital that new homes are able to come forward in a timely manner;
- Housing delivery needs to be effectively monitored;
- Sustainable options within the Green Belt should be considered;
- Must consider the impact of new homes on the environment and existing communities;
- New housing needs to be green and affordable to run;
- We need high quality design, not soulless boxes;
- Don’t cram in new homes – allow space for people and nature;
- Additional employment provision should be made to help reduce out-commuting;
- All new homes to be built to high environmental standards;
- Housing provision should not just be about profit for developers;
- Need more bungalows provided for older generations;
- A strategic approach to housing provision across Oxfordshire is needed;
- Large-scale strategic sites enable self-sustaining neighbourhoods.

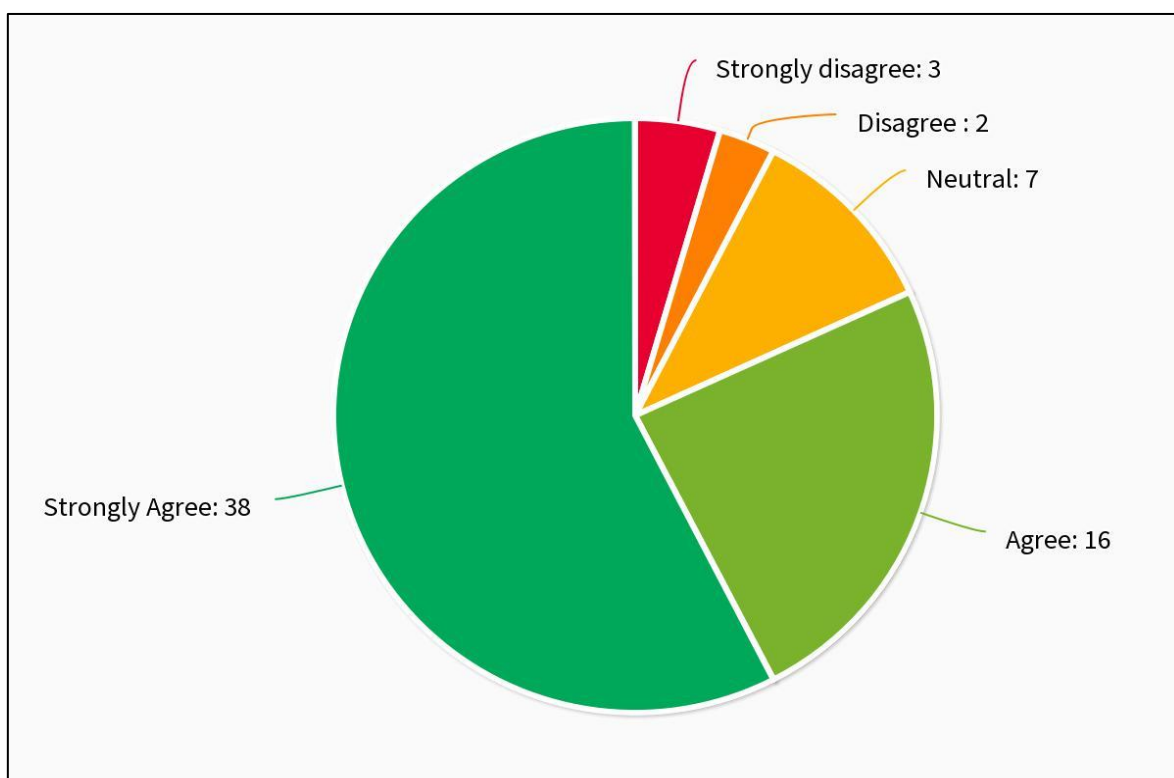
A vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy



To what extent do you agree that achieving a vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy should be an area of focus for the Local Plan? (5 strongly agree- 1 strongly disagree)

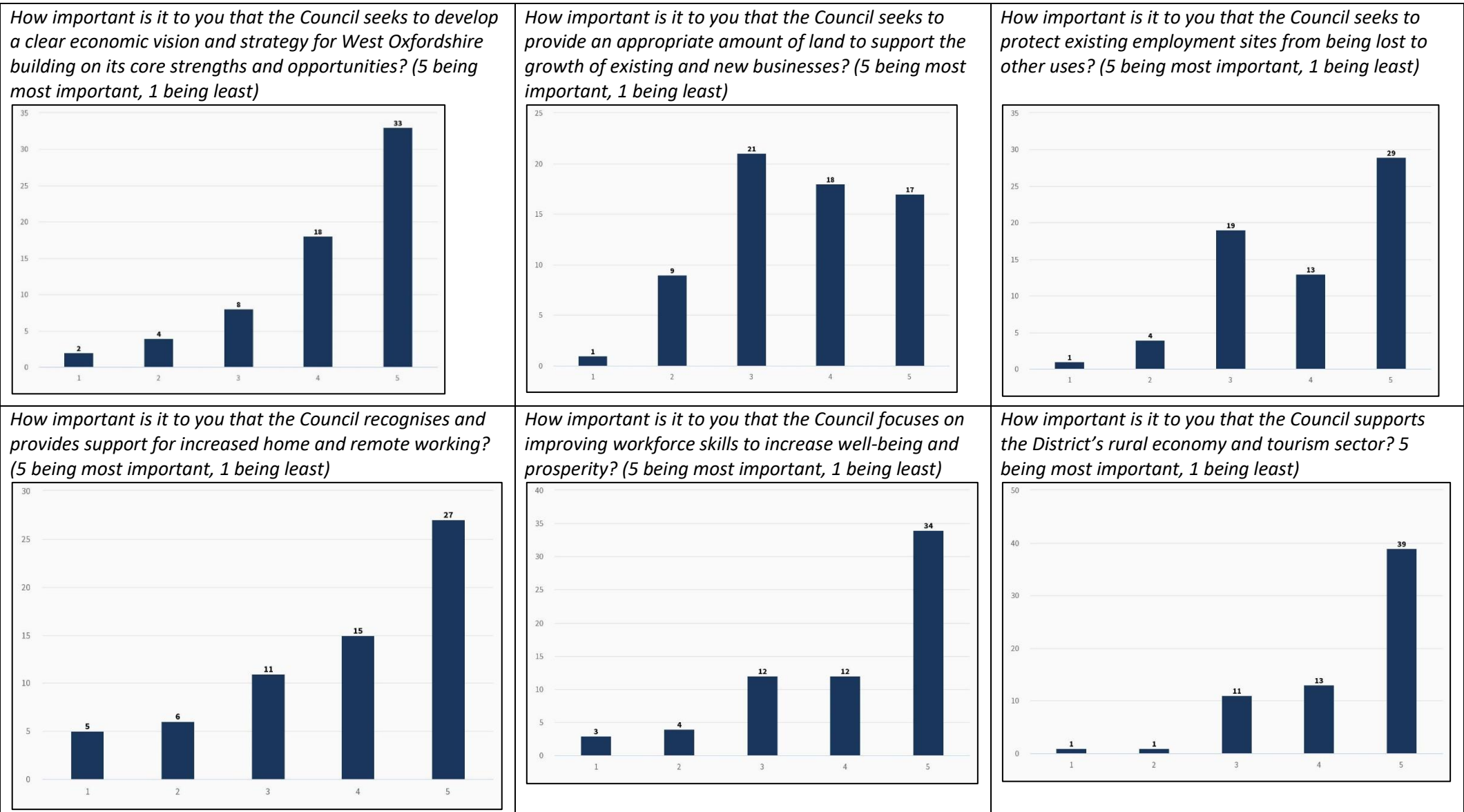
- 3.28 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 20 – Feedback on whether achieving a vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



- 3.29 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.30 Figure 21 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

Figure 21 - Responses to Individual Questions relating to a vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy



- The Local Plan must assess current employment sites and determine the quality of such sites to meet future economic needs;
- Policies could encourage a greater dispersal of smaller employment sites across the rural areas to encourage investment into such areas;
- A blanket policy protection on all employment sites may be stifling inward investment;
- Support the provision of infrastructure which will enable business growth, for example connectivity, EV charging facilities and sensors which provide live information;
- Importance of re-using previously developed land and buildings;
- The local plan should define and protect a route for a new rail link from Carterton to Oxford;
- Need to provide support for small businesses;
- The Local Plan should seek to allocate mix used developments which can provide new employment facilities alongside new residential development;
- The economy needs to be diversified and more outward facing;
- Concerns about the closure of the High Street in Witney and the economic impact this is having;
- Important to protect public houses as community and tourism assets;
- Supporting home-working and encouraging start-ups and niche industries maybe related to the centres of excellence locally should definitely be areas of focus;
- Any emphasis on home-working needs to be balanced with the provision of appropriate workspaces for those people who are unable to work from home;
- The historic environment has a close connection to economic activity - heritage-led regeneration should be encouraged as appropriate;
- It should be recognised that the nature of work has changed, with more people working more of the time at home;
- The Plan should seek to recognise and support rural land-based businesses, the local food economy and rural tourism;
- The focus should be on creating an economy for well-being, rather than a crude pursuit of growth;
- Important that new employment sites meet the same criteria as other developments e.g. housing in terms of location and building sustainability.

4. Other general comments arising

- 4.1 In addition to the quantitative and qualitative responses outlined in Section 3, the consultation generated a number of more general responses.
- 4.2 This included a number of developer/landowner submissions relating to parcels of land which they wish to be considered through the Local Plan review process with many of the submissions received explaining how particular sites could help to meet the various objectives identified in the consultation paper.
- 4.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is a schedule of the site submissions received.
- 4.4 Apart from discussion on the merits of these individual sites, other more general issues raised included the following:
- It is important that the new Local Plan addresses strategic issues that would otherwise have been addressed by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050;
 - Continued joint working will be needed in respect of any further unmet housing need from Oxford City;
 - Allocated sites which were expected to deliver before 2031 but will now deliver beyond then will need to be carried forward into the new Local Plan;
 - The Local Plan housing requirement will need to be based on robust evidence;
 - Important to understand and recognise the important linkages between economic, social and environmental objectives;
 - The new Local Plan should recognise the strategic role of Hanborough Station;
 - The plan must be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area;
 - The Council's settlement sustainability report will need to be updated as part of the supporting evidence base;
 - Any new development sites must take account of adjoining existing occupants and land uses;
 - WODC needs to work creatively with landowners, farmers and developers;
 - Important that the new Local Plan does not prevent sustainable development from coming forward due to feasibility or viability constraints;
 - A 'decide and provide' approach to site assessment will help determine which options are sustainable from a transport perspective;
 - Stronger emphasis needed on engagement with Town and Parish Councils;
 - All new development sites should be required to produce an Innovation Plan, referring to the Innovation Framework guidance;
 - Any strategic vision in the Local Plan 2041 should have a strong spatial focus, being specific about growth locations and priorities for regeneration.

5. Stakeholder Events

- 5.1 To supplement the predominantly digitally-led consultation, two workshop events were held, the first with Town and Parish Councils on 5 September 2022, the second with a number of key stakeholders on 20 September 2022.
- 5.2 Both events were well attended with wide-ranging discussions held. Attached at Appendix 2 are the summary notes taken by Officers for the Town and Parish Council event and attached at Appendix 3 are the summary notes for the stakeholder event.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The 'Your Voice Counts' consultation generated an excellent response which has provided the District Council with invaluable feedback on which key issues the local community and key stakeholders would like the Local Plan to focus on.
- 6.2 The feedback received has already helped to inform the new West Oxfordshire Council Plan and will now be used to shape a series of draft Local Plan objectives. These will be the subject of further consultation in summer 2023 alongside a series of potential spatial strategy options on what the future pattern of growth in West Oxfordshire might look like in the period up to 2041.
- 6.3 The feedback from both consultations will inform a series of preferred policy options/approaches which will then be the subject of further consultation in autumn 2023 before the final pre-submission draft Local Plan is published in late spring 2024.

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Developer/Landowner Site Submissions

Name of Site	Agent/Developer/Landowner
Land south of Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	Turley on behalf of Rainier Developments
Land to the west of London Lane, Ascott Under Wychwood	Walsingham Planning on behalf of Obsidian Strategic
Land East of Wroslyn Road, Freeland	Pye Homes
Land east of Station Road / Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Hourigan Planning on behalf of Anwyl Land Ltd
Land east of Burford Road, Chipping Norton	Savills
Land north of Mill Lane, Clanfield	Savills
Land east of Manor Road, Brize Norton	Savills
Land north of Monahan Way, Carterton	Savills on behalf of Bloor Homes
Land adjacent to Hanborough Station	Nexus on behalf of CEG and Blenheim Strategic Partners
Land west of Carterton	Nexus on behalf of Crest Nicholson
Land north east of Carterton	Nexus on behalf of Lone Star Land and Graftongate
Land at Curbridge Downs Farm, Witney	CDF Partnership
Land west of Curbridge	Arc Planning on behalf of Socially Conscious Capital
Land off The Downs, Standlake	Arron Twamley Planning on behalf of Mactaggart and Mickel
Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Catesby Estates
Land east of Jubilee Way, Witney	Carter Jonas on behalf of the Mawle Trustees and the Trustees of the Northfield Life Interest Settlement
Land at 80 Brize Norton Road, Minster Lovell	Adkin
Land east of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Hollins Strategic Land (HSL)
Land east of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Catesby Estates
Land north of Holliers Crescent, Middle Barton	Rocke Associates on behalf of Hallam Land Management Ltd
Land north of Cote Road, Aston	Terra Strategic
Land at Rousham Road, Tackley	Adkin
Land north of Bampton and east and west of Station Road, Bampton	Savills on behalf of the Church Commissioners for England
Land at Common Farm, North Leigh	Savills on behalf of Lioncourt Strategic Land Ltd
Land at Kilkenny Farm, north of Carterton	Carter Jonas on behalf of Bloombridge LLP
North Witney SDA	Turley on behalf of the North Witney Land Consortium

Record of post-it notes from Table Discussions Summit ‘Helping to Shape the Future of West Oxfordshire’ 5th September 2022 (Carterton Community Centre)

Attended by: Alevscot, Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney, Asthall, Bladon, Brize Norton, Burford, Carterton, Chadlington, Chastleton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Curbridge & Lew, Eynsham, Filkins & Broughton Poggs, Freeland, Hailey, Hanborough, Langford, Shilton, Spelsbury, Standlake, Steeple Barton, Swinbrook & Widford, Woodstock and Wootton

Tackling the climate & ecological emergency

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire tackling the climate & ecological emergency?

- Planning guidelines to include looking at outcomes – energy use, carbon emissions, water usage, drainage, ecology, pedestrians and cycling
- Heritage officer rulings to be rethought to allow building owners to reduce energy and emissions without being a slave to heritage
- Compliance – which type?
- Solar farms in otherwise usual industrial sites - solar PV should be fitted on the roofs of industrial buildings, in addition to solar farms.
- Concerns over the impact of existing buildings on storm overflows and water quality.
- Outlay for new energy generation, such as solar PV, puts residents off installing them.
- Smaller villages have accommodated housing growth; however environmental mitigation is limited and there is insufficient infrastructure e.g. sewage.
- Under occupied housing is an issue.
- Some parishes own limited buildings so are unsure what they can achieve.
- Issues with contractors working farming land.

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Older buildings, grey water soakaways to prevent flood overflows of sewerage into water courses
- Discounted council tax for privately installed soakaways to stimulate interest
- Neighbourhoods communicating
- Misconnections (sewerage)
- High energy performance and sustainability standards required in new and retrofit development.
- Ban on gas boilers, with new and existing buildings fitted with heat pumps.
- Householders need more information on what they can do e.g. how can they preserve water, enhance biodiversity in their gardens etc.
- Many residents are environmentally minded but do not have resources. Grant funding to support residents in retrofitting homes.
- Raise awareness of dual benefits, e.g. insulation traps heat and prevents noise.
- Cost benefit analysis to ensure measures, e.g. insulation, are an efficient use of resources.
- Viability argument should not be used by developers.
- District led solar programmes.
- Solar PV should be installed on all new builds (although one parish expressed concerns over visual impact).
- Cost savings of installing solar PV across terraces.
- Solar farms located in areas with low visibility to minimise landscape impact and low grade agricultural land to protect food production.
- Limit the use of agrochemicals.

- Higher density development in smaller villages to minimise environmental impact and maximise the use of loft spaces.
- New build housing accessible and supported living provision so that residents can downsize and release property to the market.
- Airbnb and second homes taxed.
- Audit taken of what climate and ecological action is happening across the district.
- Sharing of best practice among communities / exemplar projects, and evidence that these approaches work in practice.
- Coordinate parishes and develop a strong climate network, e.g. through advisory groups.
- Environmental assessments, e.g. FRAs, thoroughly checked by officers as consultants take a slanted view.
- Maintenance and monitoring to form part of planning conditions and conditions not charged unless they have been compiled with.
- More planning officers.

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress on this?

- Keep it simple advice
- Declare a climate emergency following a petition.
- Set-up climate change committee, identify work streams and establish working groups on community, climate and ecology.
- Explore energy solutions for retrofitting parish owned buildings.
- Raise environmental concerns about planning applications at committee, like WTC have in relation to surface run-off.
- Community solar farms.
- Become involved in district-wide projects e.g. the Oxfordshire Treescapes Project.
- Apply for an eco-schools green flag to enthuse young people.
- Minimise the use of plastics.
- Link up with companies and organisations to use EVs out of office hours.
- Open up community facilities to support residents with the cost of living and reduce loneliness and isolation. Some parishes charge for breakfast/lunch clubs.
- Set up foundations, welfare trusts, charities and establish links with the WI, church etc. Raise awareness of these across communities.
- Implement community emergency plans.
- Provide information to residents and engage them on issues.
- Learn lessons from other schemes in the district e.g. Hooky car club, the pesticide action network, community orchards, sustainable Woodstock etc.

