

Issued: Tuesday 27 February 2024

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Tel: 01993 861000

email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Executive, which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday 6 March 2024 at 2.00pm**.



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Executive:

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Lidia Arciszewska, Joy Aitman, Charlie Maynard, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner.

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. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Executive.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Executive, on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 12)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 14 February 2024.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive or the Chief Executive.
5. **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.
6. **Reports from Overview and Scrutiny**
To consider any reports or recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which meets on 29 February 2024.
7. **Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**
To consider any matters raised by the Audit and Governance Committee.
8. **Publica Transition Update (Pages 13 - 48)**
Purpose
To consider the Local Partnerships report and to consider the findings and recommendations therein.

Recommendation

That Executive Notes:

1. the findings and recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report; and
2. that the Interim Programme Director shall prepare a detailed transition plan, building on the recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report, for subsequent consideration by Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Council.

9. West Oxfordshire Food Action Plan (Pages 49 - 88)

Purpose:

To present the action plan produced by the Food Action Working Group (West Oxfordshire), noting especially the actions attributed to the Council. This is one of five district-specific action plans being produced as part of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy.

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Endorse the Food Action Plan (West Oxfordshire) attached at Annex A;
2. Approve the actions attributed to the Council as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

10. Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Three (Pages 89 - 148)

Purpose:

To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Three (Q3).

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Note the 2023/24 Q3 service performance report.

11. Financial Performance Report – 2023/24 Quarter Three (Pages 149 - 170)

Purpose:

To detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter Three 2023-2024.

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter Three 2023-2024;
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to review and repurpose earmarked reserves to mitigate against the four main financial risks identified in the report.

12. Road Closure Policy (Pages 171 - 186)

Purpose:

To consider a new policy for the administration of Temporary Road Closure applications.

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Note the report and approve the Temporary Road Closure Policy;
2. Agree to implement the Temporary Road Closure Policy following the standard call-in period, but no sooner than 1 April 2024;
3. Agree to amend the Officer Scheme of Delegation and insert that the

determination of Temporary Road Closure applications will be made by an appropriate officer in consultation with a legal representative, where there is no objection from any statutory consultee; and,

4. Approve the fees as set out in paragraph 4 of the report for Temporary Road Closure applications.

13. Fixed Penalty Notice Policy (Pages 187 - 206)

Purpose:

To consider a new policy for the administration of Fixed Penalty Notices.

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Note the report and approve the Fixed Penalty Notice Policy;
2. Agree to implement the Fixed Penalty Notice Policy following the standard call-in period.

14. Retail Relief – Business Rates (Pages 207 - 214)

Purpose:

To consider a scheme of rate relief for retail premises as outlined by Government in the Autumn Statement 2023

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Approve the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure scheme as set out in Annex A for 2024/2025;
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Resident Services the award of such reliefs.

15. Carbon Action Plan (Pages 215 - 260)

Purpose:

To present the West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan, which is proposed to be adopted and resourced by the Council from April 2024.

Recommendation:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Approve the West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan to deliver on the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.

16. Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2 (Pages 261 - 270)

Purpose:

To seek approval for the Council to enter into an agreement with Sport England for the acceptance of a grant from the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) Phase 2; and for the Council to draw down funding awarded to Chipping Norton Lido, acting in its capacity as lead authority for the delivery of the SPSF.

Recommendations:

That the Executive Resolves to:

1. Approve the acceptance of the SPSF Phase 2 grant awarded to West Oxfordshire District Council, valued at £243,328, to install rooftop solar PV (Photo Voltaic)

and energy saving showers at the Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney;

2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance to draw down and deploy the SPSF Phase 2 grant awarded to Chipping Norton Lido Ltd, valued at £84,366, to install solar PV and an air source heat pump.

17. Exclusion of Press and Public

If the Executive wishes to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Executive to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

18. Exempt Annex A - Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund (Phase 2) - Capital Grant Agreement (CGA) (Pages 271 - 294)

(END)

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Executive

Held in the Upper Hall, Chipping Norton Town Hall, High Street, Chipping Norton,
Oxfordshire OX7 5NA at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 14 February 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Lidia Arciszewska, Charlie Maynard, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director for Commercial Development), Heather McCulloch (Community Wellbeing Manager), Rachel Crookes (Biodiversity & Countryside Land Management Officer), Andrew Thomson (Lead Planning Policy & Implementation), Andrew Brown (Democratic Services Business Manager), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Elise Chowdhury (Communications Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Michele Mead

139 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joy Aitman.

140 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, declared for transparency that he was an Associate of the Community Communications Partnership, and highlighted that related work took place outside of Oxfordshire. The Declaration was made in relation to Agenda Item 8 – West Oxfordshire Local Plan Update 2041.

There were no other Declarations of Interest made by Members of the Executive.

141 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 17 January 2024, be agreed by the Executive as a true and accurate record, and signed by the Leader.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 17 January 2024, as a true and accurate record.

142 Receipt of Announcements

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, welcomed attendees to the meeting, and thanked members of the public for attending proceedings. The Leader gave the members of the public in attendance a brief overview of the way that the meeting would run.

The Leader advised that the meeting was the eighth in the Council's "Executive on Tour" series, with previous meetings being held around the West Oxfordshire District in Charlbury,

Executive

14/February2024

Woodstock, Carterton, Eynsham and Burford, along with a previous 'on tour' meeting held in Chipping Norton in Autumn 2022.

The Leader also advised that the next meeting of the Executive would take place on Wednesday 6 March 2024, at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber at Woodgreen, Witney.

The Leader further advised that the final Agenda Item contained commercially sensitive information, and if the Executive wished to discuss the information, the meeting would need to agree to enter private session. The Leader advised the attendees that this would be highlighted at the appropriate juncture.

143 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at the meeting.

144 Reports from Overview and Scrutiny

The Leader stated that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be considered as part of the Nature Recovery Plan and Nature Recovery Officer item.

145 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee

No matters had been raised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

146 West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 Update

Councillor Charlie Maynard, Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, introduced the report, which provided an update on the progress of the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2041), including a revised timetable for taking the Local Plan through to formal adoption.

The Executive Member added that the consultation had received over 2000 responses, and the Executive thanked Members of the Public for their engagement.

Andrew Thomson, Lead Planning Policy Officer, was invited by the Executive Member to give an overview of the responses that had been received by the Council in relation to the Local Plan update project. Andrew Thomson made further reference to potential ecological, climate, environmental and sustainable development implications that had been raised in a recent public consultation.

In debate, Members made reference to Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) within the Chipping Norton area, highlighting that it was imperative to see it be considered as part of the Local Plan process, in conjunction with Historic England. The Executive referred to proposed SDAs within Chipping Norton, stating that identified sites were nominated by developers. The Executive also committed to working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, with the interests of residents at the centre of future discussions.

The Executive highlighted that businesses and employers located in the district would also play a vital part in discussions, to prevent West Oxfordshire becoming a 'dormitory' district, feeding employment in the Greater Oxford and London areas.

By invitation of the Leader, a non-Executive Member in attendance referred to the importance of engaging with Royal Air Force Station Brize Norton, located within the district, as a major employer and employment site. It was envisaged that the military's input into the Local Plan consultations would be of vital importance throughout the new Local Plan process.

Executive

14/February2024

Councillor Charlie Maynard proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the content of the consultation summary report attached at Annex A, in particular the key themes arising which will be reflected in the next stage of Local Plan consultation;
2. Agree to approve the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex B.

147 Nature Recovery Plan and Nature Recovery Officer

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change, introduced the report, which presented the West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan. The report further set out the business case to appoint a new Nature Recovery Officer. The Nature Recovery Plan was proposed to be adopted and resourced by the Council from April 2024.

The Executive Member stated they would propose an additional recommendation, where delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainability, in conjunction with the Executive Member for Climate Change, to make any necessary minor amendments to the Nature Recovery Plan, following consideration by the Executive and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Member referred to recommendations made to the Executive by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and circulated ahead of the Executive meeting.

The Executive Member for Climate Change stated that the Executive had accepted, in principle, the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The recommendations suggested more engagement with Town and Parish Councils, that the Council takes a network approach to the facilitation of grassroots projects and getting people involved in nature recovery activities, and that consideration is given to mitigating risks around the future funding for the new post and the reliance on external funding for projects.

The Executive further highlighted that the Rural England and UK Shared Prosperity Funds would also provide additional funding for nature recovery projects in rural areas that would struggle to provide match funding through WestHive.

Councillor Andrew Prosser proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report, with an additional recommendation as outlined in the presentation of the report.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the West Oxfordshire District Council Nature Recovery Plan and recommend to Council that it is adopted as part of the Council's compliance with the new biodiversity duty;
2. Agree to part-fund a Nature Recovery Officer at a cost to the Council of £39,039.00 over 24 months;
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainability, in consultation with the Executive Member for Climate Change, to make any necessary

minor amendments to the Nature Recovery Plan following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

148 Climate Change Officer

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change, introduced the report, which set out the business case to make the Council's Climate Change Officer post permanent.

In debate, the Executive thanked the ongoing work of the current postholder for their continued efforts within the climate change area, and the value of the work undertaken to date. It was also highlighted that the Climate Change Officer had also provided vital income to the Council, through their hard work on the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

By invitation of the Leader, a non-Executive Member in attendance questioned who the Climate Change Officer would be employed by. The Chief Executive stated that Publica would be the employer for the permanent Climate Change Officer as the other staff in the Climate Change team were currently employed by Publica. Future employment would be considered on a case-by-case basis, owing to an ongoing review into Publica.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to make the Climate Change Officer post permanent at a total cost of £50,155 per annum.

149 Improving Youth Participation and Development

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which set out the Council's approach to supporting young people and building on the results and findings of a recent Youth Needs Assessment.

The Leader paid tribute to the work of the Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities and the Council's Community Wellbeing Manager, for their work in Youth Participation across West Oxfordshire, highlighting that work was of even greater significance owing to the rural nature of the West Oxfordshire District.

In debate, the Executive highlighted the significance of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), awarded to the Council by central government, and that younger people were perceived to have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to the recruitment of a dedicated Youth Development Officer on a full time, 2-year fixed term contract;
2. Note that £60,000 external funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) will be used to support the post;

14/February2024

3. Approve up to £28,000 from the Council Priority fund to meet the balance needed for the post;
4. Approve the use of the £20,000 COMF budget allocated to youth activities to enable test and learn opportunities as developed by the postholder, which tackle the barriers faced by young people, to access activities, services and opportunities.

150

Waste Fleet Purchase Strategy

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for the Environment, introduced the report, which updated the Executive on progress on the review of the West Oxfordshire waste fleet.

The report also sought to seek approval to purchase 4 standard fuel general waste refuse collection vehicles, and when necessary, and sought further approval to hire 2 standard fuel general waste refuse collection vehicles, whilst research is undertaken into options to use more environmentally sustainable vehicles such as electric vehicles.

By invitation of the Leader, a non-Executive Member in attendance expressed disappointment that the report had not been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (as a consequence of less than 28 days' notice of the decision being given on the Executive Forward Plan). The non-Executive Member also questioned why the Council was proposing to purchase waste vehicles when the Council's waste partner, Ubico, was considering owning waste vehicles itself. The Assistant Director for Commercial Development advised that funding for replacement waste vehicles was available in the Council's capital programme and that Ubico's consideration of owning waste vehicles itself was at the very early stages and, if pursued, would take some years to implement.

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

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree to purchase 4 x 28 tonne standard fuel general waste refuse collection vehicles (RCV's) for use on frontline collections;
2. Agree to hire 2 x 28 tonne standard fuel general waste refuse collection vehicles when needed whilst research is undertaken during the next financial year into options to use more environmentally sustainable vehicles such as electric vehicles.

151

Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which provided a detailed update on the budget for 2024/25, following the government funding settlements of 18 December 2023 and 24 January 2024.

The report also provided updates to and considered the draft base budgets for 2024/25, the Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2032/33, the level of Council Tax for 2024/25, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and the responses from the statutory budget consultation.

The Executive Member for Finance provided an overview of the budget pressures facing the Council, the assumptions that had been made, and the expected funding changes over the medium term. The budget was balanced but based on current projections of funding and expenditure the Council's reserves were expected to be significantly reduced over the medium term.

Executive

14/February2024

The Executive Member thanked the work of the Council's Finance Team, led by the Director of Finance, for their continued hard work throughout the wider budget setting process.

Councillor Alaric Smith 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.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the Parish Precepts and Tax Levels set out in Annex I;

And **Resolved** to Recommend to Council to:

2. Approve the General Fund revenue budgets as summarised in Annex B;
3. Approve the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy in Annex C;
4. Approve the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2032/33 as set out in Annex E;
5. Approve the Fees and charges for 2024/25, as detailed in Annex J and K;
6. Approve the Council's Pay Policy Statement as set out in Annex M;
7. Approve the level of District Council Tax for 2024/25 for a Band D property of £124.38 as shown in Annexes F-H.

152 Exclusion of Press and Public


The item was not considered at the meeting.