Healthy, Safe, Strong and Active Communities

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving healthy, safe, strong and active

- High rate of significant road accidents
- Ambulances a problem everywhere
- Roads do not encourage cycling
- Doctors: Difficult to get appointments, structures of surgeries often poor
- Dentists
- Playgrounds – Burford. Improving funding?
- Communications about initiatives
- Volunteer link-up
- Air BnB destroying communities. Rules on 2nd Houses. Eg Cornwall.
- Some support required to make a new “estate” be integrated into village life. “Community Officer”
- Walking Route Passport of stamps. Safe routes to schools/signposting.

Question 2: What improvements, changes or progress would you like to see towards this?

- General assumption, CIL has not been implemented because previous regime did not want parish councils to participate in community infrastructure funding decisions. PC's have been squeezed out of above decision.
- Existing (old) policies. E.g. x pitches per 1,000 population increase, y allotments per 1,000... these policies exist but were not embedded in the Local plan
- No community centre strategy in larger developments local P council has to ask WODC to negotiate S106 money but if it's not in the local plan it's difficult.
- Youth provision – warm space not necessary to have fixed activities.
- Greater flexibility of S106 spend – be able to redefine what it can be spent on.
- Help T+P's with promo + communication of activities
- Burford – adult & child trim trail, support active lifestyle
- Burford – Warwick hall has broken heating as geo-thermal needs replacing – we need funding to enable replacement to keep warm then could be “warm place” open days + evenings.
- Safety – Air pollution
- High Speed Broadband – Gaming clubs
- Monitor the Airbnb + similar properties in WODC + create rules that limit the number
- Protect our green infrastructure
- WODC can help facilitate discussions from amongst parish councils
- Support T+Ps to initiate their own consultations/map out hyper local facilities
- Why was Martin Holland, playing field and recreation officer not replaced.
- Walking football + netball. Cycle paths.
- Poo bins for dev site paid for by developer
- No-one within WODC taking responsibility for recreation facilities. Parish councils are not the experts, where do we go for information/assistance?
- Please could someone from WODC come and talk to Brize Norton Parish Council about the 2 new “football pitches” on the Brize Meadow development attached to 2 existing football pitches at Monahan Way owned by WODC.

Question 3: What could your town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress on this?

- Burford need some activities/equipment for youth
- Youth club. Supervision space
- Warm space
- Networking groups with people working
- Homeworking
- Gaming. Need high speed broadband
- Coffee

Miscellaneous

- Focus on outcome rather than budget
- What funding are we entitled to?
- Louder voice for NHP
- 20 MPH speed limits
- A40 Crossings, Burford side
- Cost of Living support community spaces
- Lack of volunteers, how to reach youth?
- Shared working spaces
- Who to contact for recreation?
- More support RE section 106!
- Joining up neighbouring parishes
- Not fans of “aspirational” policies
- Communication is key
- Youth provision is about safe spaces
- Support parishes to consult parishioners.

An enhanced natural & built environment

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving an enhanced natural & built environment?

- WODC has been very good at controlling housing numbers e.g. delivered quality over quantity

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Future policies should encourage built environments to be ‘green’ – providing opportunities for all ages of communities to integrate and promote lots of social interaction opportunities
- More development designs should include water elements – not just green infrastructure but blue infrastructure e.g. boating pond, wild swimming, nature
- At a Parish level – achieving measures to reduce flooding by working with WODC and OCC
- Accessible greenspace and biodiversity rich areas – integrate people management into natural spaces
- Make use of metrics to measure what we want to achieve and then measure that success
- Community hubs should be build first to help integrate new residents with the old
- Value of coordinating with other WODC support for Nature Recovery Planning
- Water quality and measures – holding Thames Water to account to greater extent
- Infrastructure – insuring sufficient infrastructure for new homes
- Strong protection for Public Rights of Way that developments should not detract from or negatively impact

- Access to a resource for developing proposals for improving the natural environment
- WODC under-resourced staff particularly in relation to flooding issues – only one Officer working on this for three local authorities.
- Burford – protecting AONB areas of natural beauty e.g. Coles field east of Barns Lane can be protected by not building on it. This has been dismissed twice in the last 4 years (waste of public resources to fight the same proposals time and again) e.g. topography, ancient trail etc.
- Enforce conditions and costs to deter number of AirBnB ratios to residential housing
- Maintaining the community – need to act against AirBnB's which damage the community.

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress on this?

- Produce at Parish level and Nature Recovery Network and local Nature Recovery Plans ... but need some guidance and support with how to do this. Lots of enthusiasm but less technical expertise.
- Work with the Evenlode Catchment Partnership on water quality, biodiversity etc
- Be included in development proposals to help shape and influence designs. T&PC's have valuable local knowledge and their input should be valued.
- Put pressure on Thames Water – but how?
- Roads and potholes – cycle paths, footpaths and bus routes
- Flooding and maintenance – what can our role be in this?
- A more achievable carbon plan
- Keep the District's rural identification
- New developments need allotments – only available after the last house is build when they should be provided much earlier

Attractive, accessible & thriving places

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving attractive, accessible & thriving places?

- Support for all age groups with a range of facilities – young adults and older. Locate a range of services together so that they support each other
- Free parking not helping – we need a better reason to visit
- More leisure experiences
- Provide for specialist shopping
- Funding for maintaining public areas has been reduced
- Protect and maintain greenspaces
- High Street Witney – one way system is not attractive nor is the overall environment
- Need better walking/cycling connections to/from surrounding villages
- Need joined up thinking between areas
- Infrastructure requirements: sewerage, better standards needed, better design standards

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Need reliable bus services in villages
- Mix of housing – need smaller homes – these play an important role
- Positive about community planning
- Infrastructure is lacking
- Development in the future should be spread across all villages and towns rather than select few areas
- Potentially more interest to put more development in smaller settlements to sustain services

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress?

- CIL when progressed
- Infrastructure to match housing
- Longer term links to towns and villages
- Cross boundary transport
- Develop Town Centres to be more attractive
- Enforcement needs to be strengthened – this needs to be monitored
- Seek out best practice and share it
- Strategic sites are not attractive – to uniform, not in keeping, different approaches between rural/urban settings, need to plan around greenspaces

Meeting the housing needs of all

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire meeting the housing needs of all?

- Current local plan target too high
- Phasing of infrastructure provision
- Concern 5 year supply too onerous
- Difficulty of social integration if too much development too soon
- Pressure from speculative development

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Oxford City should be doing more e.g. Colleges
- Focal point e.g. community facility + phased early in development
- Villages need modest levels of growth, proportionate in scale
- Affordable units need to be genuinely affordable
- Affordable housing provided but not at the expense of infrastructure provision
- More brownfield, mixed-use development e.g. shop/office conversion
- Air B n B - local buyers being outbid
- Energy from waste
- Adaptability of dwellings / future proofing of buildings and spaces
- More bungalows needed
- Increased energy efficiency in new build
- Implications of post-covid e.g. properties with shared gardens, digital community. Dedicated working space, community space
- Need to enforce housing mix policies
- Foul water drainage capacity. Need to make sure we have more imaginative solutions eg. grey water recycling
- Modular construction needed on larger scale to increase sustainability and speed of delivery
- Affordable housing should be for local people - application of local connection criteria

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress?

- Rural exception site - small scale provision in most villages
- Social integration between different age groups e.g. intergenerational living
- More active support for neighbourhood and community planning
- Social isolation and loneliness - need to combat this
- WODC acquisition of land to enable direct delivery

A vibrant, resilient & diverse local economy

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving a vibrant, resilient & diverse local economy?

- Out-commuting reflects lack of local opportunities
- Co-working hubs vs smaller bespoke offices
- Advice centres for small businesses who are struggling
- Signposting to grants and support – don't rely on Google!
- Brexit, supply of goods and labour uncertainty = less investment
- Learn from Scandinavia
- AirBnB needs controlling
- Christmas lights and events to support local businesses
- Lack of small office spaces for start-ups in non-Witney locations
- Energy costs of home working and less social interaction & teamworking
- Businesses are cautious at the present due to state of the economy
- Care industry is on its knees – supported living to release housing. Care is a business too.
- Business rates is a key issue but not for small businesses
- Taxation will deliver more than planning ever can
- Better access to Oxford

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Care needs will increase – Interest in apprenticeship less
- Young people moving away is a real issue
- Only minimum wage jobs for the young
- Resistance to business development in villages from 'new comers'
- Local hubs for businesses in villages needed
- Tailor education to the needs of the area
- Internships as well as apprenticeships to align to a local business
- Clearer careers advice for all and especially for the less able – kids are 'drifting' and need mentoring
- Are university's pulling their weight?
- Spin-off businesses need space to locate and grow and employ local people
- Barns to residential is a real problem for local employment
- High Streets – Will Covid 'boom' carry on? How do we help? Can we help the market? More social than just shopping, help local not chain stores
- Businesses feed off and support each other in villages
- Anchors other businesses and shops
- Rural landowner monopoly of land for businesses (Oxford University and Blenheim)
- Rent/Business Rate free first year to trade
- Demographic profile of the district means less workers – need training for local workers?
- Identify USP of each settlement
- Pop-up shops, market stalls, start the market before a shop
- Free parking is a significant benefit locally but appropriate time limits are important to encourage churn.
- Get rid of buses – visitors pay and locals free!
- What else other than Coffee Shops can the High Street do?
- Frequency of the market – coordinate so not competing against other markets
- Improve public transport
- Doctors surgeries in the town centre help

- Activity as well as shopping – bold vision for public spaces – destination not shopping (Tourism and Leisure Managers)

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress?

- Need to coordinate support – Chambers of Trade + DL/TL + Village Hall are separate
- Volunteers are time poor
- Local artists exhibition
- Outdoor activity to High Street is essential
- Community Centre as a stop/surgery/ economic hub etc
- Use empty shops for housing
- Second hand shops promote recycling and trade on brand of upper-class area
- Build in hubs rather than bolting on 'ticky tacky'
- Public transport shrinking in rural areas – transport apps with cost and frequency would be useful
- Housing must relate to good transport
- Don't stop business support during downturn that may be needed when economic cycle picks up.

SESSION 1: Mixed tables of representatives from economy/community and environment sectors

Task: To discuss if we have the priorities for the 'Your Voice' consultation correct:

- Tackling the climate & ecological emergency
- Healthy, safe, strong & active communities
- An enhanced natural & built environment
- Attractive, accessible & thriving places
- Meeting the housing needs of all
- A vibrant, resilient & diverse local economy

Group 1

- Concerns over lack of historical investment in infrastructure – public transport, flooding
- Concern over staffing for leisure and tourism

Opportunities

- Green construction skills
- Inequality – access to opportunities
- Improve water quality
- Local tourism
- Integration with the NHS (benefits for leisure industry)
- Changing partnerships – who we need to work with
- Buy in from younger people

Group 2

Session 1 - Priorities.

- Growth is needed to address inequalities but it needs to be done in a sustainable and green way which is aware of climate and ecological issues. A different approach is therefore needed.
- The tourism offer needs to be taken more seriously. How do we attract tourists if limited VICs are now available to promote the area?
- Need better communication/ positive messages to promote current projects such as the Witney High Street traffic restrictions which appears to be unpopular locally.
- Redistribution of opportunities is fundamental rather than simply trying to create new ones.
- Need to create more accessible natural spaces for people to visit. Managing 'risk' is a hurdle to this (insurances/ risk of injury etc) as well as cost of maintenance.
- Climate adaptation and how we respond to climate change will become increasingly important.
- Access to community groups in rural areas is an important issues. Need resilient communities with good local services and spaces. In addition, development sites need to include a balanced mix of uses to help create community cohesion with good active travel linkages.
- Accessibility is key – public transport is a key consideration in this.
- Renewable energy policies need to be given higher priority and we need to reconsider how these are balanced with other planning considerations.
- Currently the Local Plan is quite silent on energy and food security.
- Energy efficiency standards on new development needs to be vastly improved and better supported at a national level.

- Chamber of Commerce: 'A vibrant, resilient and diverse economy' drives the others – growth, growth, growth is needed – address income inequalities through more employment that in turn has to be done in a way that deals with climate issues that are paramount – we have to have a plan that enables growth in a sustainable way. That creates active communities.
- CofC – how can we give people opportunities – grow the economy in a way that is more aware of ecological issues – create an environment that people feel welcomes new businesses.
- Tourism – how can we attract people? We need Visitor Info Centres – an organisation to counteract negative narratives on the area. Eg Witney Gazette publishes that Witney is closed and failing but revenue is up in local businesses.
- Wychwood Forest Trust – countered this – growth forever is a road to ruin. West Ox is affluent – there is no shortage of ££ the problem is distribution of this. We need policies to enable the redistribution of opportunity.
- WFT – on the climate/ecological emergency – question is do we want to focus on rural/pretty or intensely farmed landscapes? Challenge is inaccessible land. 80% of West Ox land is agricultural, 10% is housing, 2% is SSI, <5% is good quality ... that remaining 3% needs careful consideration. We need to redistribute opportunities to access quality land – doesn't need to be a big endeavour – also need to increase biodiversity over the entirety of the District.
- Cornbury Estate – we would put Climate as the top priority – trickle down benefits to growth after. We are more aligned than we think even though we all come from different perspectives. Regarding accessibility to our land – biggest concern is managing risk of people entering our land. Ash die back a big concern. Cornbury is an employer – it is essentially a London business who has its HQ in the Cotswolds (employs 15 staff) so contributes on multiple levels. Seeking to link with tourism/cultural offer locally e.g. working proactively with Chipping Norton Theatre – holding outdoor theatre events at the park.
- Nick Mottram – OCC Environment Lead. Climate emergency is very difficult to grasp. How do you balance growth with concerns that are so significant that they will chip away at business as usual. From OCC's perspective the focus is on climate adaptation – water access, flooding, storm event. Preparing our communities for these inevitable events.
- Ruth Madder for VCS Forum – climate is not on our radar, it's all about health and social care. A group of people the same size population as Chipping Norton (7,000) in Oxfordshire suffer from psychotic illness – 2/3 of these don't work, 1/3 hold down a job. This has huge implications for community cohesion.
- VCS Forum – connectivity important – social prescribing – need opportunities for people to connect with each other. Creating blue/green corridors that give people access to public spaces (built as well as natural) ... places to play and socialise. If there are spaces the VCS will support, facilitate and enable. This can be intensive for 6-12 months but then groups can become self sustaining.
- Land-uses are not mutually exclusive – what use is most appropriate where and where are there opportunities for cross-benefits? E.g. both environmental, community and economic benefits?
- Wychwood Forest Trust – If we kick the can further down the road on the climate/ecological emergency it will get progressively worse. We can't expect to contribute to the global debate if we don't take local action.
- Energy and food are both missing from the priorities.
- Growth in businesses is needed to provide job opportunities but should not be at the expense of climate/environmental issues
- Need to create an environment in which businesses are keen to invest/create new jobs
- Importance of tourism – WODC should reinstate tourist visitor centres. Clearer information needed e.g. traffic restrictions in Witney Town Centre. Needn't necessarily be run by WODC
- Support the interlinkage of the climate and ecological emergency – fundamentally intertwined
- Should be seeking redistribution of opportunities
- Key issue is accessibility to open space in rural areas which is limited. Need more accessible and biodiverse areas to attract visitors
- Ash dieback is a major problem for some areas as remedial work restricts any public access
- Need to think about the future scenarios/impacts of climate change especially adaptation. Plans need to be future-proofed
- Local Nature Partnership recently established
- Mental health issues including in relation to accessibility of local services – both within towns and villages and between in terms of connectivity including between people and nature
- Multi-purpose hubs e.g. Spendlove centre at Charlbury well supported

- Continuity of support from WODC across all sectors including environmental
- Should be potentially looking to third sector organisations for further support
- Accessibility by public transport in rural areas is poor
- WODC should be looking at potential for renewable energy provision across the District including wind and solar
- A need to balance competing requirements – e.g. growth/development and climate change
- Visual example – interactivity – what will this look like?

Group 3

- Inequalities
- Climate emergency
- Communication
- Food
- Co-working spaces
- Accommodation /housing costs
- Using planning policy to drive Net Zero
- Rural land management
- Transparency on action re infrastructure particular in relation to water and sewerage
- Understanding biodiversity net-gain
- Access to the countryside
- What is the role of Market Towns?

Group 4

- Climate should run through all things, potentially most important topic.
- Economy is very diverse throughout the district, lots of high tech industry.
- Rise in homeworking suggest opportunity for more co working spaces such as is available at Part & Parcel in Witney.
- Promoting High Street resilience.
- Lack of housing and lack of land drives people away from the district.
- Cotswolds being used as a carbon offsetting landscape threatens to change the character of the landscape.
- WODC can best help by removing barriers to organisations trying to put climate first.
- Lots of pressure being put onto farmers to be leaders in all aspects of climate and environment.
- Poor clarity/information on spending of S106 moneys.
- Water quality a hugely pressing concern, particularly in context of continued development.
- Huge appetite for more joined up working, WODC positioned as a leader and facilitator for other local organisations.

Need to:

- Give consideration to the trends in working, such as the potential continuation of home working. Implications for design and use of homes, neighbourhoods and settlements, as well as people's mental and physical health. Plan in co-working hubs.
- Recognise that the function of town centres is changing. Re-use of vacant premises and re-designing/re-using public realm.
- Assess the implications for the AONB of health and societal changes. The development of renewable energy an important consideration.
- Emphasise 'recovery', including those that are trying to address climate change and support them.
- Have a vision of what we want to achieve in, say, 4 years' time.
- Give attention to rural land management, as well as getting people back on the land (perhaps through use of tied cottages).