153 Exempt Annex K - Trade Waste Fees & Charges - Budget 2024/25

The exempt annex was considered as part of the public consideration of the Budget 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The Meeting closed at 3.17 pm

CHAIR

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>PUBLICA REVIEW- LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TRANSITION UPDATE</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>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email: Giles.Hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the Local Partnerships report and to consider the findings and recommendations therein.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Local Partnerships Report</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That Executive notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the findings and recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report; and 2. that the Interim Programme Director shall prepare a detailed transition plan, building on the recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report, for subsequent consideration by Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Council.
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Putting Residents First by ensuring that all services delivered by the Council are delivered to the highest standard.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Governance Interim Managing Director of Publica

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** Council services are delivered through Publica, a joint vehicle owned by the Council together with Cotswold District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Forest of Dean District Council. An options appraisal review of Council services and the way in which they are delivered was undertaken by a company called Human Engine in 2023. The final report recommended that a significant number of services should move from Publica and return to being under greater control of the Councils. This would leave Publica delivering a range of support and customer services for the Councils.
- I.2** Following the Human Engine report and its recommendations work begun to recruit an Interim Programme Director who would support the Chief Executives of the Councils and elected members in implementing the transition.
- I.3** An Interim Programme Director has now been appointed, following a two-stage interview process involving both officers and Leaders and is working on behalf of the Councils, under the leadership of the Chief Executives, to develop and implement the transition. Whilst the recruitment of a programme director was taking place, it was important to maintain momentum. Local Partnerships was therefore asked to support the councils, commissioned by Cotswold District Council as part of its South West transformation grant funding programme, in the development of a 'bridging report' that built on the work undertaken by Human Engine and to inform the preparation and implementation of a detailed transition plan that will be presented by the Interim Programme Director and Chief Executive later in the year.
- I.4** The Local Government Association runs a Transformation Fund programme through its partner organisation Local Partnerships. Local Partnerships LLP is a consultancy firm jointly owned by the LGA, Treasury and Welsh Government, delivering value for the public purse. Local Partnerships come with a wealth of experience and are well placed to be able to refer to the wider public sector's experience of insourcing to provide illustrations of governance, organisational design and service transformation, having been involved in undertaking service reviews for a number of councils in the past. This knowledge and approach facilitates bringing services back in-house following best practice, rather than simply 'lift and shift'.
- I.5** The brief agreed with Local Partnerships was for the provision of a high-level set of recommendations, following those set out in the Human Engine report, to enable the councils to take the project forward. The Councils were granted the equivalent of 20 consultancy days to provide high-level advice based on their experience of supporting councils with transition plans and from evidence gathered from other insourcing projects across the sector. Therefore timescales set out are indicative but realistic based on previous experience. Furthermore, the Local Partnerships report did not intend to seek to identify all service areas to be transferred, but to give a high level overview of and suggest key phases of services as part of the transition. It will be for the Interim Programme Director to develop this further with more specific detail

in due course. It is envisaged that the detailed transition plan will be completed by the end of April, with subsequent reporting back through the Council's scrutiny and decision-making meetings.

- 1.6** The Local Partnerships commission was undertaken in a similar way to a Peer Review. The Local Partnerships team carried out interviews with the four CEOs, Interim MD of Publica and the Interim Programme Director to understand the current position from their perspective and their views and ambitions for the insourcing project.
- 1.7** In addition, a half-day workshop took place with key staff from both the Councils and Publica, to understand more about the views of the wider stakeholder group regarding the transition. This information was then used to develop an outline framework for the transition of services to enable the programme team to take this forward. Their report covers key governance, risk and structural principles to support the transition from Publica back to the Councils.

2. NEXT STEPS

- 2.1** With a Programme director recruited, the next stages of the transition will involve considering and implementing the recommendations set out in the Local Partnerships report, continuing to develop the necessary governance arrangements, and member and staff engagement processes and the presentation to Executive, Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Council of the Programme Director's Transition Plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** There are no financial implications associated with this report. The Local Partnerships work was grant funded by the Local Government Association at no cost to the Councils. As set out in earlier reports, the financial impact of the proposals will be developed as part of the due diligence process over the coming weeks and included in the detailed transition plan.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** There are no legal implications associated with this report. As per financial implications, the legal implications associated with the Publica Review have been previously reported and will remain a key part of the due diligence process.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1** The commissioning of Local Partnerships and their subsequent report provides additional independent advice and recommendations associated with the return of services to the Council. The recommendations are based on assessment of the original Human Engine report, conversations with key officers and their experience based on best practice elsewhere. As such their report is beneficial in terms of providing additional assurances to the Council on the key elements of the review, phasing and the direction of travel. This approach of risk management will continue as the service review develops. In addition, clarity around the

transition plan will also help to minimise risks associated with staff feeling unsettled and unsure of their future, which in turn should minimise risks around day to day service delivery.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

6.1 Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief

When considering this recommendation, no barriers or impact on any of the above groups has been identified.

7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This recommendation has no climate change implications.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Annex A Local Partnerships report and recommendations.

(END)

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JOINTLY OWNED BY



Insourcing from Publica Review

Version No: Final Report

Issue Date: **15 February 2024**



1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Background.....	3
1.2 Our brief	4
1.3 Our approach	4
2 Findings and Recommendations.....	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Overview of Transition	8
2.3 Recommendation 1: Consider adopting the proposed phasing.....	10
2.4 Design-led principles	11
2.5 Recommendation 2: Consider adopting the proposed design-led principles criteria	11
2.6 Transition framework.....	12
2.7 Recommendation 3: Consider adopting the proposed outline transition framework	12
Governance of Publica.....	18
3 Conclusion and Next Steps	19
3.1 Summary of recommendations.....	19
4 List of consultees	20
5 Other examples of insourcing.....	22
6 Insourcing good practice template	25



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Supporting the insourcing of some council services from the arm's length company, Publica

Local Partnerships LLP is a consultancy firm jointly owned by the LGA, Treasury and Welsh Government, delivering value for the public purse. We help transform services across the public sector. As a key interface between local and central government, we provide expert advice and practical resources alongside project/programme delivery support, enabling public services to thrive.

Local Partnerships was asked to support the councils, as part of its South West transformation grant funding programme, in the development of a 'bridging report' that built on the work undertaken by Human Engine and that will usefully inform the preparation and implementation of detailed transition plan that will be presented to the Councils, later in the year.

Cotswold District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Council are all shareholders of Publica, a Local Authority Teckal Company (LATCO) which has been delivering the majority of council services for the past six years. Since Publica was formed, the context for the shareholders has changed because of changes to political control and changes at senior management level, with all four councils having re-instated Chief Executive positions.

A recent LGA peer review recommended that the delivery options for some services should be reviewed, including whether they should be brought back in-house. It also recommended that the commissioner/provider relationship between Publica and the councils be re-considered. Following this, the councils commissioned an independent strategic review of Publica services to provide options for the future of service delivery, the outcome of which was that it was recommended that the majority of services would benefit from being brought back in-house.

The councils have approved the recommendations that the Chief Executives and their retained management teams will work with Leaders and the Publica Board and Executive to consider in detail the requirements for a smooth transition, via preparing and presenting a detailed transition plan for subsequent approval by the cabinet/executive and councils.



1.2 Our brief

The purpose of this work is to provide a high-level set of recommendations, following those set out in the Human Engine report, to enable the councils to take the project forward. It does not seek to identify all service areas to be transferred and as such does not provide a detailed transition plan. It is designed to provide high-level advice based on experience of supporting councils with transition plans and from evidence gathered from other insourcing projects across the sector. Because of the constraints of timing and number of days available, it has not been possible to provide further detail. Therefore timescales set out are indicative but realistic based on previous experience and it will be for the Interim Programme Director to develop this further with more specific detail in due course.

1.3 Our approach

Following the Human Engine report's findings which proposed the transfer of the majority of council services back in-house, we have taken the transition to the next stage.

We have carried out the following:

- Carried out interviews with the four CEOs, MD of Publica and the Interim Programme Director to understand the current position from their perspective and their views and ambitions for the insourcing project
- Co-facilitated a half-day workshop with the Interim Programme Director (see section 4 for list of consultees) to understand more about the views of the wider stakeholder group regarding the transition
- Reviewed the Human Engine report and other reports provided to us
- Used this information to develop an outline framework for the transition of services to enable the programme team to take this forward. This covers key governance, risk and structural principles to support the transition from Publica back to the councils, ensuring that the councils operate in 'lockstep' including governance boards, terms of reference and decision-making documents to mandate contributions from all
- Referred to the wider sector's experience of insourcing to provide illustrations of governance, organisational design and service transformation. This is to facilitate bringing services back in-house following best practice, rather than simply 'lift and shift', including collective criteria regarding how the services might look



- Provided recommendations on the governance of the reduced scale Publica.

This report and its recommendations will then lead into the detailed transition work being carried out by the transition team led by the Interim Programme Director.



2 Findings and Recommendations

2.1 Introduction

This report follows the work conducted by Human Engine consultants which concluded that the majority of council services should be brought back to the sovereign councils (the 'what'). This now requires further detail and an implementation plan to enable it to happen (the 'how') which will be facilitated by the Officer Transition Board, reporting to the owning councils and led by an Interim Programme Director.

The overarching vision for the new way of working has been agreed, which is to bring back control of the majority of services to the councils.

Through discussions with those interviewed (see section 4 for details), the rationale for insourcing is more than simply the overall cost of service delivery. A key consideration is the ability for the councils to set their own direction and ensure services are delivered in a sustainable way, whilst being focussed on positive results for residents and businesses of their administrative area.

Other key considerations have been identified as:

- Recruitment and retention
- Capacity
- Sustainability
- Sovereignty
- Affordability
- Resilience
- Maintaining 'business as usual'
- Risk management
- Trusted partnerships
- Pragmatism
- Control
- Duplication of managerial costs
- Simplifying operational arrangements.



We have used these as the basis for our recommendations.

There has been a general trend of insourcing across the local government sector in recent years. In addition to cost saving, reasons for this are wide-ranging and include:

- Building greater flexibility, rather than being at the behest of a third-party provider, even if it is owned by the authority as it is still arm's length from it
- Greater control of service delivery in an uncertain economic landscape
- Ensuring better service continuity
- Addressing poor performance
- Improving the quality of services
- Better opportunity for governance and alignment to political ambitions
- Increased integration of services
- Community wellbeing and satisfaction.

Typical services insourced tend to be administrative-related functions such as revenues and benefits and HR. Environmental services also are often insourced because of the inflexibility of long-term contracts. However, in the case of some arm's length wholly owned or joint venture companies, there is often a wide range of services delivered through this means.

While there are many examples of where previously outsourced services have been brought back in-house, there are no examples that are similar to the arrangement with Publica. This is due to the relatively high number of shareholders (four) and having set a company delivering most of the councils' services which are not also trading externally. It is therefore difficult to draw a true comparison. However, some learning can be drawn. The most relevant examples that have been found are included in section 5.

It is good practice to undertake regular reviews of how services are delivered and from research it seems that practicalities rather than ideology have been at the root of why decisions have been taken to revert to insourcing. Service delivery models that were appropriate at one point in time may no longer be appropriate as the landscape changes, so the review of Publica at this stage in its evolution, as with many other public organisations, is timely.

Recognising that there are demonstrable benefits to insourcing, it must be implemented carefully as it is not without its challenges and there are a range of factors that need to be considered, including the cost of the transition. There is no guarantee that costs will reduce



because of it. It is often difficult to determine whether insourcing has been successful as savings such as a reduced establishment and fewer resources needed in relation to governance are not easily quantifiable and may not be realised until sometime after the transition. Some examples of insourcing have reported cost savings, whilst others have resulted in additional costs, however, many report that the wider benefits have made it worthwhile. Others have forgone the benefits of income generation by the outsourcing company achieved through external trading, however, this is not the case for Publica which was not set up for that purpose, but rather was established purely for the purpose of providing services to the owning authorities and it is doubtful that trading to external parties could easily be established at Publica without significant investment given that it has not traded externally before. Although Publica has not generated external income, it has generated cost savings. Whilst it is recognised that some of these savings may be lost in the insourcing process, it is expected that other savings will be made possible.

2.2 Overview of Transition

Insourcing requires careful planning and management to ensure continuity of service delivery, the successful transfer of intellectual property and knowledge, and the effective integration of services including ensuring the people who deliver them to ensure they are fully engaged in the process.

Transitioning from an out-sourced delivery model to a wholly in-house service model, or hybrid arrangement involves several key stages. A good practice template of stages for transition and progress against it to date is set out in section 6. This has been used as the basis for the transition framework at section 2.4, which in turn will be further developed by the Interim Programme Director.

As noted above, the Human Engine report and its recommendation to bring the majority of services back in-house has been taken as the starting point for this phase of work.

A summary of the output from this work is shown below. This is a starting point for development rather than a definitive list and has been tested as part of this work through the interviews and workshops to determine to what extent there is agreement.



Retained in Publica	Sovereign	Opportunities to Share
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Services• Complaints• Revenues and Benefits• Housing Services• ICT• Data Protection• Freedom of Information• Subject Access Requests• Procurement• Transactional Finance• Transactional HR including Payroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Finance• Accountancy• Insurance• Economic Development• Tourism• Parking• Property and Estates• Communications• Community Safety and Engagement• Business Intelligence• Corporate Performance• Organisational Development• Electoral Services• Democratic Services• Members Services• Waste• Grounds Maintenance• Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Housing• Development Management• Building Control• Land Charges• Risk Management• Health and Safety• Emergency Planning and BCP• Flood Risk• HR Policy and Employee Relations• Legal Services• Commercial Contract Management (could include Waste, Grounds and Leisure)• Environmental Health• Food Safety & Licensing

The detail around alternative delivery models has not been considered in this report. However, there are opportunities for sharing services and possibly looking to use Ubico for additional service provision. Initial discussions have taken place between Cotswold and West Oxfordshire councils to explore the scope to share certain services and roles, with Forest of Dean most likely looking to provide direct service delivery or consider other neighbouring authorities for potential partnering opportunities. Stakeholder interviews together with an initial workshop with officers involved in the process has been carried out as part of this review, focusing upon exploring the preferred option as set out in the Human Engine report. This has provided the opportunity to understand the thoughts and take on board the particular considerations of those involved.



In terms of the phasing to repatriate services, the workshop identified the following, based on the rationale of number of staff involved, complexity of service and need for systems/infrastructure, ease of disaggregation time/cost implications, and ability to trade in the future should services remain in Publica. This has been used as an indicative list of services to be transferred, with approximate timings, for the first two phases.

The Officer Transition Board will be responsible for confirming which services will transfer in each phase. The third phase will be decided by the parties at a later date.