- Do something about inadequate infrastructure, especially sewage treatment works and the water environment. What can the Council achieve?
- Be clear as to what 'good' looks like for Biodiversity Net Gain?
- Decide whether the Council wishes to be a 'leader'.
- Consider having a leadership role around the topic of healthy towns and communities, including economic recovery. By way of example, town centres should be less about retail and more about community hubs, pop-ups and cultural services.
- Look at settlement clusters. Blenheim considering this around Woodstock – linking surrounding villages to town by footpaths and cycleways as a way of providing new homes in those small villages
- Provide access to nature for all.

SESSION 2: Representatives from the economic sector sat at table 1, environmental sector sat at table 2 and community sector at table 3.

TASK – To identify opportunities for practical action towards delivering strategic aims relevant to their sector within the District. What role could/should WODC play in this action?

Group 1 – Economy

- Cost of living crisis - £300k utilities bill for Abingdon and Witney college – general impact also on staff and students well-being
- Accessibility by public transport between different campuses
- Tourism sector – actually doing quite well despite cost of living crisis – could be due to a number of factors including money saved by households during covid
- Business/economy also doing well generally – quite resilient and diverse which helps. Still some issues to address e.g. lower than average incomes
- Rural estates (Cornbury) – largest impact felt during covid but generally returned to normal
- Blenheim – visitors back to pre-covid levels. Most visits depend more on weather. Cost of living not yet biting on visitor numbers – possibly still to come
- Impacts of inflationary pressures e.g. rental prices. Increased number of lettings and people moving further afield to access cheaper properties
- Need to promote more EV skills training/green skills/construction etc. Link with WODC climate manager role.
- Would be useful for stakeholders to know more about Council Officers and what they do – a 'meet the team' style section online perhaps
- Need to focus on short-term tangible improvements e.g. Witney High Street
- Need to more re: public transport and connectivity. Potential use of S106 funding, increased lobbying
- Better communication needed – what's on in West Oxon? Links with loyal free initiative – big push on this this year
- Visitor economy – overarching organisation would be helpful
- Potential scope for further joint working between different estates and organisations
- Hotel provision – hospitality sector – potential links with college (although courses tend to focus on GVA so probably not a priority)

Group 2 - Environment

- Communication and networking between organisations is reasonably good but there could be a role for WODC to help inform these groups of funding opportunities as well as helping to bring these organisations together (today is a positive example of this).
- Many of the organisations cover different geographical areas and whilst there could be regular 'West Oxon' meetings between the groups, it may be better for any such groups to be project focussed.
- WODC could help influence change with responsible organisations such as Thames Water.
- Funding and resources remain a hurdle. Also need a better understanding of the issues we face and a change in attitude/ new approach.
- Need to try to improve collaborative working at the earliest stage and this should be underpinned by action plans.
- Generally happy with the priorities set out in draft Local Plan consultation but what does this mean in reality and how will these priorities be implemented?
- Good monitoring is vital if these priorities are to be delivered. Could have monitoring by communities but training would be necessary and communities would need to be supported in this.
- Need strong evidence base to support policy approach. Joint working between the organisations can assist with this.
- Need to focus on positive change rather than focussing on impact only otherwise we will continue on the same path.
- Policies and strategies need stronger oversight and enforcement.
- Lack of regional planning means that organisations often have to engage multiple times at the local level.
- Networks should be established at all scales.
- Important for the environment sector to actively engage with other sectors.
- Collaborative approach might work best through pilot projects – spotlighting successes and challenges.
- Farmer clusters are good examples of landowners coming together effectively to discuss key topics in depth to collectively prepare for future change.
- Climate adaptation is important, not only mitigation.
- Sufficient infrastructure should be put in place before development connects to it.
- WODC Ecologist in post is essential.
- OP2050 evidence base should be explored to make use of existing data.
- Project – look at housing delivery for agricultural workers
- Lobby water companies – you can connect new housing but only if sewerage capacity is adequate
- Projects should support ecosystem quality and resilience
- Climate adaptation needs to be a focus – consider the impacts down the line of local land uses and water supply
- What is the role of citizen science – Parish Council's as part of this
- What is WODC's approach to community engagement to build local resilience e.g. extreme weather events. We need to coordinate at the highest of levels
- In terms of the environmental sector's role – we are different types of organisations ... we need to be less competitive and would benefit from a more collaborative grants process. West Oxon needs to detail projects at a landscape level. If you focus grants at a more granular level you get more opportunists.
- Environmental sector needs to interact more with community and economy sector e.g. Farmer Cluster is a good example. Landowners want to know where the £ are coming from and how they access.
- WODC can be a champion for some of these issues – food, housing, ecology so that others input and raise the profile of the issue within the District.

Group 3 – Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive Communities

- In addition to the Council Plan and the Local Plan, there should be a Health and Wellbeing Strategy/Plan which sets out: where we will lead; where we will work in partnership; and where we will take more of a back seat and focus more on 'influencing' others.
- The District-level is an important starting point for partnership working.
- Voluntary sector has a significant role to play. Huge health and wellbeing benefits for both those participating and the outcomes of their actions. Citizen champions.
- Need to recognise that for many people, especially those living hand-to-mouth, Plans and Strategies are not seen as having relevance and/or not a priority for them to be involved. Shows the importance of having trusted relationships to tackle inequalities – making use of the knowledge and skills of others.
- Important to make use of spaces and places in a multifunctional way, both existing and new, including the public realm.
- Need to focus on partnership working and how this can continue to achieve maximum opportunities/benefits.
- Funding seen as a significant issue for many groups, especially if this is currently decided on an annual basis.

List of attendees

Organisation	Name
Abingdon & Witney College	Simon Kibble
Witney Chamber of Commerce	David Gambier
Wake up to Woodstock	Dennis Allen
The North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster	Tim Field
Cornbury Park Estate	John Jacques
Cornbury Park Estate	Lord Rotherwick
P.D Hook	Patrick Hook
Blenheim Estate	Liz Foulkes
Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership	Camilla Burrow
Evenlode Catchment Partnership	Eoghan Concannon
Wychwood Forest Trust	Neil Clenell
Lower Windrush Valley Project	Rachel Crookes
FarmED	Ian Wilkinson
OCC Climate Lead	Rachel Wileman
OCC Lead for the Natural Environment	Nick Mottram
Windrush Against Sewerage Pollution	Ashley Smith
Cotswolds National Landscape	Andy Parsons
OCC Healthy Place Shaping Lead	Rosie Rowe
GLL – Partnership Manager West Oxfordshire	Matthew Simmons
West Oxon VCS Development Group	Ruth Madder
Oxfordshire MIND	Lisa Harle-Ward
Community First Oxfordshire	Tom McCulloch
WODC	Cllr Andrew Prosser
WODC	Cllr Joy Aitman
WODC	Cllr Dan Levy
WODC	Cllr Carl Rylett
WODC	Cllr Duncan Enright
WODC	Cllr Geoff Saul

WODC	Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy
WODC	Janice Bamsey – Planning Policy
WODC	Kim Hudson – Planning Policy
WODC	Hannah Kenyon – Planning Policy
WODC	Oliver Murray – Planning Policy
WODC	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer
WODC	Astrid Harvey - Policy & Partnerships Officer



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

West Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme (LDS)

April 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS). It explains what planning policy documents the Council already has in place and what will be prepared during the three-year period April 2023 – April 2026

2. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

- 2.1 The current [West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031](#) was formally adopted on 27 September 2018. The plan provides an overall framework for growth in the period up to 2031.
- 2.2 Although the current Local Plan remains relatively recent, it was prepared under previous national policy which has since been updated and the plan could usefully be strengthened in a number of key areas around climate change, environmental enhancement and health and well-being.
- 2.3 As such, the District Council has committed to preparing a new Local Plan covering the 20-year period 2021 – 2041.
- 2.4 To kick start that process, an initial ‘scoping’ consultation took place from 24 August – 5 October 2022. The consultation was the first step in the Regulation 18 *plan preparation* stage and was intended to seek early views on the potential content of the new Local Plan.
- 2.5 Two further periods of public consultation are now expected to take place under the Regulation 18 plan preparation stage as follows:
- June/July 2023 – A focused consultation on draft Local Plan objectives and spatial strategy options along with a ‘call for sites’ exercise
 - November 2023 – Consultation on preferred policy options/approaches
- 2.6 Subject to the outcome of these two stages, the Council should then be in a position to publish the formal Regulation 19 pre-submission draft version of its new Local Plan in June 2024, with a view to submitting it for examination in November 2024.
- 2.7 Depending on the progress of the examination, adoption would then follow sometime in the second half of 2025.
- 2.8 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the Local Plan 2041 is set out at Appendix I.

3. Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 3.1 A key element of the adopted Local Plan is the allocation of land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham for a new garden village of around 2,200 homes, together with business space and other supporting uses and facilities. The proposal is being supported by central Government through its locally led garden village, towns and cities programme.
- 3.2 Development of the garden village is being led by a separate [Area Action Plan](#) (AAP) which, when adopted, will form part of the statutory development plan for West Oxfordshire.
- 3.3 The AAP was formally submitted for examination in February 2021, with examination hearing sessions held in June/July 2021. Following the hearing sessions, the appointed Planning Inspector wrote to the Council, effectively ‘pausing’ the examination and requesting further work on the phasing of infrastructure.
- 3.4 Subsequently, the Inspector wrote to the District Council on 26 May 2022 confirming that the AAP can be made ‘sound’ through a number of Main Modifications. Consultation on those modifications took place from 23 September to Friday 4 November 2022 and the Inspector’s Final Report¹ was received on 1 March 2023.
- 3.5 The District Council will now review the report recommendations which include a number of changes to the AAP and formally consider its adoption.
- 3.6 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the AAP is set out at Appendix I.

¹ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/djkhe03s/salt-cross-aap-inspectors-report-main-mods-appendix-final.pdf>

4. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 4.1 Supplementary planning documents do not form part of the statutory development plan but are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Their main purpose is to elaborate on specific local plan policies and explain in more detail how those policies will operate.
- 4.2 At present, the Council has two adopted SPDs including the [West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD](#) adopted in 2016 and the [Affordable Housing SPD](#) adopted in 2021.

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

- 4.3 The Council is preparing a SPD on the topic of 'Developer Contributions' setting out in detail the District Council's approach to mitigating the impact of new development by securing the right package of supporting infrastructure.
- 4.4 Initial consultation on a first draft of the SPD took place in November 2020 with 27 responses received from a variety of Town and Parish Councils, developers and landowners, other local authorities, statutory bodies and individuals.
- 4.5 Further consultation on a revised draft version of the SPD subsequently took place in October 2022 with 29 further responses from various individuals and organisations.
- 4.6 Taking account of the issues raised, the final version of the SPD is expected to be adopted in July 2023.
- 4.7 Further information on the anticipated purpose, scope and timing of the SPD is set out at Appendix I.

Hanborough Station Masterplan

- 4.8 The District Council has previously agreed to provide funding, in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council, to commission the development of a masterplan for Hanborough Station.
- 4.9 After a period of delay, the scope/brief of the masterplan has now been established and it is hoped that work can begin during summer 2023. Completion of the project will depend on a number of factors including the outcomes of stakeholder consultation and so detailed dates are not provided here. In broad terms, the District Council expects significant progress to have been made by the end of the year.
- 4.10 It has however become evident that whilst the development of a masterplan for the station is possible within the available budget, taking it forward formally as a supplementary planning document would have additional cost implications in terms of additional procedural requirements and stakeholder consultation etc.

- 4.11 As such, once the masterplan has been produced, Officers propose to then take a view on the merits of taking it forward as a formal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Combe Village Design Statement

- 4.12 Combe Parish Council has prepared a Village Design Statement which was the subject of initial public consultation in 2019/2020 and was submitted to the District Council in November 2021.
- 4.13 The stated purpose of the VDS is to ‘*provide design guidelines that can help to shape any future development so that it blends in with Combe’s distinctive rural landscape and heritage*’.
- 4.14 In October 2022, the Council’s Cabinet agreed that the draft VDS should be subject to a 6-week period of public consultation. This took place from 3 February – 17 March 2023.
- 4.15 The responses received will now be considered and a view taken on whether the VDS should be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). If the VDS is taken forward for formal adoption as a SPD, this is likely to take place in July 2023.
- 4.16 Further information on the anticipated purpose, scope and timing of the VDS is set out at Appendix I.

5. Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.1 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.
- 5.2 There are currently seven adopted Neighbourhood Plans in West Oxfordshire including:
- Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 15 March 2016)
 - South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 8 January 2019)
 - Shilton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
 - Hailey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
 - Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 6 February 2020)
 - Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 14 June 2021)
 - Woodstock (adopted 23 January 2023)
- 5.3 There are six other Neighbourhood Plans currently in progress including:
- Ascott under Wychwood
 - Brize Norton Neighbourhood Plan
 - Cassington
 - Milton-under-Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan

- North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan
- Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan

5.4 Because the progress and timing of neighbourhood plans are beyond the control of the District Council, the LDS does not include any information on their anticipated timetables. Further information can however be obtained from the District Council's website².

6. Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

6.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in the preparation of the Local Plan and other related documents. It also provides information about how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in relation to the determination of planning applications.

6.2 Local planning authorities are required to review their Statements of Community Involvement every 5 years with the Council's most recent SCI being adopted in February 2020³. Although there is no immediate need to review the SCI because it remains quite recent, we anticipate that planning policy related consultations will in the future have a much greater digital focus, with the District Council having secured funding from central Government under Round 2 of the PropTech Engagement Fund⁴ which has enabled the implementation of a new digital engagement platform.

7. LDF Monitoring Report

7.1 In accordance with national planning regulations the Council is required to produce a monitoring report addressing various matters including plan progress and implementation, neighbourhood planning, CIL (where applicable) and the duty to co-operate.

7.2 The Council's most recently published monitoring report covers the period 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021⁵. A further report covering the period 1st April – 2021 – 31st March 2022 will be published shortly.

² <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

³ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/jo0g3prh/statement-of-community-involvement.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.localdigital.gov.uk/proptech-engagement-fund-round-2/>

⁵ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wqdcxefn/annual-monitoring-report-2020-2021.pdf>

8. LDS availability and updates

- 8.1 The LDS must be made publicly available and kept up-to-date.
- 8.2 In terms of availability, a copy of this LDS is online at <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/>
- 8.3 Hard copies are also available in the locations listed in the following table.
- 8.4 The LDS will be updated annually or more often if there are any significant changes in timescales or documents being prepared.

West Oxfordshire District Council Witney Town Centre Shop 3 Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 861000 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm	Witney Town Council Town Hall Market Square Witney OX28 6AG Tel: 01993 704379 Open: Mon, Tues and Thurs 8.30am to 5pm, Wed 9.30am to 5pm and Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm.	Carterton Town Council 19 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JL Tel: 01993 842156 Open: Monday – Friday 9.30am to 4.00pm
Chipping Norton Town Council The Guildhall Market Place Chipping Norton OX7 5NJ Tel: 01608 642341 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 1pm	Bampton Library Old Grammar School Church View Bampton OX18 2NE Tel: 01993 850076	Burford Library 86A High Street Burford OX18 4QF Tel: 01993 823377
Carterton Library 6 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JH Tel: 01993 841492	Charlbury Library Charlbury Community Centre Enstone Road Charlbury OX7 3PQ Tel: 01608 811104	Chipping Norton Library Goddards Land Chipping Norton OX7 5NP Tel: 01608 643559
Eynsham Library 30 Mill Street Eynsham OX29 4JS Tel: 01865 880525	North Leigh Library Memorial Hall Park Road North Leigh OX29 6SA Tel: 01993 882935	Stonesfield Library Village Hall Longore Stonesfield OX29 8EF Tel: 01993 898187
Witney Library Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 703659	Woodstock Library The Oxfordshire Museum Fletcher's House Park Street Woodstock OX20 1SN Tel: 01993 814124 07759 140531	Wychwood Library 29 High Street Milton-under-Wychwood OX7 6LD Tel: 01993 830281

Appendix I – Document Profiles

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The Local Plan will set out the overall framework for future growth in West Oxfordshire to 2041. This is expected to include strategic policies dealing with the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development as well as non-strategic policies dealing with other matters including site allocations and development management policies.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	<p>Regulation 18 initial scoping consultation – August - October 2022 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Regulation 18 focused consultation on draft plan objectives and spatial strategy options along with a ‘call for sites’ exercise – June/July 2023</p> <p>Regulation 18 consultation on preferred policy options/approaches – November 2023</p> <p>Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) – June 2024</p> <p>Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 22) – November 2024</p> <p>Examination and adoption - 2025</p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council’s Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council’s Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.

Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
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Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	Supplements the Local Plan 2031 providing additional detail on the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) – now referred to as Salt Cross Garden Village. The AAP will establish a vision for the garden village, supported by a series of core objectives and policies arranged on a thematic basis. A key focus of the AAP will be delivery and implementation.
Geographical coverage	Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) north of Eynsham
Timetable	<p>Submission – February 2021 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Examination hearings – June/July 2021 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Consultation on Main Modifications – September/November 2022 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Inspector's Report received – March 2023 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Adoption – July 2023</p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).