The first phase should be completed as soon as possible and within no longer than six months. This progress can then be used to provide some certainty of direction of travel and generate reassurance within the teams of meaningful progress.

To achieve some early wins, those services that are relatively more straightforward to move across, such as democratic services and elections, could be in the first phase.

2.3 Recommendation 1: Consider adopting the proposed phasing

Phase 1 (6 months from April 2024)	Phase 2 (12 months from April 2024)
Development and building control	Food safety and licencing
Local plan team	Environmental health
Democratic services and elections	Performance and Business intelligence
Corporate plan and policy	Property and estates
Economic development	Project management
Communities	Communications
Climate change/environment/sustainability	
Strategic finance	



Strategic HR	
Strategic housing	
Community wellbeing	

The decision regarding which services should remain in Publica will be decided at a later date. Any future governance framework will depend on the outcome of the decision on this matter.

At the workshop officers identified that there could be further opportunity to include some services in the first phase which were allocated to future phases, as it was noted that some services would be relatively ease to 'lift and shift'. Further work to reach agreement as to which services should be allocated in which phase may need to be reviewed more corporately (e.g. sustainability could be grouped with flood risk management), thinking more innovatively in line with the new ways of working.

The Office Transition Board will take this work forward. Together with team members, it will look at and agree the most appropriate way forward for each service. This will consider all relevant factors including HR, finance and other practical considerations so that informed decisions may be made. The timescales provided are indicative and may change in due course as more detailed planning is undertaken.

2.4 Design-led principles

These principles will be fundamental to the success of the insourcing project. The re-patriation principles and criteria will need to be decided as part of the planning stage, where opportunities for changing the way in services are delivered can be considered against the needs of the individual councils and their corporate objectives. Each council will need to articulate its ambitions for success and consider if this aligns with other councils. Corporate plans will need to be assessed in terms of their alignment to one another and the shared ambition. This should assist in embedding the councils to a new organisational culture into the ways of working, rather than creating a like-for-like structure.

2.5 Recommendation 2: Consider adopting the proposed design-led principles criteria

- *Being responsive and business like* - adopting a more commercial mindset when considering engagement with businesses, residents, and key stakeholders, ensuring a cost recovery approach is implemented wherever possible to maximise service efficiencies etc.
- *Shaping delivery of services* - being more mindful of efficient working methodologies (travel routes etc.)



- *How best to repatriate staff* - where staff work across multiple councils (taking the provisions of TUPE into account), considering factors such as historic pension strain, relationship lead roles with specific councils, whether as part of a shared role, the majority of work is undertaken principally for a particular council
- *Cost* – recognising that there is a cost to bringing services back in-house and it may be difficult to quantify any short/medium-term savings such as senior management salaries and reduced costs of running a company
- *Employing people locally, being accessible and visible*, with the ambition of making services more local with greater accountability and transparency
- *Group services to accelerate efficiencies*, by identifying synergies between certain services before moving services.

These criteria will be important in ensuring clarity is provided to staff and members on how the repatriation process will be agreed and should be developed further as part of the more detailed transition plan.

2.6 Transition framework

A proposed outline framework for transition is set out below. Further information is included in the table in section 6. Because there are various uncertainties, it is not prudent to identify timescales after June 2024 when the detailed transition plan is expected to be completed. The number of tasks required to reach this point is significant and will require dedicated resource and alignment across all stakeholders. However, there are some quick wins that may be achieved early on to provide certainty regarding direction of travel. This framework is intended as a starting point for development into a detailed plan by the Interim Programme Director as lead of the Office Transition Board, working on behalf of the Councils.

2.7 Recommendation 3: Consider adopting the proposed outline transition framework

Phase	Action	Features	Points to note	Indicative timescales	Dependencies
1	Programme office set up	Membership, TOR, reporting mechanisms	Staff roles and responsibilities agreed and staff seconded into teams TOR for programme agreed PID produced Meeting schedule developed	Immediate	Reporting lines to be established e.g. to each council's cabinet Delegation of authority/decision-making agreed



			Project plans including timelines, dependencies, milestones established		
1	Creation of Programme Board to support alignment of all stakeholders	Articulation of agreed principles underpinning the project	Any red lines of each council to be noted Recorded and minutes of meeting required	Immediate	Details may take time to be agreed
1	Development of Target Operating Model	Stages of transfer, confirm which services are moving and when, what is remaining in Publica Development and agreement of design-led principles	Ethos of new organisations to be established and new organisation design developed – see below Early indication of the future look of Publica and its relationship with councils Review services coming across and in what order Defining new approach e.g. more commercial approach to service delivery Councils may not all agree on principles and phasing of transition	Immediate	Other partnerships (shared services) may be being considered in parallel but not to be a distraction Agreement may not be reached by June 2024
1	Organisational Design Model incorporating individual organisations organograms	Review current management structure to ensure adequate capacity to manage and lead future insourced functions	Review the current management structure within each council in order to identify any functional/capacity gaps e.g. Human Resources, OD/Culture and transformation requirements Primary responsibility sits with each of the councils to determine their own organograms with the assistance of Publica to share	June 2024	TOM / Design principles to be agreed to trigger what is implemented



			details on current staffing arrangements/alignment etc. Purpose to set a clear direction of travel for the councils, to review and evaluate and update its practices, policies, procedures and ways of working, ensuring an improved customer experience post transfer of services		
1	Development of Target Operating Model				
Phase 1 outcome: a settled and detailed transition plan ready for cabinet approvals					
2	Financial plans and future operating budgets developed and agreed	Detailed financial analysis of impact of transfer	Costs of transfer including programme board costs, transfer related costs, any redundancies, branding etc. Benefits may be measured against these	June 2024	Depending on decision regarding Publica's future look
2	Consultation with recognised Trade Unions	Establishing a partnership approach with Trade Unions so that their views and those of their members can be taken into consideration when developing transitional plans.	Dialogue should commence in good time to allow for meaningful consultation (and where appropriate) negotiation and as a minimum in line with statutory requirements Consultation documents to be developed including business case for change, benefits to services to be realised, current and future establishments and any resulting impacts on staff etc	July 2024	TOM and Organisation Design/ organograms completed and approved. Financial plans and budgets developed and agreed
2	Communications	Staff engagement strategy required.	Engagement and Communications strategy developed and detailed plan	July 2024	



		Regularised updates to be shared with elected members including backbenchers	produced utilising Platforms e.g. Yammer		
2	Individual Employee Consultation	Within the wider consultation process and in addition to the formal consultation process undertaken between management and Trade Union representatives.	Individual consultation with affected staff should commence once business case for change has been developed and shared with Trade Unions Employees given the opportunity to express their own preference as to where they transition to prior to any final decisions being taken by management	July 2024	Consultation document prepared and shared with Trade Unions.
2	Managing Change protocols	Single agreed set of protocols to be developed and consistently applied by all councils when filling new vacancies arising out of TOM /Organisation Design.	A single, transparent, fair and equitable approach to 'Managing Change' protocols should be developed and adopted by all parties in consultation with Trade Unions, incorporating i) appointment process ii) redeployment process iii) Pay protection and iv) Employment law	Post July 2024	
2	Organisation Development/Culture change programme	Encouraging dialogue/ identify Staff champions	Recognising that change is a difficult process consideration as to how staff will be supported through the transition should be developed Managers will have a key responsibility throughout the	Post July 2024	Link to communications and organisational design and development review.



			process and therefore, appropriate OD interventions, training and use of other support facilities should be made available		
2	Internal Governance	<p>Identification of all relevant governance boards and reporting lines to each by the Officer Transition Board</p> <p>Consideration of cross-party working group</p>	<p>Audit and Scrutiny Committee Cabinet Shareholder Forum Scrutiny Panel Formation of Member Transition Group to be considered</p> <p>All-member briefing to gather views on what 'success' looks like</p>	Post July 2024	
2	Publica governance	Implementation of new governance system for Publica following transfer	<p>Shareholder Forum revised to meet current needs</p> <p>Revised structure of Publica board</p>	Post July 2024	
2	Risk management	Development of risk register	Monitoring arrangements	Post July 2024	
2	Transfer of existing staff	Transfer of staff from Publica to sovereign councils	<p>Regulation 3 of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 will apply where a service provision of an organised group is transferred back into one or more of the councils</p> <p>Since TUPE transfers can be detailed, time consuming and fought with legal and contractual</p>	<p>Post September 2024</p> <p>Indicatively: Phase 1 – 6 months</p>	



			challenges, Councils are recommended to obtain specific and more detailed HR and legal advice a part of the Officer Transition Board		
2	Transfer of other assets	As above	As above	As above	
Phase 2 outcome: completion of phase 1 transfers in October 2024					
3	Development of new roles e.g. client commissioner roles, new senior team officers	Client roles to be set up to manage contracts remaining with Publica	May be drawn/appointed from Publica transferees subject to Managing Change protocols	Post July 2024	
3	Explore further opportunities for sharing	Opportunities to share between each other and/or with others	This could be carried out as a second stage	Post July 2024	
3	Benefits realisation assessment	Reviewed regularly to ensure no problems escalate	Part of Transition team's remit and circulated to stakeholders	Post July 2024	
Phase 3 outcome: Completion of identification of further operational efficiencies leading to phase 2 transfer					

The timescales set out are indicative but realistic based on previous experience and will be for the Interim Programme Director to develop this further with more specific detail.



Governance of Publica

This will depend on what services remain in Publica. As noted above, it is likely that in the short-medium term, Publica will be leaner and focussed on a smaller number of largely support/back-office services. With a phased approach to transition, Publica will remain in existence in some form for the foreseeable future. As a smaller organisation, a decision will need to be made regarding whether to retain it and potentially make it a more commercial entity e.g. through trading services externally. This will need to be balanced with the level of resource that would be required for its effective governance to determine if it is worthwhile keeping a separate company.

Factors to take into account should include the resource needed to continue to invest in Publica when there is a significant transition programme of insourcing also requiring officer time whilst still ensuring council services are not disrupted.

In the transition period however, governance may be strengthened both in terms of strategic and operational matters by the following:

- Refreshing the shareholder forum through a review of composition and terms of reference to ensure that it has sufficient oversight of Publica in its current form
- Reviewing the board of directors, ensuring that its size and nature is appropriate for the revised size of Publica, and that non-executive directors have the relevant skills to steer the company through the next phase e.g. with transition/business change skills
- An updated business plan setting out the proposed approach over the next year
- Ensuring that council-side committees such as Audit and Governance Overview & Scrutiny are regularly reviewing the performance of the company in accordance with the councils' requirements
- Ensuring that there is a strong clienting function to manage the day-to-day oversight of remaining the Publica contract. There may be challenges because of the way the contracts have been set up which do not lend themselves to KPI management, but there is still an opportunity to make changes to the way the contract is managed.

The governance of Publica is reliant on clarity from the councils regarding its role and what its objectives will be in its new form.



3 Conclusion and Next Steps

3.1 Summary of recommendations

Consider adopting the recommendations as set out above, which in summary are:

- The proposed phasing of service transfers
- The proposed design-led principles
- The proposed outline transition framework

It is envisaged that the transition of the majority of Publica services will take place in three phases over the next 18 months or longer. This is a major programme of work of great complexity and intricacy that will require significant resource and consensus for it to be successful. However, some initial progress may be made in the first phase, as soon as possible and ideally within the first six months, to demonstrate progress and reduce levels of uncertainty.

At this stage there are some unknowns and agreement will be needed in relation to the exact timescales for completion, which services will remain in Publica and whether there is any desire to trade. It is hoped that this framework will provide additional context and thought that will help to ensure the programme delivers against the key objectives summarised in section 1.

With a lack of direct comparison of service reviews of this type, (because of the unique nature of Publica i.e. four shareholders and a comprehensive range of services being in-sourced) there will be an emphasis on the Interim Programme Director, CEO's, key members and Publica management to ensure that assurance processes are put in place to enable the project to be successful in achieving its objectives. However, the other examples of insourcing provide some learning opportunities.

The development and continued implementation of the existing Officer Transition Board and recruitment of a dedicated Interim Programme Director will support this work. The team will now take forward more detailed plans in relation to the framework set out in this report as the next step in transition.



4 List of consultees

The list of those interviewed and/or attended the workshop is set out below:

Name	Role	Interviewed	Attended workshop
Rob Weaver	CEO, Cotswold DC	Yes	Yes
Giles Hughes	CEO, West Oxfordshire DC	Yes	Yes
Gareth Edmundson	CEO, Cheltenham BC	Yes	
Nigel Brinn	CEO, Forest of Dean DC	Yes	
Andrew Pollard	Interim Programme Director	Yes	Yes
Frank Wilson	Interim MD, Publica	Yes	Yes
Phil Martin	AD, Business Services		Yes
Jon Dearing	AD, Residents' Services		Yes
Bill Oddy	AD, Commercial Development		Yes
Zoe Campbell	AD, Organisational Effectiveness		Yes
Andy Barge	AD, Communities		Yes
Claire Locke	AD, Property and Regeneration		Yes
John Llewellyn	Business Manager, HR		Yes



Sian Roxborough	MO, Forest of Dean DC		Yes
David Stanley	S151, Cotswold DC		Yes
Andrew Knott	S151, Forest of Dean DC		Yes
Andrea McCaskie	MO, West Oxfordshire DC		Yes
Angela Claridge	MO, Cotswold DC		Yes



5 Other examples of insourcing

London Borough of Islington

One of the largest insourcing examples. Since 2011 has brought back in-house £380m of services for the purposes of delivering better quality and value which for the majority of service has proved to be the case. A key outcome was enabling better terms and conditions of 1,200 frontline staff and generated net savings to the Council in the region of £14m. Services brought in included cleaning, housing repairs and maintenance, waste and recycling, grounds maintenance and temporary accommodation. For the phase of insourcing in 2019, the council ran a consultation to residents. Businesses, services users and those with an economic interest in the borough.