Developer Contributions SPD	
Status	Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Overview	Intended to provide further guidance on the Council's approach in respect of developer contributions including planning obligations.
Geographical coverage	District-Wide
Timetable	<p>Informal consultation – November 2020 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Further consultation – October 2022 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Adoption – July 2023</p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031)
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council's Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council's Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Hanborough Station Masterplan	
Status	To be confirmed. Potentially to be taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) either in whole or in part.
Overview	A masterplan for Hanborough Station considering a range of factors including accessibility, the use of space, circulation, available facilities etc.
Geographical coverage	Hanborough Station
Timetable	Work to commence in summer 2023 with exact timings for completion to be confirmed.
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031).
Management arrangements	<p>The masterplan will be produced by external consultants with input from West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council as the commissioning authorities.</p> <p>If the masterplan (or elements of it) is/are subsequently taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), that process may be led by the District Council.</p>
Resource requirements	Masterplan to be commissioned through external consultants.
Community engagement	The masterplan will be the subject of extensive stakeholder engagement. If taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document, any further engagement as part of that process would be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Combe Village Design Statement (VDS)	
Status	Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Overview	Intended to provide design guidelines that can help to shape any future development so that it blends in with Combe's distinctive rural landscape and heritage.
Geographical coverage	Combe Parish
Timetable	<p>Informal consultation – 2019/2020 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Further consultation – February/March 2023 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Adoption – July 2023</p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031) and West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016).
Management arrangements	Document production led by Combe Parish Council. West Oxfordshire District Council to facilitate formal public consultation.
Resource requirements	Combe Parish Council have led on the preparation of the VDS to this point. West Oxfordshire District Council to facilitate formal public consultation.
Community engagement	Public consultation has already taken place in respect of the VDS in 2019/2020. Further statutory consultation will take place in accordance with the requirements of the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Appendix 2 – Overall Timetable

Document	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)				A																									
Developer Contributions SPD				A																									
Combe Village Design Statement SPD				A																									
Hanborough Station Masterplan	Dates to be confirmed																												
Key: IC = Informal Consultation; FC = Formal Consultation; S = Submission; H = Hearings; MM = Main Modifications; A = Adoption																													
Document	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041			IC	IC				IC	IC						FC					S									
Key: IC = Informal Consultation; FC = Formal Consultation; S = Submission																													

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 19 APRIL 2023
Subject	DISCRETIONARY COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FUND
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Dan Levy – Executive Member for Finance Email: dan.levy@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To adopt the Discretionary Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/2024
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	<p><i>That Executive resolves to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Approve a payment of £55 as detailed in paras 3.3 and 3.4 of this report; and,</i> <i>b) Delegate the distribution of surplus funds to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director for Resident Services, Director of Finance (Publica), Executive Member for Finance

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Government has announced £100 million of additional funding for local authorities to support the most vulnerable households in England, by providing additional support to those households already receiving council tax support (CTS).
- 1.2** The funding is for the 2023/2024 financial year with West Oxfordshire District Councils allocation being £114,643.
- 1.3** The discount should apply to current claimants in receipt of CTS that have an outstanding council tax liability for the 2023/24 financial year.
- 1.4** The funding is finite and therefore the Council, although keen to ensure that awards are distributed to the maximum number of residents, is conscious that its expenditure cannot exceed that amount.

The funding will be paid to the Council through a grant, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The government expects local authorities to use the majority of their funding allocations to reduce the bills of current working age and pension age CTS claimants by up to £25.
- 2.2** Where a claimant's liability for 2023/24 is, following the application of CTS, less than £25, then their liability would be reduced to nil.
- 2.3** Where a claimant's liability for 2023/24 is nil, no reduction to the council tax bill will be available, as those bills should not be credited.
- 2.4** There will be no requirement for any recipient of CTS to make a separate application for reduction under the scheme. As part of the annual billing process in February/March, officers will assess who is eligible for support and automatically apply the discount.
- 2.5** The Council can establish its own local approach to utilise the remaining funding allocation to assist those in need throughout the financial year 2023/24. It is however being proposed that any new CTS applications awarded during the financial year is also considered for an award of £25 or less, depending on the amount of liability outstanding following an award of CTS.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** The Government will be allocating funding to local councils to cover the scheme through a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003. The allocation for West Oxfordshire District Council is £114,643.
- 3.2** Data obtained in January 2023 show the following predicted caseload as follows:

Working Age (WA) CTS	Pension Age (PA) CTS	Nil to pay WA CTS	Nil to pay PA CTS	Total Potential non-nil caseload
2544	1740	1241	1187	1856

- 3.3** Based on data modelling an initial expenditure of £46,400 would be distributed. This leaves surplus funding of £68,243. The Council could consider other options as follows:

Award Topped up to:	Potential Cost	Surplus Funding	Potential New Awards during 2023/24
£50	£92,800	£21,834	436
£55	£102,080	£12,554	228
£60	£111,360	£3,274	54

- 3.4** If the Council were to consider the option to award £55 per eligible CTS claim (£25 mandatory and £30 discretionary), then a further 228 potential new eligible CTS claimants following 1 April 2023 could be supported with additional funding.
- 3.5** It is not anticipated that an additional 228 new claims will be made. However, close monitoring of the scheme will be maintained and reported to the Chief Finance Officer. It is proposed within the recommendations that should there be significant surplus funding towards the end of 2023/24, that delegation be given to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance with proposals on how to distribute any surplus funding.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The government have confirmed that they expect local authorities to administer the grant by using their discretionary relief powers under S13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1** The funding is limited, and therefore the Council must ensure it does not award more funding than is received. Close, weekly monitoring of payments will be undertaken to ensure spending remains within the funding allocation.
- 5.2** If the funding is fully allocated before the end of the financial year, no further payments will be made to any new CTS applicants.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

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


7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

8.1 Alternative options are detailed within paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 above.

8.2 The Council can also establish its own local approach to using any surplus funding, this may include apply council tax relief using its adapted existing discretionary/hardship policies. It is proposed that if this option is taken, that the delegation is given to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to consider any future changes that may be necessary to maximise the support that can be given.

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE - 19 APRIL 2023
Subject	INTEGRATED CARE STRATEGY FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, OXFORDSHIRE AND BERKSHIRE WEST (BOB ICS)
Wards affected	All
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Summary/Purpose	To present the new Integrated Care Strategy for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) and seek Executive's endorsement of it.
Annexes	Annex A – Integrated Care Strategy for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire (West)
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: <i>a) Endorse the BOB Integrated Care Strategy</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Putting Residents First ● A Good Quality of Life for All ● A Better Environment for People and Wildlife ● Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency ● Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	No

Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board has conducted a consultation exercise in line with national guidance.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This has been a year of significant change in the Health system. From July 2022 new organisations and partnerships under the umbrella title ‘Integrated Care Systems’ were introduced. As part of this structure, Integrated Care Boards (ICB) have been formed replacing the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG).
- 1.2 This is the new NHS body that receives funds from NHS England and in our area, plans and buys services for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire’s three westerly local authority areas of West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham (known as ‘Berkshire West’) – referred to as the BOB area.
- 1.3 The Health and Care Act 2022 documented new statutory requirements for the ICB, one of which is to produce an Integrated Care Strategy (ICS) for the BOB area, as explained in guidance published by the DHSC in July 2022.
- 1.4 As part of the ‘Integrated Care System’ an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) is formed to bring together all the key providers of health and care services in the BOB area. Members include local NHS organisations and GPs, local authorities, public health, Healthwatch, care providers, voluntary and community groups, as well as academic and research partners. Across Oxfordshire Chief Executives from all Councils have made a commitment to this.
- 1.5 The ICP will be responsible for the implementation of the Integrated Care Strategy. This strategy builds on our current joint local health and wellbeing strategies. These have been developed between NHS, local authority and other partners at local authority level. The ICP has worked with members of our partner organisations, the voluntary sector, and others to understand their areas of focus and ambitions.
- 1.6 The ICP also asked local people and partner organisations to share their views on the draft priorities and this feedback has been used to shape this strategy. A public consultation period closed on the 27th January 2023.

2. INTEGRATED CARE STRATEGY

- 2.1 The vision of the strategy is *‘for everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and the Berkshire West area, to have the best possible start in life, to live happier, healthier lives for longer, and to be able to access the right support when they need it’*.
- 2.2 The strategy sets out a series of guiding principles:
 - Preventing ill-health
 - Tackling health inequalities

- Providing person centred care
- Supporting local delivery
- Improving the join up between our services

2.3 There are five areas of strategic priority where the ICP expects to do more together, locally and across the health and care system, to improve health and wellbeing in a manner that is fair and inclusive. These five areas are described below:



2.4 These strategic priorities are further broken down into a series of 19 priorities for action. These are:

Promoting and protecting health

- Take action to address the factors that influence our health and wellbeing
- Reduce the proportion of people smoking across BOB
- Reduce the proportion of people who are a healthy weight and physically active, especially in our most deprived areas and in younger people
- Reduce the proportion of people drinking alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing
- Protect people from infectious disease by preventing infections in all our health and care settings and delivering national and local immunisation programmes

Start Well

- Improve early years outcomes for all children, particularly working with communities experiencing the poorest outcomes
- Improve emotional, mental health and wellbeing for children and young people

- Improve the support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and for their families and carers
- Support young adults to move from child centred to adult services

Live Well

- Improve mental health by improving access to and experience of relevant services, especially for those at higher risk of poor mental health
- Reduce the number of people developing cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) by reducing the risk factors, particularly for groups at higher risk
- Increase cancer screening and early diagnosis rates with a particular focus on addressing inequalities in access and outcomes

Age Well

- Support people to remain healthy, independent, and connected within their communities
- Provide personalized and joined up care for people as their care needs increase and become more complex
- Improve support for carers

Improving quality and access to services

- Develop strong integrated neighbourhood teams so that people's needs can be met in local communities
- Reduce and eliminate long waits for our planned services, and address variation in access across the system
- Support the consistent development of our urgent care services to reduce demand and support timely access
- Improve access and experience of palliative and end of life services to enable people of all ages to die well

2.5 Full details are set out in the Integrated Care Strategy, which is included as Annex A.

3. WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT

- 3.1** The Council has been keen to engage and actively participate in the discussion and shaping of the new Integrated Care strategy. We recognise that to enable the system as a whole to have an impact on local health issues, in particular in the areas of deprivation and health inequalities across the district, it's critical that key work strands connect and align to tackle the wider determinants of health - such as housing, unemployment, education, lifestyle choices and access to food and green spaces.
- 3.2** The Council has responsibilities across a number of areas considered 'wider determinants' and therefore has a significant role to play in the prevention of poor health and wellbeing.

This is reflected in the priority 'Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All' in our recently adopted Council Plan 2023-2027.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1** The Integrated Care Partnership will be developing Delivery plans for each priority area over the coming weeks and months. The Council will seek to engage in all relevant discussions moving forward.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no financial implications for the Council in endorsing the Integrated Care Strategy.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no legal implications for the Council in endorsing the Integrated Care Strategy.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** There are no risks for the Council in endorsing the Integrated Care Strategy.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** The Integrated Care Strategy is concerned with high level priorities at system level across the "BOB". 23. Inequality is a key focus for the ICS and is reflected within the Strategy

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** There are no climate change implications in endorsing the Integrated Care Strategy.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1** There are no background papers.

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WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire
and Berkshire West
Integrated Care Board



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you



Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership

Integrated Care Strategy



March 2023

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There is little doubt we are living through a time where pre-existing assumptions about health outcomes are being challenged. From the shock of the pandemic, to a cost of living crisis likely to widen health inequalities rather than reduce them, the task of setting a course for the years ahead is not easy.

We already know that the places and circumstances where people are born, grow up, live, and learn influence how happy and healthy they are, which makes it particularly difficult to set a strategy for a catchment area as large as ours. Many strategies cross over county boundaries, others do not.

The pandemic shone a bright light on the health inequalities in our societies. We always knew they existed, but we maybe don't talk about them enough. As always, the biggest impact was felt by less well-off communities and the same will apply to the economic conditions in the year ahead.

My own patch of Reading ranks as the third most unequal town or city nationally for wealth distribution. Looking at the wider area of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West – which covers nearly 2 million individuals – life expectancy can vary between areas by up to a decade. And people in less affluent areas experience poor health 10-15 years earlier than their more affluent neighbours (the so-called 'healthy life expectancy gap').

The pandemic also taught us the importance of partnership. The work of one organisation can be quickly undermined if other bodies are pulling in a different direction. By identifying our shared priorities, and the actions that can support them, this strategy helps us work together towards a common goal – to give people the best possible start in life, for people to be happier and healthier and to ensure they have access to support when they need it.

Partner organisations and local communities know best what the challenges are in their own areas. It's why we have consulted widely on our proposed priorities and why we intend to continue this dialogue with people and organisations across our area. This strategy is the start of a journey which aims to ensure that the NHS and all partners direct limited resources so as to have the biggest positive impact on people's lives.



Cllr Jason Brock

Chair, Integrated Care Partnership
and Leader of Reading Borough Council



Our Integrated Care Partnership

Our Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) is a group of organisations who plan and provide health and care services for the people who live and work in the local authority areas of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire's three westerly local authority areas of West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham (known as 'Berkshire West').

Members include local NHS organisations and GPs, local authorities, public health, Healthwatch, care providers, voluntary and community groups, as well as academic and research partners.

The purpose of this Strategy

As a Partnership we are committed to working together to improve health and wellbeing across our area. We want to ensure that children and young people have the best possible start in life and that everyone can live a happy and healthy life for as long as possible. We also want to ensure that people who live and work in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West are able to access the right support when they need it.

This ambition applies to everyone in our area. However, we recognise that this is a bigger challenge for some people and we are committed to working together to reduce the inequalities in health experienced by many people in our area.

What are health inequalities?

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society. These include how long people are likely to live, the health conditions they may experience, and the care that is available to them.

Many different things lead to health inequalities. The conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age all impact on our health and wellbeing. People living in geographic areas where there are high levels of deprivation often have much poorer health and lower life expectancy than those living in wealthier areas.

Some groups and communities are also more likely to experience poorer health than the general population. The individuals in these groups often share specific characteristics including those protected by law such as sex, ethnicity or disability. For example, those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and people who are neurodivergent or have a learning disability frequently suffer from significant health inequalities.

Other individuals experience challenges in accessing care, often because they are from socially excluded groups. For example, those experiencing homelessness or people with drug and alcohol dependencies.

Improving services for everyone, preventing ill health and reducing health inequalities will require us to work together better and to work differently. We need to consider how resources are used, how we assess the impact of the decisions we make and look at new ways in which everyone can have equal access to appropriate services. We need to work more closely with our communities, listening to what they tell us and using their lived experience to guide our actions.

To do this we have agreed five areas of strategic priority where we expect to do more together, locally and across the health and care system, to improve health and wellbeing in a manner that is fair and inclusive. This strategy outlines these priorities and sets the direction for our health and care system.

This strategy builds on our current joint local health and wellbeing strategies. These have been developed between NHS, local authority and other partners at local authority level. We have worked with members of our partner organisations, the voluntary sector, and others to understand their areas of focus and ambitions.

We also asked local people and partner organisations to share their views on our draft priorities and we have used their feedback to shape this strategy. This is just the start of a dialogue which will continue as our work develops. Together we are confident we can make a real difference in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

Our area

Situated in the heart of the Thames Valley, much of our area is rural with more densely populated areas around our towns and cities including, High Wycombe, Oxford and Reading.

Beyond our boundaries we have a mix of rural areas and large urban centres. Our location offers relatively quick access to London and strong transport links to other parts of England.





Our health and care system

















Our health and care system is made up of many organisations who all play a part in helping people to be as healthy as possible, for as much of their lives as possible. These include local councils, social care support, hospitals, emergency services, GP practices, dentists, mental health providers, care homes, and many voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

In addition to these organisations who directly provide health and care services, we have links with schools, universities, businesses and research partners working in health or care in our area.

There are well over 8,000 registered charities in our geography and there may be as many as 5,000 more informal community groups.

Most of the registered charities are very small and volunteer-run. As well as making a difference to the health and wellbeing of our population, these voluntary and community groups provide us with a strong link into our communities and a valuable insight into local needs.

Some of the people and organisations playing a part in the health and wellbeing of our population include:

 Nearly 2 million people	 3 acute / integrated hospital trusts	 More than 250 care homes	 50 primary care networks (157 GP practices)
 2 mental health trusts	 182 dental practices	 Approx 68,000 staff in health and care	 Multiple community providers
 More than 800 schools	 5 Healthwatch organisations	 5 universities	 More than 8,000 voluntary organisations
 5 district councils	 1 ambulance trust	 Approx 260 pharmacies	 5 unitary / upper tier local authorities

Nearly two million people live in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

The overall age profile of people living in our area is similar to the national average, with a slightly higher proportion of people aged under 18 and a slightly lower proportion of people aged over 65 years. Just over 1 in 5 people are under 18 years and just under 1 in 5 people are over 65 years of age.

This profile is likely to change over time. We anticipate a 5% growth in the overall size of the population by 2042 (an extra 89,000 people). This figure, however, masks significant changes for different age groups. The number of people aged over 65 is predicted to increase by 37% (increasing by 122,000 people) while the number of children and young people (those aged under 18 years) will reduce by 7% (26,000 people) over the same 20 year period.

According to the 2021 census, the ethnic profile for our combined area is very similar to the national average. However this masks individual differences at local authority level. People who responded that they were White British make up 73% of residents overall which is similar to the national average but this ranges from 53% in Reading to 85% in West Berkshire. People from many different ethnic groups live in our area including 3.5% of the population who describe themselves as Indian, 3.1% as Pakistani, 1.6% as Black African and 0.8% as Black Caribbean. These relative proportions vary between local authorities and ethnic diversity tends to be higher in our major towns and cities.



Living long lives in good health

People living in our area are generally healthier and live longer lives in good health than the national average. This is true for all our local authorities except for Reading where women do not live as long as the national average and men live as long as the national average.

Within each local authority, how long people live varies between wards by up to 10 years, with people living shorter lives in more deprived wards.

Across our local authorities, both men and women spend more years in good health than the national average apart from women in Reading who spend fewer years in good health. The gap in years spent in good health is even wider than the gap in how long people live. People in more deprived areas develop poor health 10-15 years earlier than people living in less deprived areas.