London Borough of Barnet

The decade-long partnership with Capita, set up in 2013, was one of the country's largest local authority outsourced contracts. Its aim was to deliver significant benefits with savings of £31m and improved customer satisfaction. In the early years savings were made but as the contract continued, these failed to be sustained. As income targets amongst other issues failed to be met, the Council decided to insource services from the company (Re). Its various contracts with Capita encountered various problems including a major fraud and did not deliver against targets despite generating savings, for which it had to pay compensation. There were particular problems with IT performance.

300 staff were re-patriated from highways, planning and environmental health in a first phase, with estates, building services, facilities and print transferring in a second phase. HR and finance systems transfer after that, but IT, customer services, and revenues and benefits will remain for some time because of the complexities and would result in further costs associated with redundancies and cuts to services. All back-office services are expected to be insourced by 2026, to allow more time to make arrangement for the future of these services as swiftly as possible. The insourcing of Re is expected to save up to £204k per annum. Three years has been allowed for insourcing to allow breathing space to consider options, including sharing services with neighbouring London boroughs,

Shropshire Council

Shropshire's wholly owned company, IP&E Limited, was set up in 2012 to facilitate a strategic commissioning framework for all council services, transferring services across in phases. It was wound up in 2016 as it was loss-making and all services (comprising a large proportion of Council services) were brought back in-house. Significant overheads were unsustainable and exacerbated by a lack of external trading. High overheads arose from buildings and the appointment of senior staff which was unmatched by rise in income. Catering, cleaning, facilities



management, finance, HR, legal and print services were initially re-patriated. Then communications, public health, development management, building control, public protection and regulation of private sector housing were transferred in a second phase.

South Holland and Breckland District Councils The two councils mutually agreed to end their eleven-year partnership of a shared management and joint working arrangement in 2021, in order to pursue new local strategic partnerships at each council. They reported that, as well as producing productive joint working on strategy and policy development, helping to protect front-line services, and the recruitment and retention of skilled officers, the partnership has also saved taxpayers' money totalling around £4.4million, plus ongoing annual benefits to each council in excess of £0.5m, proving its value at a time where councils have found themselves under particular financial pressure.

However, with temporary separate management teams put in place to deal with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ongoing national discussion around the Local Government Review process and the potential outcomes of this for each council, senior leaders at both sides have recognised the need to review their partnership and explore the case for changing the way the councils work together.

Both have decided that the best decision for the districts and its residents would be to develop a new strategic partnership within existing county boundaries, which will support them to carry on delivering great outcomes for their communities whilst also giving them the flexibility to adapt to a fast-changing and challenging local government environment.

South Holland has since entered into the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership with Boston and East Lindsey district councils. The three will share a management team and workforce. The ambition is to provide the councils with the opportunity to share a stronger voice at a local, regional, and national level and will enable savings of up to £42m to be achieved over the next ten years. The shared workforce is almost 1,000 officers, the partnership will look at providing improved services to local communities with greater efficiency whilst also working to identify and secure investment for growth and regeneration in strategic infrastructure across the partnership area.

South Worcestershire Civica Partnership

The three south Worcestershire districts of Worcester City, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils had been in a long-term partnership with Civica for the delivery of revenues and benefits and customer services. However, in early 2022 Civica expressed its intention to exit the partnership and therefore the three councils had to make alternative arrangements. Civica's budget had reduced because of the councils' desire to make efficiencies and it was no longer a viable model. After looking at alternative service providers, they decided to bring the services back in house, continuing to work together as a shared service. This began in January 2023 and took approximately one year to complete. The staff, comprising approximately 70 people, were transferred from Civica to Malvern Hills District Council. No money was saved because all efficiencies had already been found. Although no cost savings were achieved, the councils have reported that morale and productivity is higher



and service standards have improved. It is not clear exactly why, but it is believed that it is because the service has been brought closer into councils and this has supported a feeling of greater purpose.



6 Insourcing good practice template

Stage 1 – Pre-Transition Assessment	Activity	Progress against plan
1. Future State	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be clear about what the insourced service will look like once it has been transferred from Publica (the 'Transferor') to the receiving organisation/s (the 'Transferee/s').• Identify what your BAU operating model will be since this will help inform the next steps in the transition process and the degree to which some of those steps may overlap with one another.• Failure to define the 'future state' or new 'TOM' will potentially lead to confusion; disrupt service delivery and may damage your external reputation with service end users.• By clearly defining how you intend to operate your services post-transition, you are likely to be able to return to BAU more quickly; avoid or mitigate any service delivery or reputational risks associated with the transition; reduce the impact on staff and avoid potentially costly employee relations issues.• It also becomes increasingly difficult to be able to assess the success of the project post-implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Engine report sets out the general approach i.e. to insource the majority of services• Workshop clarified preferred phasing of services to be brought back in• Further work on TOM needed to provide extra detail including which services may be shared between the councils and/or more widely
2. Review existing Contract with Publica and negotiate exit terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is important to fully understand and consider the contractual terms and conditions associated with terminating the current arrangements. It is important to ensure that adequate notice or any other legal requirements within the contract are adhered to, in order to avoid any potential claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services may be removed at any time with a notice period



	of breach of contract and ensure the disaggregation process is legally compliant.	
3. Establish Transition Oversight Team with supporting Task and Finish Workstreams Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Interim Programme Director responsible for leading the transition will need to establish a team of senior personnel to oversee the development and implementation of the transitional plan. The main function of the Officer Transition Board is to provide strategic direction, make key decisions including removing barriers likely to impact the successful implementation of the programme, secure any necessary resources, identify and manage any emerging risks, ensure politicians are kept informed of progress and approve communications strategies. Some of the key roles to include on the Transitional Programme Board are Finance; HR/Workforce; Legal; Communications and Heads of Service/Function as appropriate. Underneath the Transition Programme Board will be the various Task and Finish Groups led by the Programme Board leads who will be responsible for implementing various aspects of the transition plan e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR/Workforce responsible for conducting consultation with recognised trade union representatives, handling staff transfers including TUPE ensuring appropriate 'due diligence assessments' are carried out as well as ensuring a continuous programme of staff engagement is implemented. They will also be responsible for ensuring effective Change Management processes are developed and implemented consistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight board created and Interim Programme Director appointed Further work to ensure sufficient relevant resource is committed to this project will be needed, including the setting up of separate task and finish groups as required Robust governance and reporting procedures to be established to ensure compliance with any legal obligations, ensure transparency to all key stakeholders, and to ensure any emerging risks are quickly identified and mitigating action take to eliminate or reduce the impact on service delivery



	<p>where organisational restructures are required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Communications responsible for ensuring the drafting of key messages, producing newsletters and internal communiques, responding to any external data information and FOIs are responded to according to legal requirements etc.○ Legal responsible for reviewing contracts include licence renewals etc.○ IT/Systems where any changes to information and/or technical processes are required; manage the transfer of any physical assets to ensure continuity of service throughout the transition period.	
4. Develop Transition Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a comprehensive transition plan that captures the various workstream actions setting out the specific steps required to exit the current outsourced arrangements so that services are transferred smoothly and effectively.• The Transition plan should include details of the phasing of each service to be transferred with appropriate timescales, key milestones, reporting periods and risks registers.• Identify any processes that need developing to facilitate the transition, such as the development of any Management of Change protocols, processes and procedures.• Identify any capacity issues detailing out any recruitment / change management processes that need to be actioned before any service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outlined in this report with further detailed plans to be developed by the Interim Programme Director by May 2024



	<p>(TUPE) transfers take place aligned to the new TOM/organisation structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure statutory consultation periods are captured and built into the plan making sure sufficient time is allocated to make for meaningful consultation with both recognised trade unions and effected staff. • Build in requirements for staff / management briefings. 	
5. Develop Reporting and Performance Tracker Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relevant Programme Management reporting templates to ensure progress can be tracked, risks and mitigating actions are captured and monitored effectively throughout the transition period. Communications are logged and recorded including relevant Q&As developed and published for staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be developed by the Interim Programme Director
6. Commence Implementation of the transition plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once approval of the implementation plan is gained start initiating the transition process ensuring regular assessments are undertaken of any impact on service delivery to minimise disruption and maintain operational effectiveness, • Beginning the transition by facilitating the transfer of the most straight forward services to move across demonstrates commitment and sets the foundation for the successful implementation of future service transitions. • Ensure any training requirements are identified and address as soon as possible making sure that all the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver the services are in place and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to approval by the constituent Council Members.



	<p>any identified gaps are closed as soon as practical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress any recruitment required to support the delivery of the incoming services or top fill gaps as a result of non TUPE transfers.	
7. Review and amend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post transfer, actively assess the performance of the returned service/s to ensure they are delivering as expected. It may be necessary to adjust or amend allocation of resources, revisiting processes etc. in order to maintain effective standards of performance as well as look for opportunities for continuous service improvement.• Track performance by setting clear KPIs; seeking feedback from staff and service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be implemented post-transfer



Spalding
Lincolnshire
United Kingdom
PE11 2XE

Email: info@sholland.gov.uk
Follow us:

Contact details


Vivien Holland, Director, Local Partnerships
Email: vivien.holland@localpartnerships.gov.uk
Tel: 07795 328146

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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 – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>FOOD ACTION PLAN FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE (PART OF THE OXFORDSHIRE FOOD STRATEGY)</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Joy Aitman – Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities. Email: joy.aitman@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>Heather McCulloch – Community Wellbeing Manager. Email: heather.mcculloch@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To present the action plan produced by the Food Action Working Group (West Oxfordshire), noting especially the actions attributed to the Council. This is one of five district-specific action plans being produced as part of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Food Action Plan (West Oxfordshire) Annex B – Oxfordshire Food Strategy</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the Food Action Plan (West Oxfordshire) attached at Annex A; 2. Approve the actions attributed to the Council as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.
<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

Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Previous Executive report dated 13th July 2022</p> <p>Multi stakeholder Food Action working group led by Good Food Oxfordshire has been meeting since January 2023</p> <p>Stakeholder meeting to review actions held on 23rd September 2023</p>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The Oxfordshire Food Strategy, led by Good Food Oxfordshire (GFO), was launched in 2022. This report presents the Food Action Plan for West Oxfordshire, one of 5 delivery plans covering the whole of the county. The plan includes a range of actions, some of which are for the Council to lead on. Funding from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is available to enable the delivery of the actions in the plan. Endorsement of the Council's actions enables officers to start the work set out in the plan, alongside other stakeholders.
- 1.2** West Oxfordshire has an established and well connected Community Food Network made up of 14 Larders, Fridges and Foodbanks serving the West Oxfordshire population.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The government published a National Food Strategy in July 2021 that made recommendations to government to address climate change, biodiversity loss, land use, dietary related illness, health inequalities, food security and trade. For local government, it recommends that local authorities work with communities and partners to develop local food strategies to reduce health inequalities. The Oxfordshire Food Strategy was launched in 2022.
- 2.2** A report setting out the Oxfordshire Food Strategy came forward to Executive on 13th July 2022. The vision captured in the strategy seeks to ensure 'Everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day' through the following ambitions:
- Food justice: healthy and sustainable food is affordable and accessible to everyone
 - Sustainable food economy: Local food businesses flourish, with more productions, more outlets, more employment and better standards for workers
 - Good food movement: more people can enjoy and engage with healthy, sustainable food and 'good food for everyone' is part of our culture
 - Food for the planet: We waste less food and the food that we do produce, consume and waste has a less negative impact on the planet
 - Sustainable supply chains: More locally produced, sustainable food is bought and consumed locally, and supply chains are more resilient.
 - Governance and strategy: Continue, evaluate and strengthen existing initiatives.
 - Build foundations for new initiatives. Establish enablers to manage and monitor progress.
- 2.3** Food Action Working Groups (FAWGs) were set up in Cherwell, South Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire, to create delivery plans for each area. These were multi stakeholder groups, promoting collaboration across the food system and resulting in shared actions.
- 2.4** The first meeting of the FAWG for West Oxfordshire took place on the 21st March 2023. Meetings were held monthly and convened by GFO. FAWG members represent a wide range of stakeholders including Witney & West Oxfordshire Food Bank, Oxford Food Hub, Cornerstone, North East Cotswolds Farming Cluster, Abingdon and Witney College, Chippy Larder, West Oxfordshire District Council and Good Food Oxfordshire.

- 2.5 Alongside monthly FAWG meetings, members consulted with a wider group of 29 community stakeholders at the West Oxfordshire Food Summit event held in September 2023.