A good start in life

The early years are a crucial time for the health and wellbeing of children and their development with far reaching impacts throughout their school years and adult life. A mother's physical and mental health during pregnancy can affect the health and development of her baby before it is born. Children undergo rapid physical, mental and emotional development in the first five years of life and the circumstances in which they live and early life experiences have a profound effect on their development and subsequent mental and physical health as teenagers and adults.

The proportion of babies born at term who were a low birthweight was similar to the national average of 2.9% except in Oxfordshire where 2.3% of babies born at term were low birthweight.

A higher percentage of children in our area achieve a good level of development compared to the national average, except in Reading which is slightly lower. However, this average overlooks the experience of some of our most vulnerable children. Children in receipt of free school meals have lower levels of good development, especially in Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

Young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are at increased risk of poor physical and mental health. In 2020, Buckinghamshire had a higher proportion of 16-17 years who were NEET than the national average, Reading had a similar percentage to the national average, while rates were lower in other parts of our area.

Healthy behaviours

The four main health behaviours – smoking, physical inactivity, an unhealthy diet and alcohol misuse - account for 40% of all years lived with ill health and disability. These behaviours are major risk factors for long-term conditions such as heart disease and cancer. People with all four unhealthy behaviours are four times more likely to die prematurely than people with no unhealthy behaviours and the risk increases with each behaviour.

13% of residents in our area smoke according to GP data but this varies significantly between our least and most deprived areas.

1 in 4 residents in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and 1 in 5 residents in Berkshire West (Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire) are estimated to drink alcohol at levels that increase their risk of health problems.

Around 3 in 10 children aged 10-11 years across our area are overweight or obese and around 6 in 10 adults are overweight or obese.

Around 1 in 5 adults do less than 30 minutes moderate intensity activity a week.

The circumstances in which people live affect their health behaviours and on average people living in more deprived circumstances tend to have lower levels of healthy behaviours.

Long term conditions

Levels of long term conditions such as heart disease or diabetes are generally lower than the national average. Long term conditions tend to increase with age and it is estimated that 3 in 5 people over 60 years have a long term condition. However, many long term conditions are preventable. For example, up to 70% of heart disease and stroke, up to 50% of type 2 diabetes and 38% of cancer cases could be prevented. Smoking causes 15% of all cancers and obesity and being overweight is the second most common cause of cancer in the UK.

People living in deprived areas develop more long-term conditions and at an earlier age than people living in less deprived areas.

Mental health and wellbeing

Good mental wellbeing supports people to get the most out of life. However mental health problems are common and can be worsened by adverse social and economic circumstances. Approximately 12% of adults across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West have a recorded diagnosis of depression which is similar to the national average and 0.8% have a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia.





The places and circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live learn and work profoundly influence their health. Although the health of the population across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West is generally better than or similar to the national average this masks many differences between different groups of people. These differences are often the result of the different social, economic and environmental conditions in which they live.

Deprivation

From birth to old age people living in more deprived circumstances tend to have worse physical or mental health.

Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, West Berkshire and Wokingham are in the 10 least deprived local authorities in the country. Reading is slightly less deprived than the national average. However, within each local authority, levels of deprivation vary - 3% of our population (57,000 people) live in an area that is one of the 20% of the most deprived areas in England.

The percentage of children living in poverty, and the percentage of households living in fuel poverty are all below the national average and unemployment levels are lower than the national average, except in Reading.

The proportion of people who are defined as homeless is below the national average, apart from Reading where rates are higher.

Recorded rates of domestic abuse and hospital admission rates due to violence are lower than the national average. However, we know there is significant under reporting of domestic abuse.

Poorer health outcomes for some groups

We know that some people living in deprived areas tend to have poorer health. There are several other groups that also tend to have poorer health.

People from different ethnic groups are at higher risk of some diseases. For example, people from Black and South Asian ethnic groups are at a higher risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease (which causes heart disease and stroke). Mothers from Black and South Asian ethnic groups are at greater risk of complications and death during pregnancy and child birth.

Other groups with poorer health include people with a physical or learning disability, people suffering severe mental illness and those who are homeless.

These differences in health are due to a complex mix of societal, economic, environmental and biological factors. However, health problems can also be compounded by people's knowledge of, or ability to access services. Services may not be accessible or acceptable or appear welcoming to some groups of people. Some groups of people also report having worse experiences or poorer outcomes from services.

Inequalities are often multiple and overlapping – for example, a study by the Race and Health Observatory (June 2021) highlighted that people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are disproportionately affected by socioeconomic deprivation – a key determinant of health status.

Our vision is for everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and the Berkshire West area, to have the best possible start in life, to live happier, healthier lives for longer, and to be able to access the right support when they need it.

Five principles will guide everything we do:

Preventing ill-health

We will help people stay well and independent, enjoying better health for longer. We will help develop healthy places and thriving communities to protect and improve people's health.

Tackling health inequalities

We will seek to improve the physical and mental health of those at risk of the poorest health. This will include making sure people can access health and care services, whatever their background.

Providing person centred care

We will work together to provide help in a way that meets people's needs and helps them to make informed decisions and be involved in their own health and care.

Supporting local delivery

We will plan and design support and services with local people and provide support as close as possible to where people live, learn and work.

Improving the join up between our services

We will improve the way our services work together to ensure people get support when they need it and residents have a better experience of health and care services.

We have identified five priority areas.

Supporting our delivery

While these priorities will be the central focus of our work, we recognise that the success of this strategy will depend on a number of factors including:

- The **people** who work across our health and care system. This includes people in paid employment and also the large number of volunteers and informal carers across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.
- The **digital solutions, data and insights** available to those who work or volunteer in our area as well as how we use digital technology to move care closer to people's homes and to support people to self-manage their health conditions.
- Our ability to **respond to change and learn from best practice** to embrace new and innovative ways of working.

We also need to ensure that we provide strong leadership across our area whilst also empowering partnerships at a local level to deliver in their communities. Most of all, we know we need to engage with the people who live and work in our area: we need to listen to their voices and involve them in the plans we develop to deliver this strategy.

In the following sections we explain why we have selected each priority, what our areas of focus will be, and what we hope to achieve. These priorities build on the local health and wellbeing strategies already in place and on existing work that is being led by individual organisations in our area. By selecting these priorities, we have the opportunity to develop this work at a wider system level and to support local plans. Our priorities don't name all the important statutory work that is being led through other multi-agency arrangements, such as adult and child safeguarding, but we recognise the importance of continuing to work closely together to deliver the best possible local services for our people and communities.





Promoting and protecting health

Keeping people healthy and well

Although people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West are generally healthier than the national average, many people suffer poor health from conditions that could be prevented or delayed. Behaviours such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol, having an unhealthy diet, not being physically active or being overweight can lead to a wide range of conditions including diabetes, cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease and dementia.

The choices we make are shaped by our circumstances – the people we see around us, the places we live, and other influences such as the availability and pricing of unhealthy foods, alcohol or cigarettes. These factors directly affect the opportunities people have to live healthy lives across our area, including shaping their decisions about smoking, what to eat and the amount of alcohol

they drink. Indeed, our data shows stark differences in health outcomes for different population groups, including a variation in life expectancy of up to 10 years between the least and most deprived areas.

We need to support people to live healthier lives by improving the circumstances in which people live by taking action to tackle the social, economic and environmental factors that influence health. We also need to support people and communities to address behaviours that lead to many long term conditions. This includes training and supporting our staff to promote the adoption of healthier behaviours.

By working better together and focusing on prevention in everything we do, we can keep people healthy and well for longer.

Take action to address the factors that influence our health and wellbeing.

Why this matters:

The communities and environment we live in have a significant impact on our health and wellbeing. The world around us influences the choices we make and the quality and length of our lives. This includes decisions we make about how we live our lives from whether we smoke to what we eat or the amount of alcohol we drink.

For example, feeling safe in our local area, with safe places to play and exercise makes it easier to stay healthy and active. Similarly, safe travel routes to school, shops or work make it

easier to build physical activity into our day for example, by choosing to walk or cycle.

Our social connection to other people shapes how happy or lonely we feel, while secure employment is also important to our health and wellbeing. The rising cost of living may damage people's health, especially those already experiencing financial hardship. National figures from 2020 found more than 1 in 7 households were affected by fuel poverty, with single parent households most likely to be fuel poor (1 in 4) and couples aged over 60 making the largest average reduction in fuel usage to avoid fuel poverty.



Promoting and protecting health

The price rises in 2022 and 2023 mean more households are struggling. It is harder to stay healthy and well if food and heating are unaffordable.

The quality of our housing and the air we breathe also has a direct impact on our health and wellbeing. Poor air quality, contaminated land and water pollution can lead to acute and chronic disease. Air pollution is responsible for a range of respiratory conditions, cardiovascular disease, cancers and birth defects.

We are committed to addressing the social, economic and environmental factors that influence our health, and to reducing inequalities. For this we need a place-based approach and coordinated action across local government, health care and voluntary sector organisations.

Organisations across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West have also committed to reduce their carbon footprints. The NHS target is to achieve net zero by 2040. This will require significant changes to how we live and work but will ultimately improve and protect the health of the people who live or work across our area.

Our focus areas:

- Supporting the local economy and developing job opportunities and routes into employment for people who live in our area.
- Improving public and staff awareness of services tackling income, fuel and food insecurity, and helping staff to refer people to appropriate services.
- Helping our most vulnerable people and communities access information and local offers of help, including community food projects, benefits entitlements and debt advice.

- Ensuring safe and accessible options for exercise and active travel.
- Encouraging a public health approach to planning and development, to ensure our built environments support healthy lives.
- Ensuring schemes and services are in place so people are helped to live in warm homes.
- Working together to ensure people accessing social housing have safe, warm, damp and mould free homes.
- Ensuring that new housing developments adequately reflect the needs of older people and those with disabilities and are resilient to the impact of climate change.

What we want to achieve:

- The adoption of local planning principles that have health at the heart of the built environment.
- Greater community connectedness through a consideration of community in the structures and services we provide.
- A physical environment that supports people to live independently through thoughtful design.
- All our communities have access to green space within their locality.
- More sustainable road travel, particularly for staff members who use their cars often as part of their work.
- Reduced carbon emissions across all our providers to deliver the commitment each organisation has made to achieving net zero.

Reduce the proportion of people smoking across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

Why this matters:

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of preventable disease and early death in our area, accounting for over 4,000 premature deaths each year. It is also the biggest factor behind the gap in life expectancy between people living in the most and least deprived areas, with decisions around smoking shaped by many of the factors considered in the previous section.

According to GP data, 13% of people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West smoke (154,000 people), but rates are higher in more deprived areas. An estimated 22% of people working in routine and manual occupations and 36% of people with a severe mental illness smoke.

Smoking and tobacco consumption rates are high in some ethnic minority communities and among immigrants from countries where tobacco regulations and cultural approaches to its use are different from UK.

1 in 6 Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender people smoke every day, the prevalence being higher among younger LGBT people.

Smoking causes a very wide range of ill health from the earliest years to older age. For example, smoking while pregnant can harm the unborn baby and result in babies being born too early and having a low birthweight. Parental smoking harms children's health. Smoking also increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and lung disease and the need for social care occurs on average 10 years earlier in smokers.

Smoking is estimated to cost health and care organisations in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West £94 million each year (£69 million for health and £25 million for social care).

Our focus areas:

- Working together in effective tobacco control partnerships at a place based/local authority level to help reduce the numbers of people smoking.
- Providing, or proactively referring, people to services to help them stop smoking.
- More people in deprived areas are referred to smoking cessation services by their primary care team.
- Co-producing culturally appropriate services, where necessary, to encourage people to give up smoking or tobacco consumption in other forms.
- Supporting more people in contact with the NHS to stop smoking. This includes helping people to stop smoking before planned operations to help their recovery, helping people admitted to hospital, pregnant women and their partners, and people with severe mental illness to stop smoking.



Promoting and protecting health

What we want to achieve:

- A reduction in the overall number of smokers in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, especially in our most deprived areas.
- Fewer young people will take up smoking.
- More people will stop smoking, especially in deprived areas.
- A reduction in conditions made worse by smoking, including fewer people developing cancer and lung disease.
- A reduction in the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas.

Increase the proportion of people who are a healthy weight and physically active, especially in our most deprived areas and in younger people.

Why this matters:

Across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, approximately 6 in 10 adults are overweight or obese and approximately 3 in 10 children aged 10-11 are overweight or obese.

Obesity increases the risk of many long-term conditions including cancer, diabetes, heart disease and dementia. Obese people die up to 10 years earlier than people with a healthy weight. Adults and children living in more deprived areas are more likely to be obese.

The risks of many illnesses could be reduced by increased physical activity. Indeed, 1 in 3 deaths are from illnesses where being physically active is an important protective factor against becoming ill. Approximately 1 in 5 adults are inactive.

Our focus areas:

- Working together in place based multi-agency partnerships to improve physical activity levels and support people to stay a healthy weight.
- Promoting active travel and increasing access to green spaces.

- Working together with school aged children to increase physical activity and promote healthy lives.
- Supporting changes that help people to eat healthily and improve access to affordable healthy food. This includes promoting healthy schools and hospitals, and healthy weight in hospital initiatives.
- Supporting more people to lose weight.

What we want to achieve:

- A reduction in the proportion of people who are overweight or obese.
- More children and young people will be physically active, especially in our most deprived areas.
- More children and young people will have access to healthy food and are a healthy weight, especially in our most deprived areas.
- More adults are physically active.
- More adults have access to healthy food and are a healthy weight.
- A reduction in the proportion of people who have type 2 diabetes.

Reduce the proportion of people drinking alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing.

Why this matters:

1 in 4 adults in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and 1 in 5 adults in Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham (Berkshire West) drink alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing. This is higher than the national average.

Alcohol is one of the most common causes of disability and of death in adults aged 15-49. Alcohol increases the risk of several cancers (including breast cancer), heart disease and stroke as well as liver damage.

Alcohol can lead to family breakdown and increases the risk of domestic violence and child abuse or neglect. It also increases the risk of accidents and violence.

7 out of 10 people with an alcohol disorder have mental health problems.

While drinking at levels that increase risk of harm is most common in the wealthiest fifth of the population, both alcohol-related admissions and alcohol-related deaths are most common in the most deprived areas nationally.

Our focus areas:

- Working together in effective multi-agency drug and alcohol partnerships at place level.
- Identifying and supporting more people to reduce their harmful drinking particularly in higher risk groups such as people living in more deprived areas, people with mental health conditions,

veterans of our armed forces, and ex-offenders.

- Hospitals and other care providers have clear pathways for identifying and supporting people who misuse alcohol.
- Developing more integrated help for people who have substance misuse and mental health problems.

What we want to achieve:

- A reduction in the proportion of people drinking alcohol at levels that are harmful to their health and wellbeing.
- An increase in the number of people receiving support to tackle their alcohol misuse.
- A reduction in conditions caused by alcohol including high blood pressure, cancer and liver disease.
- A reduction in the numbers of violent incidents, accidents and domestic violence triggered by alcohol and a reduction in children being taken into care because of parental alcohol abuse.
- A reduction in the number of people with mental illness who regularly drink at levels that increase the risks of harm.

Protect people from infectious disease by preventing infections in all our health and care settings and delivering national and local immunisation programmes.

Why this matters:

The prevention of infectious disease requires an integrated effort across health and social care and direct action by the people and communities affected. It is only this collective effort that can stem or prevent the acceleration of transmissible infection.

We need a shared understanding of the threats and the possible and probable infections. We need to be able to take preventative measures and intervene early. This will require an understanding of the different requirements affecting the varying populations and settings in which we live, work and learn.

Vaccinations are important to protect against ill health. However, since 2013 there has been a decline in the uptake of childhood vaccines in England and this has declined further since the Covid-19 pandemic. In Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, we estimate only 8-25% of 15-16 year-old children have had all the recommended adolescent immunisations. There are also noticeable differences in the uptake of immunisations across our area, leaving some communities vulnerable to infectious diseases.

Our focus areas:

- Protecting more people by immunising them against serious diseases.
- Raising the public's awareness of anti-microbial (antibiotic) resistance and continuing to work with professionals to reduce it.
- Ensuring robust infection control measures amongst our staff and in all health and care settings.
- Developing linked data that gives early indication of local outbreak risks through closer working with the UK Health Security Agency that means effective prevention and earlier intervention.
- Stimulating local action to prioritise tackling blood born virus and reducing transmission through earlier diagnosis and treatment.
- Continuing to work together across our area to prepare robust responses to future pandemics and other environmental or public health emergencies.
- Using local public health expertise to understand global health activities to protect our populations.

What we want to achieve:

- A reduced number of adults and children catching or becoming ill from serious infectious diseases.
- A reduction in the inequality of vaccine uptake across our communities.

- A reduced impact of outbreaks and spread of disease by achieving herd immunity thresholds for a range of diseases such as measles.
- Stronger protection for those whose immune systems are compromised, are too young, or otherwise unable to receive certain live vaccinations.
- A population that is free from Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Tuberculosis and a halt in the rise in sexually transmitted infections.
- An intelligence platform which provides the evidence to address infectious diseases linked to health inequalities.
- A robust Public Health led Health Protection and Resilience Partnership to establish a gold standard system to protect our populations.



Helping all children and young people achieve the best start in life

The foundations for a person's future health and wellbeing are set in the early years of life. We need to give every child in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West the best possible start. This begins with supporting mothers during and after their pregnancy and then working together to ensure children achieve their early development milestones so they are ready to get the most out of life, their education and future opportunities.

We want to promote communities and environments that support all children and young people to make healthier choices, and which will allow them to thrive and achieve. We want all children and young people to be able to access the care and support they need, when they need it, and we want that support to be available as early as possible, in places that make getting the support easy.

However, we know some of the circumstances children and families face make it less likely they will receive the support they need. We need to be ready to offer prompt support to those at greatest risk and to children and families who are starting to struggle. For example, we need to identify emerging mental health problems as early as possible and provide treatment before their condition worsens.