3. FOOD ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Food Action Plan for West Oxfordshire is included as Annex A. It includes a number of actions under each of the 5 priorities:
- *Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health*
 - *Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together*
 - *Grow the local good food economy through enterprise, local jobs, local wealth generation*
 - *Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains*
 - *Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering*
- 3.2 The actions for the Council have been reviewed by officers from Climate, Community Wellbeing, Planning Policy, Economic Development and Tourism to ensure that they can make an effective contribution.
- 3.3 The aim of developing local Food Action Plans for each district is to ensure that the Oxfordshire Food Strategy reflects local priorities and the unique nature of each area.
- 3.4 The Food Action Plan for West Oxfordshire includes local actions deliverable by local providers, however there are additional actions which sit at county-level and are included in a separate Oxfordshire county-level plan.
- 3.5 Actions where it is proposed that the Council takes a lead role are as follows:

<i>Priority: Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health</i>	
Work with community partners to scope a cooking project based on community needs. Build case studies drawing on the successes/ learnings to replicate and expand.	Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing) Support: West Community Food Network
Work collaboratively with CFNs and frontline health teams to increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers across the district.	Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing) and OCC Public Health Support: West Community Food Network, GFO
Test 'Good Food Schools' and in partnership with Public Health School Food Officer identify and engage schools working with target communities that have capacity and interest in undertaking food growing activities on site (or in partnership with nearby sites), assess support needs and barriers to establishing growing sites.	Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing) with OCC Public Health
<i>Priority: Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together</i>	
Map all potential growing spaces, including available allotment spaces, and unused space which could be utilised for growing. Engage town and parish councils in this through Neighbourhood Plans and Local Design Statements, including	Lead: WODC (Planning Policy, Climate, Community Wellbeing) Support: GFO

identification of Local Green Spaces. Work in collaboration with other groups and emerging mapping projects.	
<i>Priority: Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains</i>	
Influence the Local Plan and other Masterplans to support workforce for sustainable agriculture, focusing on access to affordable accommodation and infrastructure barriers.	Lead: WODC (Planning Policy) Support: GFO, NE Cotswold Farming Cluster, A&W College
<i>Priority: Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering</i>	
Lead the way as a test and learn 'Good Food School' exemplar embedding sustainable growing, cooking, eating and food education as part of the whole school experience and disseminate learning to support a group of partner schools	Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing), Burford School, A&W College Support: GFO

- 3.6 There are other actions in the plan where the Council will not lead but provide support. Details of these elements are included in Annex A.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Council could decide to approve less or none of the actions for the Council. This would reduce the workload for staff but would limit the impact of the plan. This option may leave the Council open to criticism given its previous support for the plan. Officers could go back and negotiate the details of the priorities with GFO and agree alternative options and return to Executive at a later date with details. A delay may have an impact on the availability of funds as OCC require monies to be allocated by 30th September 2024.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 OCC is providing funding of £23,500 towards interventions which will help to deliver the outcomes of the strategy. OCC will pay the funding over to the Council who will hold it on behalf of the FAWG members and project leads. A process for distributing the funds will be set out by OCC in a legal agreement with the Council.
- 5.2 The funds are not expected to be able to meet all costs of the interventions proposed. There is no expectation that the Council will provide additional funding.
- 5.3 The funding provided by OCC does not make provision for additional staff costs incurred in the delivery of these actions. Officers have therefore worked to ensure that the actions for the Council are deliverable within existing resources.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A legal agreement between OCC and the Council has been prepared and agreed by the Council.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** If the Council goes ahead and leads the elements of the plan as set out in section 2.3 the key risk is staff resource to be able to lead on interventions. Although officers have assessed the plan and deem it to be deliverable, these officers could move roles and the Council may lose capacity and expertise.
- 7.2** If the Council decides not to lead the interventions as set out in 3.5, and agrees to renegotiate the details, there is a risk that funding may be unavailable in the event of a delay.
- 7.3** There is a risk that the actions in the plan will not make an impact on the outcomes as set out in the strategy. To mitigate this the actions and interventions will be monitored against the strategy evaluation framework and reviewed on a regular basis with delivery group partners.
- 7.4** If the interventions are delayed there is a risk that the funding offer will expire. The delivery partners will review progress to monitor expenditure.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** Activities and interventions proposed in the plan are designed to be inclusive and remove the barriers faced by residents in accessing affordable healthy food.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** Activities and interventions in the full Food Action Plan will make a positive contribution to tackling climate change. Actions will result in young people knowing more about how to grow and cook food including where food comes from; more equitable access to healthy food options for those facing barriers; and, greater access and availability of food from local producers. The delivery partners will refine the Action Plan and reflect on how each action can contribute to climate and biodiversity.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1** None

(END)

West Oxfordshire Food Action Plan





Contents



1.	The Oxfordshire Food Strategy	2
2.	Developing Local Food Action Plans	3
3.	Tracking Progress	4
4.	Food Strategy Theory of Change and Metrics	5
5.	The West Oxfordshire District Action Plans	6
6.	Conclusion	14
7.	Glossary of Terms	15



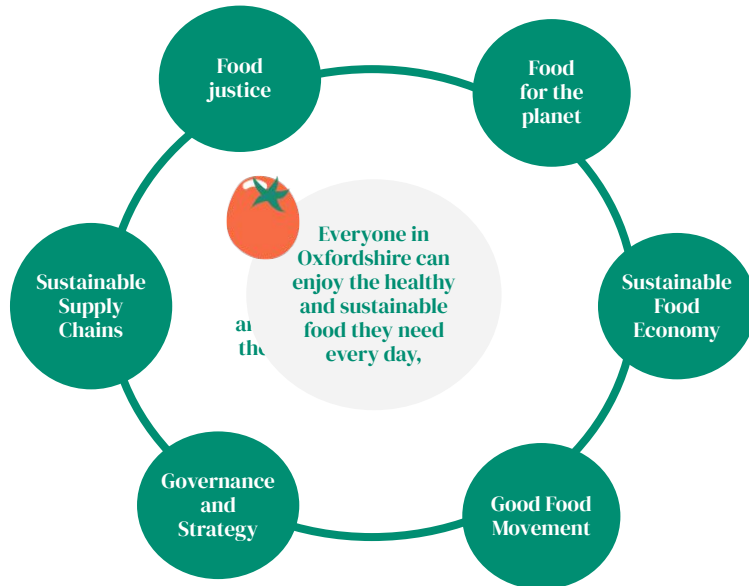
1. The Oxfordshire Food Strategy



The Oxfordshire Food Strategy sets out a vision where everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.

Ambitions to achieve this vision

Five priority areas for action



Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health

Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

Grow the local good food economy through enterprise, local jobs, local wealth generation

Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

2. Developing local Food Action Plans

A critical part of implementing this strategy has been the development of local Food Action Plans for each district, to ensure that the Food Strategy reflects local priorities and reflects the unique nature of the City and each of the Districts. These have been led by the Food Action Working Groups (FAWGs) which include representatives from across the food system.

This document presents the Food Action Plan for West Oxfordshire, however there are additional actions which sit at county-level and are therefore included in the Oxfordshire county-level plan.

This food action plan is a multi stakeholder plan, with a range of organisations taking responsibility for action. Through this 'collective action' approach we can achieve more, working collaboratively towards a vision for a better food system for West Oxfordshire.



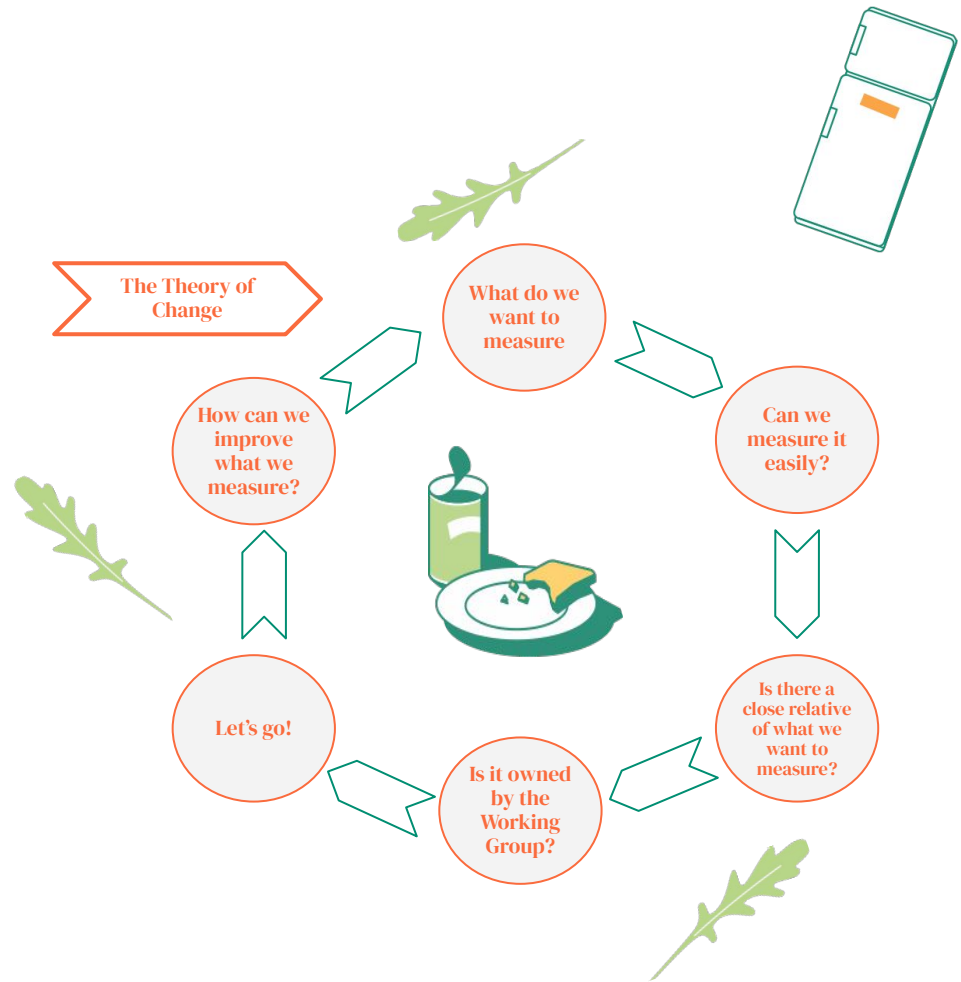
Food Action Working Groups include representatives from across the local food system

3. Tracking progress

The plan identifies initial actions spanning 2024 – 2027. The plans have been developed following a Theory of Change to ensure that the actions will deliver the intended outcomes and impacts.

Throughout this period, we will review progress against targets and metrics and refine the actions recognising that the issues we face are complex and happen within a context in which action owners do not always control external factors.

We will take an iterative learning approach both to actions and metrics and whilst maintaining the integrity of our ambitions, be pragmatic about the most effective way to achieve these.



The plans have been underpinned by the Food Strategy Theory of Change and Metrics

Everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food that they need everyday



Impacts	Outcomes	Outputs	Oxfordshire-wide activities to achieve these	SDGs
People are healthier and health and wellbeing disparities between areas reduce as a result of better diets	Fewer people experience food poverty and diet-related ill-health and levels of food poverty/diet related ill-health are less severe	Incidence and severity of food insecurity as measured by the PPFI* reduces. The disparity between areas reduces Incidence (new cases) and prevalence (total number) of diet-related ill-health conditions reduces. The disparity between areas reduces	Cash and in-kind support targeted at people experiencing food insecurity e.g., community larders, foodbanks, sharing schemes Healthy eating support available in priority areas e.g., cooking and growing programmes Planning and business support for affordable healthy options in local shops in priority areas Promote existing schemes to improve uptake e.g., Healthy Start, HAF	No Poverty Good Health and Wellbeing Reduced inequality
Community connection and cohesion are supported through a vibrant food culture	Oxfordshire is home to vibrant food communities where the growing, preparation, celebration and enjoyment of good food is central to community life	Communities access cooking and growing opportunities tailored to local needs and preferences More community volunteering linked to food Communities celebrate and enjoy food together through events, festivals and campaigns	Support for communities and individuals to find, set up and run cooking activities and growing spaces. Sharing of volunteering opportunities across a wide range of networks Sharing of food-related events and campaigns and support for communities to engage with these	Good Health and Wellbeing Sustainable Cities and Communities
Better jobs, livelihoods and places supported by the Good Food Economy	Local good food economy contributes more value to Oxfordshire - measured by economic, health, social, and environmental metrics	More people are employed in locally owned food businesses More food businesses pay wages that are reflective of local living costs	Anchor institutions use their procurement power to support local food enterprises Planning and economy teams support local food enterprises including social enterprises	Decent work and economic growth No poverty Reduced inequality
The food that we produce and consume has less negative impact on the planet, and supports local livelihoods	Sustainable farming practices, a circular economy and local food resilience are supported via short, transparent local food supply chains	More sustainably produced food is produced, bought and consumed locally	Support for and investment in infrastructure for local sustainable producers and short local supply chains Anchor institutions commit to procurement via short local supply chains	Decent work and economic growth Responsible production and consumption Life on Land; Climate Action
Institutions lead the way using their buying power to support healthy and sustainable production and consumption that is accessible to more people and becomes the 'norm'	More people can access healthy and sustainable food through institutional catering benefitting health, the planet and the local economy	More institutions serve healthy and sustainable food and measure their progress e.g., via accreditation schemes More institutions support the local food economy	Institutions set and achieve sustainability targets around food	Good Health and Wellbeing Responsible production and consumption

4. The West Oxfordshire Food Action Plan



In West Oxfordshire the FAWG have met on 8 occasions to debate priorities, and develop, refine and test the local action plan. 12 FAWG members represent a wider range of stakeholders including Witney and West Oxfordshire Food Bank, Oxford Food Hub, Cornerstone, North East Cotswolds Farming Cluster, Abingdon and Witney College, Chippy Larder, West Oxfordshire District Council and Good Food Oxfordshire.

Alongside monthly FAWG meetings, members consulted with a wider group of 29 community stakeholders at the West Oxfordshire Food Summit event.

For the purposes of this plan we have only included primary lead and support organisations involved in the development of these plans, however the named lead and support organisations for each action may be working with a range of delivery partners.

The delivery partners will further refine the Action Plan and reflect on how each action benefits climate and biodiversity.