We also recognise that some children, young people and their families need additional support and we are committed to working together to provide joined up services to enable these children and young people to reach their full potential.

Improve early years outcomes for all children, particularly working with communities experiencing the poorest outcomes.

Why this matters:

The first five years of a child's life are crucial to their healthy development and these years can have a lasting impact on the rest of their life.

The best start for a child begins with a healthy pregnancy. The mental and physical wellbeing of the mother and their home environment is important for the baby's healthy development. Proactively supporting mothers during and after pregnancy, therefore, improves outcomes for both mothers and their children.

Some mothers and babies have a higher risk of complications during pregnancy and this includes women living in more deprived circumstances

and those from Black and Asian ethnic groups. This can result in poorer outcomes, including babies being born too early or with low birthweight. Although deaths in pregnancy are rare, national research has found that mothers from some minority ethnic groups are more likely to die during pregnancy than their White British counterparts.

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns have impacted on the development of many younger children, who lost time in school and nursery and missed out on many social and developmental opportunities. This has led to more children who are not as ready to learn at two years old and not ready for school at five years old.

Families have also told us that they sometimes experience difficulty finding the services they need and have to 're-tell their story' to different services and professionals. This is most often the case for disadvantaged and vulnerable families.

Our focus areas:

- Offering support to women to ensure a healthy pregnancy with targeted actions focused on women from deprived communities and from minority ethnic groups who have historically experienced more problems during pregnancy and poorer outcomes.
- Supporting women experiencing mental health difficulties during pregnancy and after their baby is born.
- Improving the help we offer to pregnant women and their partners to stop smoking.
- Strengthening and simplifying the links between services for under-fives and making it easier for families to find and access the support they need without stigma.

- Working together to provide support to children under five to enable them to fulfil their full potential.

What we want to achieve:

- An increased proportion of mothers will have a healthy pregnancy, including those living in more deprived areas and those from targeted minority ethnic groups.
- Fewer babies will be born prematurely or with a low birthweight.
- Fewer mothers will smoke during pregnancy.
- The number of women who receive effective support for their mental health during pregnancy and after their baby is born will increase.
- The number of children achieving their early development milestones on the way to school readiness will increase, especially in our most deprived communities, so that they can get the greatest benefit from their education.

Improve emotional, mental health and wellbeing for children and young people.

Why this matters:

Mental health problems are a leading cause of disability in children and young people. Problems experienced as a child can have long-lasting effects. Indeed, half of those with lifelong mental illness experience symptoms by age 14.

The number of children suffering from mental health problems in our area has increased over

the past five years with more children admitted to hospital for mental health conditions, including more cases of self-harm.

Measures of positive mental wellbeing have also reduced. The pressures children have faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have made this situation worse.

We need to help our children by identifying mental health problems as early as possible and providing treatment before their condition worsens. At the moment it takes too long for children and young people to access mental health and wellbeing services in our area.

We need to do more. We will work with the many active voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations who tell us that they could do more to help us support our children and young people.

Our focus areas:

- At every opportunity across our system (health, care and education), supporting children to get the right mental health and wellbeing advice at the right time at a place near to where they live and learn.
- Improving access to mental health support teams for more pupils, prioritising schools with higher numbers of students eligible

for free school meals, a higher proportion of students with special educational needs or high proportion of students who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

- Reducing the waiting times and improving the experience for children and young people accessing mental health services, particularly NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

What we want to achieve:

- Better mental health for children living and learning in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, through earlier intervention and support.
- More children will have easier access to support when they need it, including reduced waiting times for formal mental health services.
- Reduced rates of hospital admissions for self-harm among people aged 10-24.

Improve the support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and for their families and carers.

Why this matters:

The number of children and young people who have special educational needs or disability (known as SEND) has been increasing since 2016 and there are currently 1.5 million in England. This includes children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, social emotional and mental health needs, moderate learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and other neurodevelopmental disorders or specific learning difficulties.

In Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, we need to improve the identification of children and young people with SEND and ensure they get appropriate and timely support. This will help them to take as full and active part in their daily lives as they can and enable them to reach their full potential.

Effective support at the right time and in the right place can improve educational attainment, employment, social mobility and mental health, which in turn impacts on longer-term health and wellbeing. Timely support for the child or young person also helps to support the broader resilience of the family.

Our focus areas:

- Identifying children and young people with special educational needs and disability at the earliest opportunity and ensuring they, and their families, are able to access the right level of support.
- Providing support for these groups in a broad range of settings based on their presenting needs rather than whether they have a diagnosis.

- Giving children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and their families, opportunities to shape their support with their clinical and professional teams.

What we want to achieve:

- Children, young people and their families report that they know where and how to access available support and services and report positively on their experience.

Support young adults to move from child centred to adult services.

Why this matters:

Services designed for children are not appropriate for young adults as they get older. There comes a point where the young person's care needs to move from a team focused on supporting children to professionals who provide services for adults. This varies from individual to individual and usually happens between the ages of 16 and 25.

Young adults, particularly those with more complex needs, can find this change difficult. It is important the process is as clear and supportive as possible, meeting the young person's needs while building their resilience to look after their own health as much as possible.

We can work better together to support young adults through this transition, understanding the needs and wishes of the individual and their carer(s) to ensure the right support remains available.

Our focus areas:

- Building the confidence of young adults, their independence and resilience as they transition so that they and their families and carers are actively involved in the changes to their support.
- Working together across our services to provide more holistic support, recognising the needs of the individual and supporting them through the move to adult services.

What we want to achieve:

- An increased number of young adults contribute to the development of a personalised plan that addresses their specific needs as they move to adult health or social care services.
- An increased number of young adults meet and actively engage with the adult services team that will be working with them after their transition.
- Sustained and personalised support for individuals in preparation for, during and after the transition phase to adult services.

Supporting people and communities to live healthy and happier lives

We want every adult in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West to have the opportunity to live a healthy life. Under our priority of promoting and protecting health we have already explained how we will tackle factors that influence people's health and how we will support individuals to make healthy changes to their lifestyle.

To support people to live healthier and happier lives we plan to supplement this with targeted preventative work around health conditions that affect large numbers of people across our area. In this strategy we are prioritising cancer, cardiovascular disease and all aspects of adult mental health. We want to do more to support those who are at greatest risk of developing these or most likely to suffer inequality in access, experience or outcomes.

While supporting those most at risk of developing these conditions, we also need to offer extra support to the people in our communities who we know currently have poorer health outcomes overall, including people with learning or physical disabilities.

We also want to help people to understand how they can stay healthy and support them to look after themselves.

Improve mental health by improving access to and experience of relevant services, especially for those at higher risk of poor mental health.

Why this matters:

Mental illness is common – every week around 1 in 6 adults will experience a common mental health disorder such as anxiety.

Mental health problems are the biggest single cause of disability in the UK, and suicide is one of the leading causes of death in England in people aged between 20 and 64 in England.

People with a severe mental illness (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder) have more than a 50% higher risk of having cardiovascular disease

and an 85% higher chance of dying from cardiovascular disease.

Mental health problems can affect anyone, but some groups are at higher risk of poor mental health than others due to social and environmental factors. People living in the most deprived areas in England are twice as likely to be in contact with mental health services as those in the least deprived. Emergency mental health admissions are also higher in our more deprived areas.

People from some groups in society find it harder to access mental health services and have a poorer experience of services when they do. This includes people from certain ethnic minority groups.

We expect the cost-of-living increase to have a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of people who live in our area and we know the risk of deaths by suicide increases in times of economic crisis. People living in the most deprived areas, and with known risk factors for poorer mental health, are most likely to be most vulnerable to the health consequences of the cost-of-living crisis.

To effectively improve mental health we recognise that we need to consider all the factors that influence an individual's wellbeing rather than trying to focus on just one aspect of their life.

Our focus areas:

- Joining up support for people with mental health problems including access to employment support, health care, psychological support and services led by the voluntary community and social enterprise sector.
- Listening to ethnic minority groups on how to best provide mental health support relevant for their communities.
- Providing services that are culturally sensitive that improve access, experience and outcomes for people from ethnic minorities at highest risk of deteriorating mental health.

- Ensuring that people living in our more deprived areas have better access to a wider range of support and information to improve their mental health at an early stage.
- Improving the physical health of people with severe mental illness by increasing the number of people with severe mental illness who stop smoking and increasing the uptake of regular physical health checks, with appropriate advice and treatment.
- Ensuring mental health treatment and support is tailored to individuals' needs to ensure improved accessibility for all people, including people who are neuro diverse.
- Providing better community-based support for adults and older adults with mental illness.

What we want to achieve:

- Improved mental health of everyone who lives in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West, with particular improvements for those at highest risk of poor mental health.
- Improved mental health of people from ethnic minorities and those living in our more deprived areas.
- Improved access to, experience of and outcomes from services that support mental health.

Reduce the number of people developing cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) by reducing the risk factors, particularly for groups at higher risk.

Why this matters:

Cardiovascular disease is one of the most common causes of death in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West and a major contributor to the gap in life expectancy between people living in our most and our least deprived areas.

Certain groups of people are more likely to develop and die from cardiovascular disease. This includes people living in more deprived areas, people from Black and South Asian communities and people with serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia.

Other groups, particularly women, are less likely to get cardiovascular disease but their signs and symptoms are sometimes different to men. This means their symptoms are often overlooked. For example, research has found that communication campaigns tend to focus on men and, as a result, women are less likely to recognise symptoms and may be slower getting help.

Up to 70% - 80% of cardiovascular disease is preventable and we know what works to help prevent it, including behaviours we can change. These behaviours include smoking, drinking too much alcohol, lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating and being overweight, having high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol. We need to ensure that people at higher risk can access the support they need to reduce their risks.

Many people who have diabetes or high blood pressure have not yet been identified and so people are not receiving the support and treatment they need to prevent cardiovascular disease.

Our focus areas:

- Identifying more people with risk factors and supporting them to take action.
- Increasing the number of people receiving NHS Health Checks that detect cardiovascular risk factors, especially in deprived areas and in people at higher risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Increasing the number of people with high blood pressure we detect and supporting them to keep this under control.
- Increasing the numbers of people helped to stop smoking.
- Targeting communications campaigns to those who may not understand their specific signs and symptoms of cardiovascular disease, including women.
- Undertaking community engagement, using a tailored approach to improve people's health in communities at higher risk of heart disease with a particular focus on Black and South Asian groups.
- Increasing our capacity and infrastructure for cardiovascular support in the most deprived areas to improve access to, and experience of, services and to improve health outcomes.

- Ensuring people are supported to increase their physical activity and achieve a healthy weight and diet, as these are key factors in cardiovascular health.
- Helping people understand how to stay healthy and know where to access the support to do it.
- Increasing our capacity and infrastructure for cardiovascular support in the most deprived areas to improve access to, and experience of, services and to improve health outcomes
- Ensuring people are supported to increase their physical activity and achieve a healthy weight and diet, as these are key factors in cardiovascular health.
- Helping people understand how to stay healthy and know where to access the support to do it.

What we want to achieve:

- Fewer people will develop heart disease, stroke and vascular dementia particularly in the communities at higher risk.
- More people will know their blood pressure and be supported to manage it effectively, via lifestyle changes or clinical treatment.
- The gap in life expectancy between people living in deprived areas and the rest of the population will narrow as cardiovascular disease is a major driver of that gap.
- The gap in life expectancy between people living with severe mental illness and the rest of the population will narrow as cardiovascular disease is a major driver of that gap.
- The death rates from cardiovascular disease in Black and South Asian groups will reduce towards the levels experienced in the rest of the population.

Increase cancer screening and early diagnosis rates with a particular focus on addressing inequalities in access and outcomes

Why this matters:

The number of people being diagnosed with cancer is increasing. However, only half of these cancers are diagnosed in the early stages when there is a greater chance of successful treatment. Although there is variation across different types of cancer, early detection rates are lower in more deprived areas.

There are three national screening programmes which are important in detecting cancer early and starting treatment sooner.

These are for breast, bowel and cervical cancer.

Screening rates across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West vary depending on the area, the GP practice people are registered with, and population characteristics such as ethnicity and level of deprivation. There is lower uptake amongst people with severe mental illness and those with a learning disability.

Cervical and breast screening uptake has declined over the last five years. National data shows some ethnic minority groups are less likely to attend cervical screening. We are currently analysing our data to understand the uptake of cervical screening from ethnic minorities in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

Overall cancer screening uptake is also lower in people with learning disabilities compared to those without a learning disability. Nationally, it is recognised that cancer screening rates are also lower in people with severe mental illness and among Trans people.

We already have projects that target work with specific communities to increase screening and early detection rates but we know we need to do more. We plan to support community-based teams, who know and understand their local communities best, to spread the importance of cancer awareness and screening and to increase uptake rates.

Our focus areas:

- Improving understanding of, and accessibility to, all screening services for those from diverse communities and backgrounds through better community engagement and ensuring services are culturally competent.
- Using the data we have available to improve identification and support for communities that have low uptake of screening and detection services.

- Increasing uptake of screening where rates are low. This includes:
 - increasing uptake of cervical screening in younger women and people with a cervix
 - increasing the uptake of cervical screening in women from ethnic minority groups who are less likely to attend cervical screening compared to White British women
 - ensuring discussion of screening is embedded into the health check for those with learning disabilities and severe mental illness
 - recognising the screening needs of different people will vary and therefore make reasonable adjustments to ensure screening and detection services are tailored and accessible to all people.

What we want to achieve:

- Deliver the national ambition of ensuring 75% of cancers are diagnosed early (at stage 1 or stage 2) by 2028.
- Reduce the variation and inequality in cancer screening, access and uptake.

Staying healthy and independent for longer

People often require more support as they move through life and their health and care needs become more complex. We know there is more we can do to improve the services these people receive. Although we don't see this as age specific, most people who fall into this category will be older. This matters because our population is ageing. For example, approximately a quarter of people who live in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West are aged over 60, and this number will grow by around 11% over the next five years.

As people get older, they generally need more support both in their communities and from health and care services. Some receive support from social care or voluntary and community groups, while friends and family also frequently act as essential carers. Environmental adaptations and physical aids can also be used to provide invaluable assistance to enable people to remain independent.

It is often possible to anticipate changes in a person's needs as they age or move through life and there are advantages in making proactive plans about potential care and support needs. This is something we need to do more. Working in partnership with the individual, their family and carers, we can ensure plans are personalised and maximise the person's independence.

By working more effectively together we can enable people to stay healthy and independent in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

Support people to remain healthy, independent, and connected within their communities.

Why this matters:

Positive relationships and social interactions contribute to our quality of life and wellbeing in many ways. Staying physically active enables people to get out and about to meet friends, enjoy a wide range of activities and access services and shops as well as maintaining health and independence.

Isolation and loneliness increase the risk of poor health, including increasing the risk of anxiety and depression. Six per cent of people aged 75 and over say they often or always feel lonely. People with a limiting long-term illness or disability are more likely to say they often feel lonely.

Other social and environmental factors can also directly affect people's resilience. These can include help from informal support networks such as family and communities, appropriate housing, the ability to eat well and stay warm. A rapid change in social situation can lead to poorer health and the need for more formal care. This deterioration could often be avoided if the right support is available.

Working together to help people to stay active and connected within their communities, will help them be healthier and independent for longer and reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Our focus areas:

- Working with our communities and residents to co-design support and services to encourage activity and positive community connections.
- GPs, community connector/social prescribers, community services, social care and the voluntary community social enterprise sector will work together to increase opportunities for people to connect socially with others and remain physically active.
- Ensuring health and care staff are more aware of opportunities available in the local community so they can direct people to appropriate activities.

- Considering opportunities for assistive technology and telecare to help more people stay independent for longer.
- Supporting people to access relevant technologies and increase their digital skills and confidence so they can remain virtually connected.

What we want to achieve:

- People will be supported to maintain social contact and will be more aware of opportunities to connect with others in the community.
- Older people will be empowered to manage their health, making healthy life choices and remaining physically active.

Provide personalised and joined up care for people as their care needs increase and become more complex.

Why this matters:

We want people to remain as healthy and independent for as long as possible and be able to access the right support to manage their health and care needs when they need it. However, some people will require more support as they age or their care needs become more complex.

An increasing number of people are developing long-term health conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, mental illness or dementia and may recover less quickly from illness or health and social setbacks.

We want to ensure that everyone's care and support is well planned and is developed in partnership with the person, their family and carers. This means joining up the work of health, social care and the voluntary and

community sector. This will be underpinned by personalised care and support plans that are visible to all professionals involved in the person's care.

Our focus areas:

- Helping people learn about their condition(s), providing advice and support so they are empowered to better manage their condition(s) and improve their wellbeing.
- Identifying people who are likely to need care and support earlier, irrespective of whether that support is likely to come from health or social care or their own unpaid carers.

- Ensuring that more people have personalised care and support plans, with appropriate support from multi-disciplinary teams.
- Ensuring people's care plans are accessible to all relevant health and social care professionals so they can provide effective and coordinated care.

What we want to achieve:

- Earlier identification and support for people with more complex, long term care and support needs.
- People with complex health and care needs, including long term conditions, are less impacted by poor mental health.
- A reduction in the number of people admitted to hospital or care home placements who could have stayed at home with more appropriate support.

Improve support for carers.

Why this matters:

Around 3 in 5 people will be unpaid carers at some point in their lives. In 2011, there were nearly 27,000 unpaid carers across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West area and this number is likely to have increased since then.

Unpaid carers perform vital work to keep people safe and well. In doing this they also significantly reduce the demand for formal health and care services. However, many carers do not get the support they need to help them with their caring role and to help them look after their own health and wellbeing. Indeed, carers have reported that they are finding it harder to access adequate advice and support, and satisfaction with carer support services is declining.

Being a carer can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental health.

Many carers are juggling employment, education and other commitments alongside their caring responsibilities, with some facing significant financial difficulties.

People of all ages fulfil the role of carers, including children and young people of school age. Nationally nearly half of carers are more than 55 years old and nearly a third of carers are disabled themselves. In 2018, Carers UK reported that people providing high levels of care are twice as likely to be permanently sick or disabled. 7 out of 10 carers said they had suffered mental ill health as a result of caring, and 6 out of 10 said they had suffered physical ill health as a result of caring. 8 in 10 people say they have felt lonely or socially isolated.

We need to do more to ensure that carers of all ages can access relevant support and advice to allow them to continue in their caring role whilst looking after their own health and wellbeing.

Our focus areas:

- Identifying all carers in our area and sharing this information appropriately between health, social care and other professionals.
- Improving the support available to carers of all ages, recognising that the support offered to young carers may be different to support for adults.
- Helping carers access support, including ways to look after their own health and wellbeing, so they can continue to provide care in the way that they wish to.
- Changing the way we work to empower carers to be an active participant in shaping the personalised care and support plans that are developed for the people they care for.
- Working across our system to share best practice and promote a consistent level of support for all carers.

What we want to achieve:

- Carers experience a consistent level of seamless support, including better access to support in a crisis.
- The health and wellbeing of all carers is improved.





Improving quality and access to services

Accessing the right care in the best place

As a Partnership we are committed to adopting a proactive and preventative approach with a strong emphasis on keeping people healthy and preventing ill-health. However, we know this shift towards prevention must sit alongside an equally important focus on improving our current services and taking action to make sure these services are accessible to everyone who needs them.

Across the country, accessing support and services is sometimes difficult or slow. In a national survey conducted in 2021, respondents said that the two most important priorities for the NHS were making it easier to get a GP appointment and improving waiting times for planned operations. These priorities are echoed across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. We also hear concerns about access to social care, dental, pharmacy and optometry services and about the challenges of accessing services from rural areas, particularly given the limited public transport in many parts of our area.

We want to do more to improve the support we offer to people at all stages of life, right through to the support and care we provide for people who are dying. An increasing number of people are using our services, including more people in need of support at the end of life. We aim to strengthen our partnership approach and provide the best support to meet people's different needs.

We are committed to providing the highest quality support to everyone. There are some groups within our communities whose access to, and experience of, services and outcomes is worse than others. This includes some minority ethnic groups, people with learning or physical disabilities and people who are often excluded (e.g. sex workers, people who are homeless or part of the gypsy, Roma and traveller communities). We are committed to addressing these disparities.

Our final strategic priority therefore focuses on services for people at every stage in life - both improving these services and making sure that everyone, irrespective of their personal characteristics or their personal circumstances, can access the support they need at the right time.

Develop strong integrated neighbourhood teams so that people's needs can be met in local communities.

Why this matters:

Primary care, as the first point of contact into health and care services, has an essential role to play in preventing ill health and tackling health inequalities. However, many of these services in our area are struggling.

Public satisfaction with GP services is falling.

GPs are reporting it is harder to balance caring for people with non-urgent, longer term care needs with the increasing pressure from more people who want urgent, same day support. Although more people are living with long term conditions, pressures on our teams mean it is harder for people to build relationships and understanding with those involved in their care.

All our GP practices have joined a Primary Care Network with other practices. These networks are bringing together a wider range of professionals to work collaboratively to provide high quality support to people when they need it.

GPs often see patients who could be seen by another member of the locally based team such as community, district and practice nurses, pharmacists, social workers, dentists, opticians, and health coaches. We are committed to helping more people access these services and professionals, to be supported to manage their health where possible and get faster support from a more appropriate professional when needed, reducing the burden on GPs.

In some parts of the country there are examples of non-health and care services, such as Citizens Advice, employment advisors, or money and debt specialists sharing space with clinical teams to provide support for people in other aspects of their lives that can directly impact their health or wellbeing. This is something we want to explore for our area.

Our focus areas:

- Ensuring people understand the alternative options to care and support in their community and are supported to use them.
- Integrating health, care and voluntary services at neighbourhood level.
- Strengthening the networks and joint working between professionals in our communities so people find it easier to get the right support when they need it.
- Ensuring there is greater continuity of care for those that need it, particularly those with long term conditions.

What we want to achieve:

- More people access the right support and care when they need it.
- People are more satisfied with the care they receive from primary care professionals in the community.
- Inequalities in access to GP services are reduced across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.



Improving quality and access to services

Reduce and eliminate long waits for our planned services, and address variation in access across the system.

Why this matters:

Faster treatment generally results in more positive outcomes while delays can lead to worse outcomes. Unfortunately, there are long waits to access some of our services.

Waiting times for some diagnostic and specialist services are particularly high, with some people waiting more than a year and a half. Many of these waiting times increased during the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to increase as the number of referrals is still growing.

Waiting times vary across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West because the demand for services and the capacity of our specialist services is different. By working better together across our entire system we plan to make better use of capacity and provide a faster service to patients. We will further improve services by involving people in decisions about their care.

It is widely recognised that inequalities linked with deprivation and certain personal characteristics can impact the length of time people wait for care. These inequalities will be targeted and addressed across our system.

Our focus areas:

- Working across the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West system to make the best use of all capacity. This should lead to earlier diagnosis by specialities and a quicker start to treatment.

- Helping more people be actively involved in decision making about their care through the whole care pathway.
- Embracing the use of technology to develop innovative models of support.
- Helping people prepare to ensure they get the best outcomes from surgery or planned treatment and avoid complications. This could include support to stop smoking, optimising physical fitness by increasing physical activity or losing weight, preparing for life after surgery e.g. learning how to use walking aids before hip surgery to aid post-op recovery.

What we want to achieve:

- Reduced waiting times for patients to access diagnostic and specialist care services.
- More people have the specialist support and care at the right time, in line with national targets.
- Improved patient experience and confidence in their local health system.



Improving quality and access to services

Support the consistent development of our urgent care services to reduce demand and support timely access.

Why this matters:

Urgent and emergency care services are under pressure across England. We see this when we try to get same-day GP appointments, face long waits for an ambulance and when we wait in A&E. These delays result in a poor experience for people trying to access services and increase the risk of less positive outcomes.

Trends in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West mirror this national picture. More people are using urgent and emergency care services which means there are times when people do not get the support they want, when they need it. We are committed to improving this.

Our focus areas:

- Providing high quality urgent care services in community settings that complement our hospital services so only the people most in need go to hospital.

- Assessing people's needs and making it easier for them to get the right support in the right place.
- Providing people at highest risk of using unplanned, urgent or emergency care with the support to stay at home.
- When people are ready to leave hospital, our teams, including social care, will provide joined up support that meets their needs, closer to their home communities.

What we want to achieve:

- People's experience of accessing urgent or emergency care is improved and they find it easier to get the right support at the right time.
- Preventable unplanned emergency admissions are reduced in our hospitals.
- The time people spend in hospital is reduced.

Improve access and experience of palliative and end of life services to enable people of all ages to die well.

Why this matters:

Death and dying is inevitable and affects everyone – the living, the dying and the bereaved. It is not a response to a particular illness or condition and is not confined to a particular age, stage in life, group or section of society.

In Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West there is a rising need for palliative and

end of life services. For many people care at the end of life is not coordinated well enough, which causes unnecessary distress. In our area, we have a significantly worse performance than the England national average for percentage of deaths with three or more emergency admissions in the last year of life.



Improving quality and access to services

To deliver support and meet the needs of people of all ages who are living with dying, death and bereavement, we must have cohesive partnerships from across the health and social care sector, including statutory and voluntary organisations. This has to be underpinned by people with personal and professional experience, who share a common vision to improve end of life care through collaborative action between organisations at local level.

Our focus areas:

- Viewing each person as an individual and supporting all people with palliative and end of life care needs to receive the personalised care they need irrespective of time of day, age of individual, background, and care setting.
- Ensuring there is fair access to care.
- Focusing and maximising comfort and wellbeing, including mental health needs, for everyone with palliative and end of life care needs.
- Coordinating and providing high quality care and support to patients and their families through trained and educated staff across all providers within our area and ensuring that all staff are prepared to care.
- Improving and raising community awareness of death and dying, to enable 'compassionate communities' to grow, and providing robust pre and post bereavement services for all.
- Updating our population-based needs assessment for palliative and end of life care services in partnership with Health and Wellbeing Boards.

- Identifying people with palliative and end of life care needs early to allow proactive planning, to minimise risk of crisis and unnecessary hospital admission.
- Ensuring the voice of people with lived experience is within everything we do.

What we want to achieve:

- A system which provides cross-organisational working to enable right care, right place, right time and support a person to die well in their preferred place of care and death.
- Improved access, experience and outcomes across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West for all ages, recognising the importance of children's services and the transitional interface with adult palliative care services.
- Improved access to 24/7 advice and guidance for people with palliative and end of life care needs, their families and their carers.
- Patients with palliative and end of life care needs have access to the most appropriate funding stream tailored to their needs.
- Our communities support and empower people approaching dying, leading to a change in society's perception on death and dying.



Delivering on our priorities

Working in partnership across our system will provide significant opportunities to change the ways we think and work. However, we know that there are significant challenges ahead as we plan the delivery of this Integrated Care Strategy. There are well publicised pressures on our resources, both staff and money, and we need to be clear about how the ambitions of this strategy will be delivered and measured.

Our approach to delivery.

Strong leadership

The Integrated Care Partnership is new and we recognise it will take time to see some of the benefits of collaborative ways of working, including moving activity from being responsive to being proactive and focused on prevention.

Our Partnership is committed to providing the strong leadership that will support this change. Delivery of this strategy will be helped by the requirement that some partners – for example NHS organisations and local authorities – are required to ‘have regard’ for this strategy when drawing up their own organisational plans.

We will develop clear delivery plans which will build on the principle of prevention. We will work in partnership to understand more about how people need and use our services and the support available to them. Locally and across our system we will take actions that focus on proactively supporting people earlier and reducing demand.

Our delivery plans will include a small number of carefully considered measures. These plans will link with relevant funding – including opportunities to pool and share our resources – and will allow us to plan and phase our work to ensure our ambitions can be achieved. Clear measures for each priority will allow us to regularly monitor and evaluate the impact this strategy is having.

We will publish our delivery plans as they are developed and will share information on our progress.

Taking a 'place-based' approach

When drawing up our plans for delivery, we anticipate that many priorities in this strategy will be delivered through our three 'places' (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West), and include collaboration with our Health and Wellbeing Boards, local networks and organisations, and local people. This will build on the huge amounts of work that is already happening at this level, and in local neighbourhoods and communities.

The development of the Integrated Care Partnership has also created an opportunity to take action 'at scale', joining up services and using limited resources more effectively. Some of our priorities will benefit from a system-wide approach, others will be most effectively implemented at a more local level.

Working with our communities

Our vision and priorities are focused on improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in our area. To do this, we know we need to work closely with the people who live and work in our area, listen to their voices and involve them in our planning.

We started a process of engagement by asking people for their thoughts on our emerging priorities and on the first draft of this strategy. However, we recognise this dialogue needs to continue and our engagement needs to move beyond simply asking people for their views.

We need to form a genuine partnership between the public and our broad community of providers. It is the people who live and work in our communities who can provide us with the best insight into what needs to change and the best ways to deliver those changes. Most of our engagement will be at 'place' level. Local areas will use and develop their own methodologies for embedding the voice of residents in their decision making. At system level we will be held to account by a Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee representing the voices of people from across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West.

We also need to empower individuals and communities to manage and promote their own health and wellbeing.

In doing this, we need to ensure that everyone is included. We are committed to finding new and creative ways to engage with, and empower, people from every part of our community so that no group or individual is left out.

Supporting our delivery.

As well as rethinking our approach to delivery, we recognise that the success of this strategy will largely rely both on the people who provide support and care across our system and on adopting new and innovative ways of working, including how we use digital technology and data.

Our People

The people who provide care and support to our population are vital to the delivery of this strategy. This includes people in paid employment and also the large number of volunteers and informal carers across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. Every day these staff and volunteers provide excellent care, offer direct support to individuals, and take action to tackle the underlying causes of ill-health.

However, many are finding this increasingly difficult. Our growing and ageing population is placing more and more demands on health and care services at the same time we are battling unprecedented challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Changes in our population and how we deliver services also means we need to rethink the staff roles we have and ensure we have the right people in the right jobs.

Over the last few years, our staff and volunteers have demonstrated exceptional resilience but we know we need to do more to support them. Across our area there are many good examples of initiatives to promote staff wellbeing and there is a lot we can do to spread this best practice across organisations. We also need to tackle the things that add pressure on our workforce. This includes

recruiting people to fill all the roles we need across the whole health and social care system. It also includes making sure people want to stay. We are committed to working together to ensure a positive working environment and to working collaboratively to offer more opportunities for personal and career development.

Our focus areas:

- Ensuring all the people working in our system, paid or voluntary, are supported and feel valued.
- Pooling our knowledge and our experience of how to make a positive difference to the working environment for our staff and volunteers.
- Continuing to offer a range of health and wellbeing at work initiatives, sharing best practice between organisations across our area.
- Developing collaborative programmes to improve recruitment and retention and to increase overall staff capacity.
- Joining up our education and training, and develop a shared approach to career development across health and care.
- Doing more to ensure our staff are representative of the communities they serve whilst promoting inclusion and ensuring a genuine sense of belonging.

Digital, data and technology

Providing useful digital, data and technology solutions will be essential to deliver our priorities.

We are already supporting organisations make the most of technology and data. We need to ensure the information and data held by these organisations is shared appropriately and safely. This will strengthen system-wide pathways, allow for a fuller integration of teams and will lead to a much better experience for staff and people receiving support or care.

For example, electronic records and our ongoing work to fully implement a single shared care record will improve the breadth and depth of the information available to our clinical and care teams.

Technology is already allowing us to move care closer to people's communities and homes. It is creating more opportunities for people to self-manage their conditions using apps and initiatives such as wearable monitoring devices.

Better use of the information and data we have will allow a shared understanding of need and allow us take proactive and targeted action where this data identifies people or population groups suffering health inequalities. It will also identify opportunities to tackle individual health conditions by focusing on those most at risk.

Strong systems and processes will, however, only be valuable if people can use them. Developing the right digital skills of staff, volunteers and service users is vital. We also recognise that many people in our communities, including some particularly vulnerable individuals and groups, will need support to use digital solutions or help to access digital technology.

Our focus areas:

- Supporting health and care providers in our system to reach a minimum level of digital maturity.
- Delivering a single Shared Care Record for care settings across the ICS area.
- Delivering technology solutions which enable our workforce to collaborate efficiently while supporting work/life balance, and which provide greater resilience and security around access to clinical and administrative data.
- Supporting people to receive virtual care in, or close to, their home whenever appropriate and providing more access to digital care.
- Supporting those working or volunteering in our area to feel confident in their use of digital solutions.
- Improving the digital literacy of our citizens, especially in deprived areas, whilst also tackling the other factors causing digital exclusion.
- Using population health data to drive decision making. This will include:
 - building a stronger community of analysts to improve our analytical functions
 - using data from across our providers to identify individuals or groups of people with similar characteristics and needs
 - moving from being reactive to proactive by empowering our staff to develop and implement targeted interventions
 - using data to identify health inequalities, and some of their possible causes, to tailor care towards a more person-centred, holistic approach.

Continuous Improvement

In this strategy we have described how we will work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our population. We have given detailed examples of the type of work we plan to do to deliver our five priorities. However, we recognise that we need to be prepared to change. We need to learn from what works and what doesn't work.

Learning from our service users and staff

We have committed to developing a culture of shared learning to ensure continuous improvement in the care and services we provide. Listening and acting on what our staff and the people who use our services tell us will be important to this. We need to embed this across all partner organisations, from leaders to the people delivering our frontline services.

Our focus areas:

- Sharing and implementing best practice across our area.
- Developing a culture of learning with a focus on improvement across all partner organisations and at all levels, from leaders to those delivering our frontline services.
- Working with people who have lived experience of health conditions and services to proactively identify the improvements we need to make and co-developing those improvements.
- Strengthening public, patient and service user involvement in identifying our priorities and designing service improvements.

Maximising local research and innovation activity

We also need to embrace new innovations and technologies so that our care and services are always evolving in line with evidence and best practice. We will do this by working more closely with the wealth of world class academic, research and innovation institutions on our doorstep.

The development of the Integrated Care Partnership provides us with an exciting opportunity to draw upon and shape the direction of these potential partners. By identifying need and agreeing clear shared priorities we can seek to coordinate and focus activity that can directly address the needs of our population.


Our focus areas:

- Aligning the focus areas for research and innovation with the needs of our populations and the services they access.
- Providing opportunities for our staff to develop the skills to be more involved in quality improvement, research, evaluation and innovation.
- Addressing inequity of access to innovation and improvement and poor outcomes by some of our communities.
- Better utilising data, intelligence and available evidence to support research and innovation and quality improvements to our care and services.
- Work collaboratively with research networks and institutions within the ICS to deliver research programmes for the benefit of our populations.

For more information on the integrated Care Strategy or
the work of the Integrated Care Partnership please contact:
engagement.bobics@nhs.net



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 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 19 APRIL 2023
Subject	CONTRACTED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OUT OF HOURS SERVICE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Lidia Arciszewska Executive Member for Environment lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Philip Measures Service Leader Environmental Health Email: philip.measures@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the contract renewal for the Out of Hours Environmental Health Service.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: <i>a) end the current contracted out of hour's service</i>
Corporate priorities	Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director for Resident Services, Director of Finance (Publica), Executive Member for Finance, Executive Member for Environment

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Environmental Health service includes many functions which are regulatory in nature. Within these functions, situations may arise outside of the normal working day.