Priority Area: Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health

- Fewer people experience food poverty and diet-related ill-health
- Levels of food poverty and diet-related ill-health are less severe



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
Work with community partners to scope a cooking project based on community needs	Identification of best practices, curriculum and resources that can be replicated and expanded to other communities.	CFNs can more easily replicate and roll out cooking interventions based on best practice organisations.	Year 1: baseline number of people using cooking interventions and set year 2 and 3 targets.	Lead: WODC Support: Community Food network
Build case studies drawing on the successes/ learnings to replicate and expand.				
Work collaboratively with CFNs and frontline health teams to increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers across the district.	Quarterly Healthy start uptake figures.	Eligible children have better access to fruit, vegetables, dairy and vitamins	Year 1: Awaiting target figures - increase uptake and better understand demand and uptake hot spots in West Oxfordshire Year 2/3: Build on Year 1 and set uptake targets	Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing) and OCC Public Health Support: Community Food Network; GFO
Test 'Good Food Schools' and in partnership with Public Health School Food Officer identify and engage schools working with target communities that have capacity and interest in undertaking food growing activities on site (or in partnership with nearby sites), assess support needs and barriers to establishing growing sites.	List of potential 'Good Food Schools' 'growing' schools, plan and recommendation to implement food growing programme.	Schools engaged and committed to a 'whole school approach' to healthy and sustainable food growing; recognition of the value of this approach growing for children.	Year 1: baseline number of schools and set year 2 and 3 targets.	Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing) with OCC Public Health

Priority Area: Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

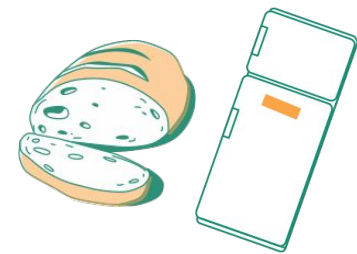
- Stronger communities through sharing and participation in food-related activities
- More people can access knowledge and skills to support growing, cooking and better nutrition
- People have better options to eat healthy and sustainable food



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
<i>Mapping growing spaces</i>				
Map all potential growing spaces, including available allotment spaces, and unused space which could be utilised for growing. Engage town and parish councils in this through identification of local green space in Neighbourhood Plans and Local Design Statements, including identification of Local Green Spaces. Work in collaboration with other groups and emerging mapping projects.	<p>Baseline understanding of existing and potential growing spaces.</p> <p>Stakeholder map of all organisations involved in mapping activities e.g., NE Cotswold Farming Cluster, Land App, Digital Commons.</p>	<p>More people can access growing and gleaning opportunities in their local area.</p> <p>More people understand and appreciate locally grown food and the value of sustainable food production.</p>	Year 1: size, use-type and location of available growing spaces in the district mapped.	<p>Lead: WODC (Planning Policy, Climate and Community Wellbeing)</p> <p>Support: GFO</p>
<i>Promoting cooking, growing, food sharing and food celebration opportunities</i>				
Expand the GFO food support map to include cooking activities, community kitchens and spaces, growing spaces, veg box schemes, neighbourhood surplus schemes.	<p>Online map of food-related activities and facilities in West Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Signposting materials, platforms and events share and promote the map</p>	<p>More people can access cooking, growing, and food sharing and celebration activities</p>	<p>Year 1: 30 West Oxfordshire activities and facilities mapped, and shared.</p> <p>5 gleaning or surplus sharing events held and promoted</p>	<p>Lead: GFO</p> <p>Support: WODC</p>
Promote and share map, directories, campaigns and events e.g., village fairs, 'gleaning opportunities, sharing shelves, Pumpkin Festival with partner organisations and other platforms to reach a wider audience.	<p>Campaign to promote surplus sharing and gleaning opportunities. Campaign on wider costs of food linked to environment and health outcomes.</p>	<p>More people informed on where to forage and glean fresh produce</p>	<p>Set year 2 and 3 targets.</p> <p>Year 1: Number of people engaged/numbers of sign ups to run events. Set year 2 and 3 targets (increase from baseline)</p>	
Create good practice case studies on gleaning, cooking with surplus, and community connections. Start with Cornerstone and Chippy Larder as examples of excellence.	<p>Good practice case studies (Chippy Larder for gleaning and relationships with private landowners; Cornerstone for community connections)</p>	<p>More people accessing surplus food.</p> <p>Reduction in food waste</p>	<p>Year 1: establish baseline and set targets for years 2 and 3</p> <p>Year 2: achieve targets and review year 3 targets</p> <p>Year 3: achieve targets</p>	<p>Lead: GFO</p> <p>Support: Cornerstone, Chippy Larder</p>

Priority Area: Grow the local good food economy through enterprise, local jobs, local wealth generation

- More locally owned food enterprises flourish
- People working in food-related organisations have decent livelihoods



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
Support and promotion for healthy and sustainable food, farming and hospitality enterprises				
Expand and promote the GFO directory and map of where to buy local, seasonal and sustainable food.	GFO Directory expanded and map shared more widely.	Increased demand for local produce via brand connection to provenance	Year 1,2,3: 5 West Oxfordshire Good Food and Farming businesses added to map each year	Lead: GFO
Networking and peer learning for food and farming businesses				
Connect West Oxon producers with countywide peer to peer networking events for small scale sustainable food, farming and hospitality businesses	Peer network of farmers and growers strengthened.	Increased connection, knowledge sharing and peer support within farming / growing communities in district.	Year 1: 5 West Oxfordshire food and farming businesses attend 2 GFO linked events	Lead: GFO Support: NE Cotswold Farmer Cluster, Abingdon and Witney College
Strengthen connections between existing local networks, emerging new networks and wider national networks (NE Cotswold Cluster, GFO, A&W College, Cotswold and National Landscape), and wider networks (e.g., Oxford Cambridge ARC) to capitalise on synergies and address gaps.			Year 2: additional 5 join. Year 3: additional 10 join.	

Priority Area: Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

- More sustainable food is produced and processed locally for local consumption
- Net zero goals are supported through local sustainable food production
- Consumers are more engaged and connected to the provenance of their food,



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
<i>Pilot short local food supply chains</i>				
<p>Pilot project to create a short local supply chain for direct sales of local produce (initially venison) to local buyers including institutions products from end to end supply chain.</p> <p>Reference link to wider supply chain work</p> <p>Feasibility study into development of a local abattoir or alternative option for local processing.</p> <p>Support communities to set-up orchards - link into countywide short local food supply chain, local delivery schemes and local processing</p>	<p>Short local supply chain infrastructure and organisation in place to facilitate direct relationship between producers and buyers for venison.</p> <p>Contractual commitments to local procurement from anchor institutions.</p>	<p>Shift to more sustainable meat sources - venison replaces other meats without overall increase in meat consumption.</p> <p>Dietary shifts to more local and seasonal diets facilitated by closer connections to food provenance.</p>	<p>Year 1: baseline amount of venison supplied locally via local supply chain connections (or more specific targets?).</p> <p>Baseline consumer survey on attitudes and habits around local and seasonal eating (resource capacity for this?).</p> <p>Year 2: increase 30% on baseline.</p> <p>Year 3: increase 50% on baseline.</p>	<p>Lead: NE Cotswold Farmer Cluster</p> <p>Support: GFO</p>
<i>Sustainable agriculture as an attractive, viable career</i>				
<p>Influence The Local Plan and other Master Plans to support workforce for sustainable agriculture, focusing on access to affordable accommodation and infrastructure barriers.</p> <p>Prepare a feasibility study for an apprenticeship or Farmstart scheme in sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Promote pathways into careers in sustainable agriculture showcasing these as viable and attractive careers, e.g. events, careers fairs, online resources.</p>	<p>Local Plan and Masterplan supports more affordable accommodation and rural infrastructure to support workforce in sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>Feasibility study and plan</p> <p>Links established between training providers schools and colleges and other career advisory services established.</p> <p>Careers events and resources incorporate careers in sustainable agriculture.</p>	<p>More people are attracted into, and remain in careers in sustainable agriculture across West Oxfordshire resulting in more sustainably produced local food.</p>	<p>Years 1/2: Support for sustainable agriculture workforce embedded in Local Plan.</p> <p>Baseline workforce employed in sustainable agriculture and set targets.</p> <p>Year 3: Meet target for workforce in sustainable agriculture.</p>	<p>Lead: WODC (Planning Policy)</p> <p>Support: GFO, NE Cotswold Cluster, Abingdon & Witney College</p>

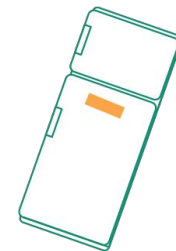
Priority Area: Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

- More people have access to healthy and sustainable food via local institutions
- The local food economy is supported by institutional procurement
- Institutions climate and sustainability targets a



Activity	Output	Outcome	Metric	Organisation/Group
<i>Children have more access to healthy and sustainable food in schools</i>				
<p>Lead the way as a test and learn 'Good Food School' exemplar embedding sustainable growing, cooking, eating and food education as part of the whole school experience and disseminate learning to support a group of partner schools</p> <p>Use learnings from pilot project to support more schools to engage</p>	<p>Showcase 'Good Food School'</p> <p>Materials to support other schools</p>	<p>Best practice identified and more schools can improve their food offer, engagement and education</p>	<p>Year 1: growing space at Burford school up and running and produce is used in school cooking and eating activities; healthy and sustainable food embedded in the curriculum; Site visits to Burford from 5 local schools to start engagement</p> <p>Year 2: Support materials shared with other 2 other schools who start their 'Good Food School' journey</p> <p>Year 3: 2 further schools start journey</p>	<p>Lead: WODC (Community Wellbeing) with Burford School, Abingdon and Witney College and Chippy Larder</p>
<p>Support institutional settings (schools, nurseries, leisure centres, parks) to participate in campaigns such as Eat Them to Defeat Them, Sugar Smart, and potential accreditation schemes such as Food for Life or equivalent.</p>	<p>Year on year increase in the number of children involved in good food campaigns</p>	<p>More children eat and enjoy healthy and sustainable food.</p>	<p>Year 1 - 2 schools</p> <p>Year 2 - 4 schools</p> <p>Year 3 - 6 schools</p>	<p>Lead: GFO</p>

5. Conclusion



Good Food Oxfordshire would like to recognise the huge commitment of each FAWG member; their experience and contributions were essential to the development of this plan. The actions contained in this plan set out a roadmap for how we will continue working together on food systems change across West Oxfordshire, and the metrics determine how we will review and monitor progress.

The process of working collaboratively and iteratively, and across sectors, has been instrumental in bringing a wealth of voices and experiences together. The Food Action Working Group engaged with a wider stakeholder group to share draft plans and test our thinking with those engaged in the food system, to ensure a wider variety of voices are reflected.

We hope this plan will catalyse the incredible work of all the many organisations who are working to change the food system across Oxfordshire. We look forward to continue to work with all the lead organisations including West Oxfordshire District Council to deliver these actions and help achieve the vision set out in the Oxfordshire Food Strategy; for everyone in Oxfordshire to enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need everyday.



Glossary of terms

Term	Definition	Source
Accredited Living Wage Schemes	Promote liveable earnings for all workers recognising cost of living. Schemes and rates for 2023 include: The Oxford Living Wage (£11.35/ hour); Living Wage foundation (£10.90 outside of London); National Living Wage (£10.43)	
Community Food Services	Refers to all services providing free or subsidised food support to communities in Oxfordshire. These include Community Larders, Fridges, Foodbanks, Cafes and meal delivery services	https://goodfoodoxford.org/food-support/community-food-services-map/
Community Wealth Building	Community wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people	https://cles.org.uk/community-wealth-building/what-is-community-wealth-building/#:~:text=Community%20wealth%20building%20is%20a%20new%20people-centred%20approach,and%20benefits%20into%20the%20hands%20of%20local%20people.
Emergency Food Services	Emergency food services include food banks that provide food support to those experiencing acute or chronic food insecurity. Reference to emergency food services does not include community larders or fridges which provide more affordable food options and help to reduce food waste	GFO
Food security/ insecurity	When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. Food insecurity exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above	World Food Summit in 1996, FAO, Trade reforms and food security, Conceptualizing the Linkages, 2003, Chapter 2. Food security: concepts and measurement. https://www.fao.org/3/y4671e/y4671e06.htm
Food Supply Chain	The food supply chain consists of the activities and actors that take food from production to consumption and to the disposal of its waste. The steps of the food supply chain include: production; storage and distribution; processing and packaging; retail and markets. At each step, food supply chains involve many large- to small-scale actors, both public and private, that are influenced by biophysical and environmental; innovation, technology and infrastructure; political and economic; socio-cultural; and demographic drivers drivers. The decisions made by one group of actors at one stage of the chain have implications for the others.	HLPE, 2017. Nutrition and food systems. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome

Food system	All elements and activities that relate to production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food.	EAT-Lancet Commission Summary Report.pdf (eatforum.org)
Healthy Eating/ Diets	A healthy diet is the right amount and variety of different foods that provide all the calories (energy) and nutrients to meet the particular needs of your body. This will allow it to grow and develop normally during childhood, and to maintain normal function in adulthood, so as to reach old age with minimal disease and disability. [IARC] Consuming a healthy diet throughout the life-course helps to prevent malnutrition in all its forms as well as a range of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and conditions. The exact make-up of a diversified, balanced and healthy diet will vary depending on individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, lifestyle and degree of physical activity), cultural context, locally available foods and dietary customs. However, the basic principles of what constitutes a healthy diet remain the same. [WHO] : eat plenty of whole grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits; limit high-calorie foods (foods high in sugar or fat)and avoid sugary drinks; avoid processed meat, and limit red meat and foods high in salt. [IARC]	[WHO]
Healthy Start (HS)	Healthy Start provides support to to buy healthy food like fruit and vegetables and unsweetened dairy products to people who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 . Free vitamins are also provided. Eligibility is linked to certain benefits. If under 18 and pregnant you are eligible regardless of benefit status.	Get help to buy food and milk (Healthy Start)
Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)	The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) is a Department for Education funded programme that provides free holiday clubs for Reception to year 11 pupils in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. The camps will take place across Oxfordshire over the long summer, winter and spring holidays.	https://coordinate.oxfordshire.gov.uk/haf-oxfordshire-county-council/
Local food	An equitable and meaningful definition of local food should consider both where food is produced and how it is produced. It should prioritise business practices that share power and wealth more equally, and ensure that local communities growing and producing food experience a fairer and more sustainable food system. Supporting local food doesn't necessarily mean buying what is produced closest to you, but sourcing in a way which builds wealth, power and resources within communities. Food zones can be a helpful way to think about how urban areas can plan where their food comes from.	https://www.sustainweb.org/climatechange/making-the-case-for-local-food/
Food zones	Food zones aim to show what we could be eating, how it should be produced and where it might come from, if we are to meet the challenges of climate change and resource depletion and make our food and farming system fit for the future. The percentage figures are there to stimulate and inspire – they're not specific targets in the sense that we have proved it is possible to meet them. They are, however, based roughly on what has been achieved in best practice examples.	https://growingcommunities.org/food-zones
Priority Places for Food Index	The Priority Places for Food Index is a composite index formed of data compiled across seven different dimensions relating to food insecurity for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Its goal is to identify neighbourhoods that are most vulnerable to increases in the cost of living and which have a lack of accessibility to cheap, healthy, and sustainable sources of food.	https://priorityplacesforfood.whichcouncil.org/

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise	The UK government definition of SMEs encompasses micro (less than 10 employees and an annual turnover under €2 million), small (less than 50 employees and an annual turnover under €10 million) and medium-sized (less than 250 employees and an annual turnover under €50 million) businesses.	
Regenerative agriculture	Regenerative agriculture is an approach to food and farming systems that aims to reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and soil biodiversity ¹² . It also focuses on enhancing ecosystem services, improving the water cycle, and increasing resilience to climate change ¹³ . Regenerative agriculture is not a specific practice, but a combination of various sustainable techniques that respect farmer wisdom, indigenous knowledge, modern research, and adaptive learning ¹⁴ . Regenerative agriculture is based on outcomes and takes advantage of the natural tendencies of ecosystems to regenerate when disturbed ⁴⁵ .	https://regenerationinternational.org/2017/02/24/what-is-regenerative-agriculture/ https://regenerativeagriculturefoundation.org/about/what-is-regenerative-agriculture/ https://www.overstovralliance.org/library/regenerative-agriculture/ https://www.csuchico.edu/regenerative-agriculture/ra101-section/ra101-definition.shtml
Sustainable agriculture	Sustainable agriculture must nurture healthy ecosystems and support the sustainable management of land, water and natural resources, while ensuring food security. To be sustainable, agriculture must meet the needs of present and future generations for its products and services, while ensuring profitability, environmental health and social and economic equity. [FAO]	FAO
Sustainable Eating Diets	Sustainable diets are those with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources. [FAO]	[FAO]
Sustainable Food	Sustainable food: refers to the food produced and consumed through sustainable processes minimizing the impact on the use of resources and on the environment.	FEAST

Sustainable Healthy Diets	"Sustainable healthy diets: Sustainable Healthy Diets are dietary patterns that promote all dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable (FAO WHO, 2019)."	FEAST
Ultra Processed Food	Ultra-processed foods usually contain ingredients that you wouldn't add when cooking homemade food. They most likely have many added ingredients such as sugar, salt, fat, and artificial colors or preservatives. You may not recognise the names of these ingredients as many will be chemicals, colourings, sweeteners and preservatives. Ultra-processed foods are made mostly from substances extracted from foods, such as fats, starches, added sugars, and hydrogenated fats. Examples of these foods are frozen meals, soft drinks, hot dogs and cold cuts, fast food, packaged cookies, cakes, and salty snacks.	What is ultra-processed food? – BBC Food
Vulnerable Groups	Dependent on the context these groups may include children, pregnant or lactating women, indigenous communities, elderly population, people with lower socio-economic status based on education levels and/or income, and people living in remote areas. Conceptually, vulnerable groups can be characterized as those with high risk and low resilience. With regard to food, vulnerable groups can be divided in three groups: 1) People that don't have access to food (both, no access to food at all and no access to healthy food) 2) People that do have access to food, but not enough knowledge or skills to eat healthy and sustainable food 3) People that do have access to food and enough knowledge and skills but don't make healthy choices In this definition, vulnerability is more open and it is not only related to pay (except the first group). dimensions of individuals' health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe and equitable; and are culturally acceptable (FAO WHO, 2019).	Adapted from FEAST Wiki. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0301421515307445 Source: Interview with Dirk Masquillier, director of SAAMO Vlaams-Brabant





Oxfordshire Food Strategy

May 2022



Part 1



Contents



1. Introduction	2
2. Oxfordshire's food challenge	6
a. The local picture	8
b. Voices from Oxfordshire	10
3. Vision and strategic priorities	14
a. Ambitions to deliver a collective vision	15
b. Priority areas for action	16
4. Delivering the strategy	15
a. Integration within existing policy and programmes	16
b. Existing programmes and campaigns	18
c. Building new foundations	20
d. Examples of excellence	23
e. Calls to action	24



1.

Introduction

Building a healthy, fair and sustainable food system for Oxfordshire.

Food is both the source of, and solution to, many of the problems we face today.



To tackle the challenges of health and wellbeing, climate change and biodiversity loss, and fair incomes and employment, Oxfordshire must have a vibrant and sustainable food system. This is integral to our organisations, community, and culture.

Alongside environmental and health drivers, the stresses placed on local communities and businesses through global events - COVID, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, rising fuel, food, and other living costs - have highlighted the need to re-evaluate the entire food system and take action. This was recognised in the 2021 National Food Strategy, which also noted the need for local areas to develop their own food strategies.

alternative energy sources, food systems currently account for roughly 40% of total greenhouse gases and contribute to biodiversity loss (IPCC, 2022). Furthermore, food poverty in Oxfordshire is real, and whilst COVID exacerbated the problem, it is not a new phenomenon. Between 9-14% of all households in Oxfordshire experience food insecurity. This equates to 62,000-96,000 people (Moretti et al 2021).

The Oxfordshire local food strategy was developed by a multi-stakeholder partnership including county and district councils, community groups, local food producers, retail and hospitality businesses, and major institutions. It is a first step towards drawing together the many strands of work that are already happening across the county and seeing them as a coherent whole.

Removing barriers and ensuring that everyone in Oxfordshire can access affordable, healthy food in ways that promote dignity, recognise diversity, and celebrate our rich cultural heritage are fundamental to this strategy. Alongside building vibrant, thriving communities, supporting the local food economy can be part of the solution. It is fundamental to providing local jobs that serve local communities' needs. Oxfordshire's food economy accounts for 10% of jobs, and in 2020 generated turnover of £2.2 billion or 10% of the local economy. We also know that "pound-for-pound, money spent in the local food web supports three times the number of jobs as the equivalent spent in national grocery chains" (Willis, 2012).

Part 1 of this strategy, presented here, identifies priority areas of action, links to existing initiatives and policy, and showcases some examples of excellence that we can learn from and build on. Part 2 will embed the strategy in existing programmes and plans, develop Food Action Plans for each District, initiate pilot projects, and monitor and evaluate progress.

The challenges of food poverty, the climate emergency, food supply, and our diet-related health crisis cannot be addressed without redefining our food systems. The time for action is now.

COP26 highlighted that 1.5 is still alive but we must act swiftly. Whilst much emphasis is placed on fossil fuels and

Part 1: Developing Oxfordshire's food strategy

Understanding the strategic challenges of food in Oxfordshire, in consultation with the Good Food Oxfordshire (GFO) network. ☒

Defining the vision and strategic priorities. Identifying the influencing factors and priority areas for action. ☒

Building on what is currently being done. How the strategy supports, evaluates, and strengthens existing initiatives, and builds the foundations for new initiatives. ☒

Part 2: Implementing Oxfordshire's food strategy

Support and strengthen existing programmes and campaigns ☐

Embed actions to deliver strategic priorities in existing policies and plans ☐

Develop detailed Food Action Plans with each key stakeholder ☐

Initiate foundation projects to build our knowledge base and inform detailed implementation plans for new initiatives ☐



Good Food Oxfordshire is a network of over 150 local organisations committed to a better food system for Oxfordshire.

Throughout this document we refer to “good food”. To us, this means food that provides health and social benefits, contributes to thriving local economies and communities, enhances our natural resources, and tackles climate change.

In other words: food that is good for people, good for communities, and good for the planet.



2.

Oxfordshire's food challenge

Oxfordshire's food challenge was real, and now it's far worse.

Fair access to good quality, sustainably produced food is problematic across Oxfordshire, and has been made worse by pressures over the last few years.

Alongside environmental and health drivers, the stresses placed on local communities and businesses through global events - COVID, Brexit, war in Ukraine, rising fuel, food, and other living costs - have highlighted the need to

re-evaluate the entire food system and take action. This was recognised in the 2021 National Food Strategy, which also stressed the need for local areas to develop their own food strategies to increase food security and improve good food access.



The local picture

Localised, sustainable food systems can provide an opportunity to improve food security for vulnerable groups, meet Oxfordshire's climate and sustainability targets, and improve food supply resilience.

Food poverty

9-14% of Oxfordshire's residents experience food insecurity. This is **62,000–96,000 people** (Moretti et al 2021)

In 2022, the **rise in living costs** mean households face an average loss of **£1,200 to their annual incomes** forcing people into a 'heat or eat' dilemma (Harari et al. 2022)

Cost of living rises disproportionately impact lower income households. There are fewer good-quality 'value' ranges and **prices increase up to 350%** for basic items (Monroe, 2022)



Health crisis

1 in 4 children in Year 6 are obese. Children living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in least deprived areas.

Obesity rates in both Reception-age and Year 6 children **increased by around 4.5% between 2019-20 and 2020-21.** These are the highest annual rises since the measurement programme began in 2006/7 (NCMP, 2021)

55% of adults in Oxfordshire are classified as overweight or obese (JSNA, 2021)

People limited by health problems and disability are **5x more likely** to experience food insecurity (Food Foundation, 2021)



Climate emergency

Food systems contribute **40% of greenhouse gas emissions** (IPCC, 2022)

Biodiversity of priority species **has fallen more than 70%** in the UK since 1970 (NFS, 2021)

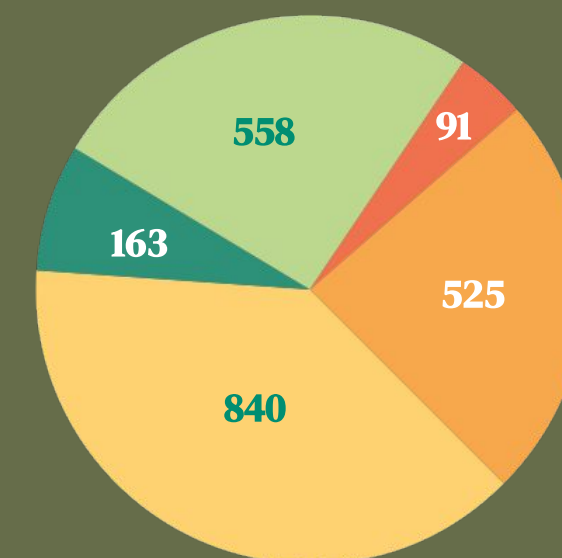
Research by GFO (2020) reported **the valuable contribution of small-scale and community food production** to sustainable land management, food security, and physical and mental health.



Food supply

Oxfordshire's food economy turnover (£millions) by subsector (ONS, 2022)

- Agriculture
- Manufacture
- Wholesale
- Food retail
- Services



In 2013, half of Oxford's food came from the UK, a third came from the EU, and 15% was imported from further afield. Less than **1% was sourced directly from the region** (Curtis, 2013).

74% of Oxfordshire's land area is agricultural, mostly cereals, followed by livestock grazing for meat and dairy

In 2020, Oxfordshire's local food economy contributed **£2.2 billion in turnover, supporting 19,500 jobs and 2,970 enterprises** (ONS, 2022)



Voices from Oxfordshire

We have listened to local people, groups, and enterprises.



Through our Oxfordshire Community Insights Programme and through workshops, questionnaires, and interviews with local residents, groups, and businesses we have heard what matters to people about food and their current experiences.



Snapshots and learnings



Childhood Malnutrition: From Grassroots to Policy Action
Roundtable Event November 2021

Key learnings:

"Taking a whole systems approach to address the double burden of both underweight and overweight childhood malnutrition involves recognition of the important overlap between the food system, education system and health system"

"breaking down artificial silos between sectors"

"need to trust their [grassroots organisations'] ability to understand the needs and priorities of the community"

(Nagraj et al 2022)

Interviews / survey of growers and producers

"Turnover [of workers] is very high....we need skills and mentoring programmes for apprentice growers... places to live affordably in rural areas."

"Food margins being driven down every year... we need to value doing good and sustainability."

"Every person in the food chain doubles the price."

"Local markets build strong relationships and loyal customers."



School food surveys and workshop
May 2021
March 2022

"We need to listen to children's voices - understanding why they sometimes avoid the food is powerful and can help with small changes."

Parents on school meals:"They try things they wouldn't at home then come back asking for it, it's fantastic."

"Too many chips according to my daughter."

"nobody needs meat every day, and for the price it can't be from sustainable and high welfare sources. It just destroys our planet and is irresponsible."

Caterers need to keep their businesses viable and struggle to balance children's preferences for unhealthy food with their ambitions to provide nutritious meals.

Schools have the ambition to improve school food, but they lack the time, capacity, and resources necessary to make a significant change.



Key Events

September 2021
Good Food Procurement Webinar
20 attendees OSEP and GFO

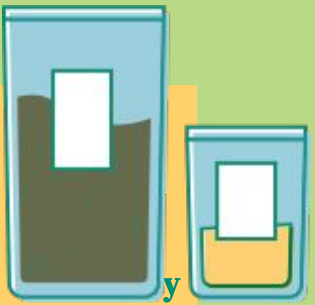
November 2021
Childhood Malnutrition Roundtable Event
33 attendees, representing community groups, schools, housing associations, councillors, council officers, academics, and researchers*

March 2022
Oxfordshire Schools Food Workshop
40+ attendees representing schools, councils, communities, and caterers

April 2021 - ongoing
Healthy Weight Insights Programme

To date... engaged 28 community partners in Banbury Ruscote/Grimsbury, Blackbird Leys, Abingdon, Witney, and Berinsfield
Conversations with children at target sites
Listened to wider stakeholders at three workshops (146 people, 50 +organisations)

September 2021 - January 2022
GFO Research
11 locations, 100+ members of public interviewed
50+ individual stakeholder meetings held
75+ stakeholders engaged at eight GFO events and network meetings



Voices from Oxfordshire



Chippy Larder

Visiting a local farm, engaging with growers, and learning new skills, having your own chick and farm fresh eggs at an affordable price, makes the 'aspirational' accessible.