1.2 Examples of these are listed:

- Noisy parties and alarms
- Bonfires producing excessive smoke
- Health and Safety fatality
- Food poisoning outbreak

1.3 Events may be reported by the public or public bodies such as the Police or Fire Service.

For the last two decades (at least) WODC has provided a contracted out of hours service. It has not been possible to provide an in-house out of hour's service because there are not sufficient numbers of day-time officers to contract to such a service. The current contracted service is now due for re-tendering.

2. MAIN POINTS

2.1 When a caller contacts the Council out of hours they are diverted to a contact centre. Where it is an Environmental Health matter, the details are provided to the contracted Environmental Health Out of Hour's Service. The Council currently employs Inside Housing Solutions (I.H.S.) for this purpose. I.H.S calls back to discuss the complaint and agrees the most appropriate course of action, subject to the contract specification. Currently, advice is provided during weekdays and visits may be offered at weekends and public holidays. All calls are logged and passed to the daytime service the next working day. During weekends, if a visit is necessary, the visiting officer is required to attend within the hour.

2.2 *Hotlist*

A hotlist is provided to the contractors to provide them with additional information and instruction about cases that might arise.

2.3 Contractor – Action on receipt of a call

A return call is made within 15 minutes of receiving the service request. In the case of food poisoning, accidents at work and serious pollution incidents, the response is the giving of advice and referring the matter to the Council's Duty Officer. In the case of noisy parties, noise from building and vehicle alarms, and complaints about commercial or industrial premises concerning noise or pollution, the response and a decision on a visit will depend on the following considerations;

- Has the complainant previously registered the complaint with the Environmental Health Service and, if so, when?
- Has it been referred to the Hotlist?
- Has the complainant been advised to call the Out of Hour's Service or sent a letter advising them to use it?

- Is the problem happening at the time of the call and is it anticipated that it will still be occurring at the time of a visit.

2.4 *Statutory Nuisance responsibilities*

The Council has a duty to inspect its district for nuisances. The time of day is not defined, so the Council has to decide how it fulfils that duty with an appropriate level of service. A city authority will have a different level of service to a rural one because of the nature of the area and the different demands placed upon a service as a result of population and environment.

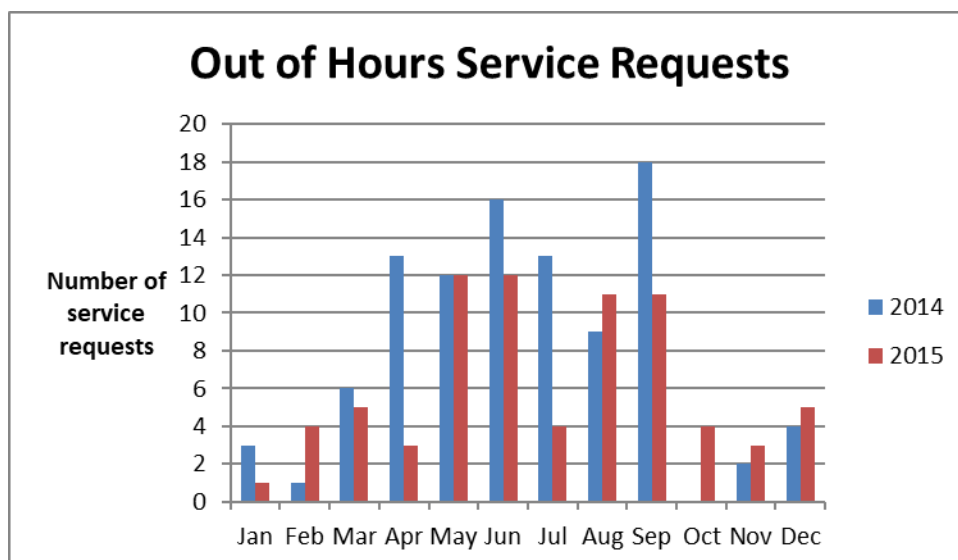
Councils can adopt further provisions under the Noise Act 1996 to issue Fixed Penalty Notices should fixed noise levels be measured and exceeded. This would require measurements to be taken at the time by officers and levels measured below the fixed levels would not constitute offences. Concerns that this would offer less protection to residents of quieter rural areas has resulted in this Act not being adopted to date in West Oxfordshire.

2.5 Public use of the service.

Table I All Calls to the contractor – 2019 to 2022

Year	Calls	Action
2019	4	Advice
2020	1	Advice
2021	1	Advice
2022	1	Advice

Chart I All Calls to the contractor – 2014 to 2015



Source. Inside Housing Solutions monthly reports

The information in Table I shows a low service demand where the action was advice only. This contrasts with Chart I, the last review of service demand between 2014 and 2015.

- 2.6** It is clear from the utilisation of the out of hours service that demand levels have fallen exponentially from when last contracted – the reasons for this are unclear but the service demand levels of one call a year suggest this service is now over resourced.

Part of the reasoning for this reduction in out of hours demand could well be the use of technology. The Council has invested in the use of the Noise App which means noise evidence can be uploaded by a complainant using their smartphone and sent directly to the investigating officer for analysis. This was unavailable at the last contract review.

Therefore, given the demand levels it is clear to officers that the Out of Hours service is providing a solution to a problem that no longer exists at the levels experienced a number of years ago. Indeed the Environmental Health team gathers evidence by making planned visits in hours and out of hours, by using noise recording equipment and the Noise App and gathering statements and logs of victims and witnesses. In the case of emergencies, the Council's emergency response process is in place and this system can cope with the demand levels set out in table I. This is the adopted approach in Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council, who operate without an additional contracted out of hour's service.

2.7 Options for Out of Hours Service

- **Re-tender service**

No change – Prices may increase on re-tendering.

- **7 day a week night-time service.** This will inevitably cost more.

- **A Service for Weekends and public holidays only.** The current contractor offers weekend cover and visits and advice only during the week at no additional cost. This means a service restricted to weekends only may not offer any saving.

- **Noise Act 1996.** Provide a night-time noise service and adopt the provisions of the Act so the penalties can be issued should fixed noise levels be exceeded. This can be explored in more detail in the proposed out of hours noise service review.

- **No contracted service**

In-house Officers already carry out scheduled and planned out of hour's visits, with the necessary health and safety considerations in place. For emergencies, these are referred under current arrangements to Senior Duty Managers via the emergency response process (*most calls to the EH out of hours service would not be classed as emergencies*).

- 2.8** At this stage because of the low demand, it is recommended that the current service be ended. It is also recommended that officers monitor the impact of this and, if necessary, bring back a further report to the Executive if this has a negative impact on resources within the team (noting that the Council have approved budget growth in this area for 2023/24).

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** The contract for I.H.S. is currently a rolling one at £2,700 a month, £32,400pa.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** There are no legal implications associated with this report. The existing day-time service meets statutory responsibilities.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1** There are no risks to assess.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

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

7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There are none associated with this report.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1** To test the market and come back to Cabinet to report on options and costs for a renewed out of hour's service and to re-tender.

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 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE - 19 APRIL 2023
Subject	LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Geoff Saul – Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare Email: geoff.saul@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Frank Wilson – Group Finance Director - Publica Email: frank.wilson@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Frank Wilson – Group Finance Director – Publica Email: frank.wilson@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To confirm the preferred method of delivery of up to sixteen new affordable homes utilising the Local Authority Housing Fund Allocation previously approved by the Executive on 8 February 2023
Annexes	Annex A – Options Appraisal summary Annex B - Outline proposal Cottsway Housing
Recommendation(s)	<p><i>That the Executive resolves to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) Accept the proposal from Cottsway Housing to fulfil the requirements of the Local Authority Housing Fund on behalf of the Council in respect of the delivery of 16 additional affordable homes;</i> <i>b) Passport the funding received by the Council to Cottsway Housing underpinned by a funding agreement setting out the relevant grant terms;</i> <i>c) Request the Chief Executive to establish a regular strategic forum to allow the Executive Member for Housing to improve the strategic engagement with our largest Registered Social Landlord in the district.</i> <i>d) Request officers to update the Executive on a regular basis on progress against delivery of these homes and subsequent use for other housing purposes.</i>

Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Good Quality of Life for All • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cottsway Housing; Blenheim Follow up from previous Executive and Council decision

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** In February 2023 the Executive considered a report which set out the new Local Authority Housing Fund aimed at providing housing initially for Afghan and Ukraine families but, subsequently, that stock being recycled into the general affordable housing stock or emergency housing provision.
- 1.2** The Executive resolved to approve that the Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to provide a total of thirteen affordable housing units under the scheme and receive funding of £1.813m for this purpose.
- 1.3** Several options for the delivery of these homes were considered but the Executive asked that officers conduct further due diligence to determine which option would best meet the needs of residents and taxpayers of the district.
- 1.4** Subsequent to the Executive meeting Council approved appropriate capital funding to enable any of the options being considered to be utilised.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** As set out in the report of February 2023 the options open to deliver the housing under this funding scheme are:-
 - Provide Directly;
 - Provide by wholly owned LA Housing Company;
 - Provide via existing Teckal Company (Publica);
 - Provide via Housing Association Partners;
- 2.2** The February report set out the risk and opportunities of these respective approaches and provided a high level options appraisal assessment. This assessment is re-provided at Annex A in an updated form based upon the additional due diligence completed.
- 2.3** The revised option appraisal shows a clear advantage in respect of the RSL option and this is considered in more detail in section 3 below.

3. RSL DELIVERY

- 3.1** Annex B sets out a delivery proposal from Cottsway Housing within which they set out how they will not only deliver against the parameters of the government funding framework but will actually deliver further value.
- 3.2** In headline terms, for the grant sum offered by government they will deliver a further 3 houses under the scheme which will then add further to the stock of affordable homes for use in the district.

3.3 In addition they undertake to :-

- Use our (their)skills, experience, and connections to source the homes at the best price possible which will enable us to provide more than the 13 homes
- Fund the purchase of the 13 homes plus any additional homes in conjunction with using the c£1.8m of grant funding
- Work closely with WODC to identify and agree the homes to purchase
- Ensure the homes purchased meet the requirements of the Local Authority Housing Fund prospectus and guidelines
- Ensure the homes meet the size and specification requirements to meet the standards required for affordable housing
- Agree a lettings plan with WODC to ensure homes are allocated in line with grant guidelines
- Manage and maintain the homes
- In agreement and where required or appropriate, potential to swap out homes with existing Cottsway properties on sites to prevent them being grouped together.

3.4 This option therefore does not require the Council to utilise its own resources to fund the scheme, does not require the Council to borrow to finance its share of the scheme, and, does not require the Council to use off site s. 106 contributions to finance the scheme leaving them available to deliver yet further affordable units with Cottsway or other partners.

3.5 The location of these properties will depend upon a number of factors including demand from Ukraine and Afghan refugees, supply and availability of housing and general impact on communities. It is likely therefore to be focussed in schemes currently being developed in Witney, Carterton and potentially Chipping Norton.

3.6 A funding agreement is being prepared which will bind Cottsway to the requirements of the scheme and ensure compliance.

3.7 The key disadvantage of utilising the RSL approach is that direct control of the asset will not be achieved. The Council should seek to mitigate this through enhanced engagement with Cottsway (in this case) on a regular basis and develop a stronger partnership with them as the major RSL in the district.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The option appraisal at Annex A sets out that all the other options do not offer the overall benefits of the RSL approach and in financial terms (set out in section 6) they would require very significant capital investment by the Council and additional revenue costs for a number of years.

4.2 The option to set up a local authority housing company could not realistically be achieved in the timeframe set out by the government for this scheme so this option could only be

delivered in conjunction with the other alternate options and suffers from the same disadvantages in this case.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The two principal options of RSL delivery and direct delivery are set out below in financial terms:-

	RSL Option	Direct / Alternate Option
Capital Cost (Net of Government Grant)	£ NIL	£ 1.8m
S 106 Funding Required	£ NIL	£ 0.5m
Annual Initial Revenue Cost	£ NIL	£13,000
Breakeven Revenue	Immediate	Year 8
Average Revenue return on investment over 30 years	Not Applicable	1%

- 5.2 Not included within this financial assessment is any knock on implications for the housing team of directly managing and maintaining the stock which will be zero with the RSL option but could be significant with direct delivery. A provision of 10% of rental income is included for management in the direct delivery model which would enable a 0.5 FTE post to be created. There is also the potential for an impact on the property team who would need to arrange works and whilst provision is made for maintenance works no provision is made for procuring and managing any such works.
- 5.3 Provision has been made by the Council for any of the options to be chosen but if the RSL option is approved those capital and section 106 resources can be released for alternate utilisation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 It is clear from the due diligence that provision via the RSL route is a lower cost and lower risk approach rather than direct delivery. It will also add additional value through the provision of additional affordable units.
- 6.2 The RSL route does not offer as much control of the assets so this should be mitigated by strengthening the strategic relationship with Cottsway.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The RSL approach reduces the legal burdens surrounding the establishment of a local authority housing company.

- 7.2 A legal agreement will be put in place to ensure the grant funding passported to Cottsway meets the requirements of the scheme.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The use of the RSL approach de-risks several aspects of the scheme as they have a strong business model which supports the provision of affordable housing. Direct provision would require the Council to build up the capacity to do it itself or procure a partner to provide this service on its behalf.
- 8.2 Specifically the risks around the following activities will be mitigated via an RSL approach:
- Voids
 - Maintenance risk
 - Rent collection and bad debts

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1 This housing will, in the first instance be set aside for refugee utilisation as per the scheme requirements. Thereafter lettings will be controlled by an agreed letting strategy which will be reviewed for equality compliance.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The scheme will utilise existing stock (or stock being currently built) so will have a neutral impact on the climate and ecological emergencies.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Executive February 2023

(END)

DELIVERY VEHICLE - OPTION APPRAISAL

Option / Rank	Housing Revenue Account Issues	Cost	Control	Management & Supervision	Asset Value	Delivery	Added Value	Total
1)Provide Directly	4	3	=1	=3	=1	=2	=3	17
(2)Provide by wholly owned LA Housing Company;	=2	4	=1	=3	=1	4	2	17
(3)Provide via existing Teckal Company (Publica);	=2	2	3	2	=3	=2	=3	17
(4)Provide via Housing Association Partners;	1	1	4	1	4	1	1	13

Rank Order – lower is better

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Cottsway Proposal – Local Authority Housing Fund

Background

Cottsway as the stock transfer from WODC, has been a supportive partner over the years and has in partnership with WODC delivered several projects as well as delivering many new homes in the district.

We are aware that WODC has submitted a bid for c.£1.8m of grant funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund to provide settled accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. The bid submitted is to fund delivery of 13 homes.

The Local Authority Housing Fund, prospectus and guidance enable Local Authorities to work with its housing association partners to deliver these homes using the grant funding.

Cottsway proposal

WODC will consider and choose the most appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve the fund's objectives, and to bring on stream the accommodation as quickly as possible, however as a committed and supportive partner of WODC we want to facilitate maximising the grant funding available.

Our proposal is that the grant is transferred to Cottsway to purchase the homes. The benefit of doing this is that with the c.£1.8million currently bid for, we can deliver the 13 homes WODC have identified they need plus a further 3 homes (subject to current discounts remaining available). As the additional homes will not have grant funding attached to them, they could be used for either temporary accommodation or general needs housing.

Using an agreed lettings plan WODC will retain control of the allocations to these homes, if and when the homes are no longer required for settled accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes they will be made available and allocated using the WODC choice based lettings scheme, as per other Cottsway properties.

Our offer in more detail:

- Use our skills, experience, and connections to source the homes at the best price possible which will enable us to provide more than the 13 homes
- Fund the purchase of the 13 homes plus any additional homes in conjunction with using the c£1.8m of grant funding
- Work closely with WODC to identify and agree the homes to purchase
- Ensure the homes purchased meet the requirements of the Local Authority Housing Fund prospectus and guidelines
- Ensure the homes meet the size and specification requirements to meet the standards required for affordable housing
- Agree a lettings plan with WODC to ensure homes are allocated in line with grant guidelines
- Manage and maintain the homes
- In agreement and where required or appropriate, potential to swap out homes with existing Cottsway properties on sites to prevent them being grouped together

Conclusion

Cottsway would welcome the opportunity to partner with WODC and can provide WODC with the skills and experience to source these homes, ensuring they meet the requirements of WODC and the grant funding prospectus and guidance. We can generate extra value to enable additional homes to be purchased and can manage and maintain them. If additional funding were made available, beyond the c.£1.8m, we are happy to work with WODC and can fund extra homes.

If WODC decided on an alternative delivery method and was looking for a partner to manage and maintain the homes, we would consider this however to meet the Regulator of Social Housing requirements this would be a commercial arrangement and would need to be of a relative scale to add value to Cottsway.

Executive Response to Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

WODC Executive Meeting – 19 April 2023

Overview and Scrutiny Meeting	Recommendation to the Executive	Lead Executive Member	Lead Officer	Executive Response
Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 16 March 2023.	1. That officers include within the current review of the Local Plan specific policies in respect of Public Houses – Future after Closure taking account of specific conditions pertaining at the time a Public House closes such as a sequential test or alternate community use.	Councillor Carl Rylett – Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager	The Executive thanks the Committee for its recommendations and Officers be instructed to take these recommendations into account in drafting the relevant future reports.
Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 16 March 2023.	2. That the title of the <i>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion</i> Policy is amended to <i>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion</i> Policy.	Councillor Mathew Parkinson – Executive Member for Customer Delivery	Zoe Campbell, Assistant Director for Organisational Effectiveness	The Executive thanks the Committee for its recommendations and Officers be instructed to take these recommendations into account in drafting the relevant future reports.

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