Cherwell Collective

We need to return to a more symbiotic relationship between food systems and communities. By connecting people to their food, through growing and cooking, people learn the value of food and not just the price. This in turn helps to reduce food waste and improves health and wellbeing through a stronger sense of community and engagement with nature.

Orange Bakery

We love having a good relationship with our mill, our milk and our eggs... it makes all the difference

Community insights

Life is complex and chaotic: "Many families tell us they have bigger issues to deal with than their child being a bit overweight"

Many people lack the **skills, capacity, or resources** to cook and to change routines & habits: "We don't plan, we live day to day"

Professionals can lack resources or skills to have **difficult conversations** about weight, food, and wellbeing to **help people to achieve a healthy weight:** "It is easier to talk about death than to talk about their child being overweight"

GFO community research

Over 90% of respondents (members of the public) emphasised the importance of buying local food: to support the local economy, reduce food miles, and care for the environment.



Workshops on food and climate identified common themes and links across health, supply, waste, and poverty.



Much of the UK's fruit and vegetable supply comes from a small number of growing areas in Europe. Access to land for food production in Oxfordshire is difficult.



3.

Vision and strategic priorities

Page 79



Ambitions to help deliver a collective vision

A coherent food strategy for all those involved with food in Oxfordshire can help push back against these pressures and deliver a vision in which everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.



We have identified the following priority areas for action

Addressing these priorities will deliver the following outcomes.



Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health

Priorities

Expand and strengthen existing services and programmes aimed at those at risk of food poverty, including Community Food Networks (foodbanks, larders, and fridges), Healthy Start Vouchers, Holiday Activities and Food.

Adopt Healthy Place Shaping principles and a Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight.

Outcomes

Everyone in Oxfordshire can access healthy food every day without shame or stigma.

More eligible people accessing existing schemes that tackle health and nutrition inequality.

Uptake of available central government funding is maximised, making full use of available funds, and providing evidence of the local need.

Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

Priorities

Support communities to grow, cook, learn, and enjoy food together. Promote campaigns and events that enable everyone to access healthy food, reduce food waste, and encourage dietary choices that are good for health and for the planet.

Outcomes

Stronger communities through sharing and participation in food-related activities.

More people can access knowledge and skills to support growing, cooking, and better nutrition.

People make food choices that are better for their health and planetary health.

Grow the local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs, local wealth generation

Priorities

Focus on local enterprises that are driven by local needs, provide employment, and multiply the impacts of money earned and spent locally.

Use the power of anchor institutions (schools, hospitals, universities, businesses, etc) to procure locally and provide access to finance, infrastructure, and skills. This is called a Community Wealth Building approach.

Outcomes

More local food enterprises flourish.

Better livelihoods, skills, and opportunities for local food workers.



Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

Priorities

Detailed scoping project to define the needs, options, and future plans for local supply chain solutions for Oxfordshire.

Consider public and institutional procurement as a way to provide scale and certainty for local sustainable producers.

Identify appropriate infrastructure to support the supply chain including local food processing hubs and dynamic procurement systems.

Work with landholders, existing producers, and new agricultural practitioners to explore access to land, infrastructure, and skills to meet local food demands.

Outcomes

Clear and robust understanding of appropriate solutions for Oxfordshire.

More sustainable food is produced and processed locally for local consumption.

Net zero goals are supported through sustainable food production and reduced food miles.

Consumers are more engaged and connected to the provenance of their food, reinforcing healthier and more sustainable habits.



Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

Priorities

Embed healthy, sustainable local food principles and targets within institutional catering.

Link food to net zero targets and promote accreditation schemes such as Food for Life, Fairtrade, and Sustainable Restaurant Association.

Outcomes

More people have access to healthy and sustainable food via local institutions.

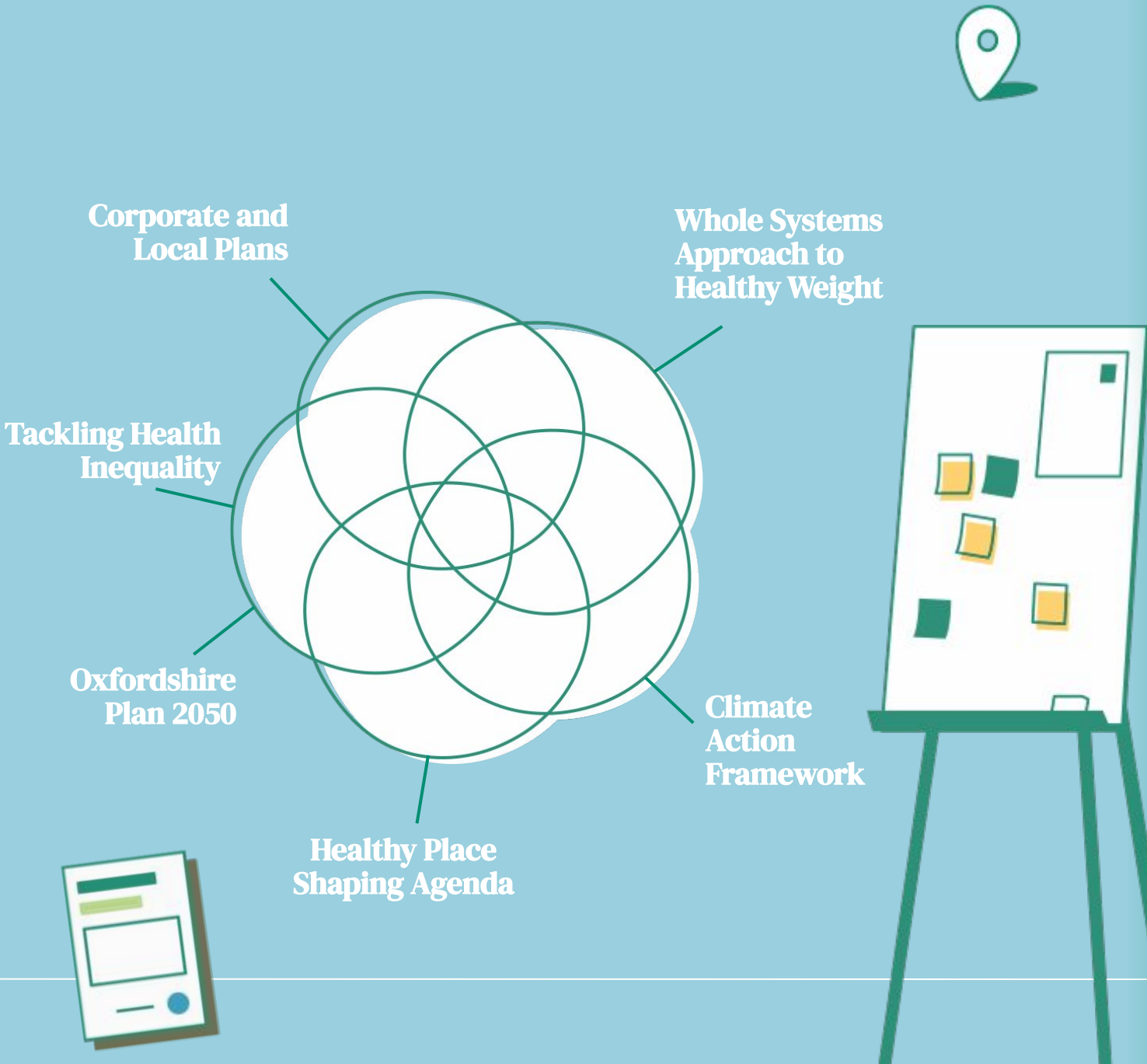
The local food economy is supported by institutional procurement.

Institutions' climate and sustainability targets are supported through better food practices.



4.

Delivering the outcomes



To achieve these ambitions, we need to ensure that food is integrated within existing policy and programmes.

Policy/ programme	Synergies with food strategy
Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Access to healthy food Awareness and promotion of a healthy diet A healthy start for families Planning healthy weight environments Tackling health inequalities
Healthy Place Shaping	20 minute neighbourhoods – easy access to healthy food Planning healthy weight environments Food systems central to healthy places – growing, buying, cooking, sharing
Tackling Health Inequality	Focus on areas of inequality where access to food and health outcomes such as higher rates of obesity in children, and life expectancy gaps, are usually worse than the Oxfordshire average (Director of Public Health Report 2019/20)
Climate Action Framework	Emissions and biodiversity: food choices, production, handling, and waste Improved local supply chains, reducing emissions from e.g., transportation, waste, and higher production standards
Oxfordshire Plan 2050	Climate action planning and infrastructure Healthy Place Shaping to guide housing growth and inclusion of growing spaces Land-use – local food production to support short, local supply chains
Corporate and Local Plans	Role of farming in climate, nature, and economy Sustainable food businesses as part of green economy Food as a facilitator of Inclusive communities through growing, cooking, and sharing together Community health and wellbeing improved through access to affordable, nutritious food Access to spaces and infrastructure



We must ensure that flourishing campaigns and initiatives across Oxfordshire are recognised, supported, and strengthened.



HEALTHY
START



Better
Health

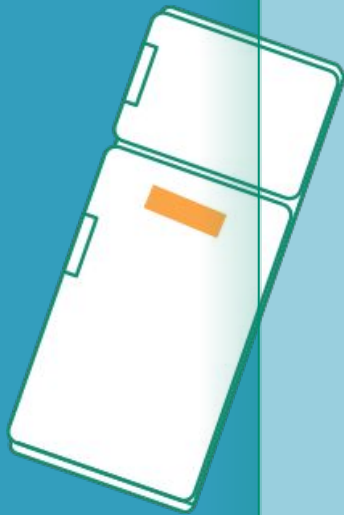
Let's
do this



NOURISH AND
FLOURISH



By showcasing examples of excellence, we aim to celebrate success and show what is possible...



...as well as building foundations and collaborations, and developing new initiatives.



Case study	Great example of...
Chippy Larder and Bruern Farm	Communities growing and sharing food together
Salt Cross Garden Village	Ambition to create better food environments in new developments, navigating complex planning challenges
Oxford City Council – Healthy Start	Partnership working to increasing the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers
Swan School	Improving the health and sustainability of school food
Play:Full	Community-led approaches to tackling holiday hunger
Cherwell Collective	Building solutions to food poverty and the climate crisis through community growing, cooking, sharing
OX4 Food Crew	Community Wealth Building, tackling food poverty, supporting resilience and community-led enterprise
Abingdon Community Fridge	Building community, tackling food poverty, reducing food waste
The Wonky Food Company	Sustainable food enterprise preventing food waste
The Orange Bakery, Watlington	Supporting local producers and providing employment for disadvantaged persons
Oxford City Farm	Community education and engagement in growing
Sandy Lane Farm	Organic and regenerative agriculture

Priority areas to develop



Work with schools, caterers, and children to better understand the challenges of school food. Collaboratively develop solutions that are impactful but achievable to improve the quality and sustainability of school food. This approach can also benefit the local food economy through institutional commitments to buying local, ethically, and sustainably produced food. The learnings from the schools pilot can be applied to other institutional settings, including – hospitals and social care.



Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains that improve resilience to external shocks and the local food economy. Work with local institutional buyers – including schools, universities, and hospitals – to commit to increasing local procurement. Work with local producers to increase local, sustainable production to meet demand. Identify the technology, infrastructure, processes, and relationships to facilitate this.



Support Community Wealth Building approaches to preventing food poverty, building resilient communities, and developing skills, jobs, and enterprises that retain wealth locally. Councils and major institutions commit to being anchor organisations, increasing local procurement, making local assets available to local enterprises, and championing local enterprise.



Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

Chippy Larder and Bruern Farm

Promoting dignity, affordable access to good food and community growing.

I set up The Chippy Larder to redress the imbalance in my community. We support families who are not only in food, fuel, and educational deprivation but also at high risk of poor physical and mental health. To be surrounded by businesses offering high quality, nutritionally dense, locally produced food, that was and still is financially inaccessible to many is not acceptable.

The first step was to set up a hub that didn't stigmatise those in need, the key was to be inclusive so the whole community could benefit. The Community Larder model was a perfect fit - Chippy Larder is open to everyone providing access to affordable food and reducing food waste. Partnering with Bruern Farm we have set up the Chicky Larder - getting members outdoors and involved with growing. Visiting a local farm, engaging with growers, and learning new skills, having your own chick and farm fresh eggs at an affordable price, makes the 'aspirational' accessible.

the chippy larder



Wonky Food Company

Reducing food waste - flourishing with support from OxLEP

The Wonky Food Company makes relishes from imperfect and surplus fruit and vegetables. Started in Oxfordshire in 2018, the business sells via the Midcounties Co-op and Ocado, as well as through a growing network of independent delis, farm shops and artisan food stores.

In 2022, it was accepted on to the Co-op's first national incubator scheme, focusing on small sustainable food and drink brands. The Wonky Food Company has benefited from local business support since its inception. It received start-up support via OxLEP and is now part of OxLEP's eScalate programme, a three-year European funded initiative supporting social enterprises, charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire. "It's been such a fantastic programme to be part of," says founder Ashley Cavers. "We have benefitted from some great peer group and networking opportunities. It has also enabled us to build our knowledge in important areas such as impact measurement and raising investment."



Community Wealth Building from food poverty to resilience and prevention

OX4 FOOD CREW

OX4 Food Crew (OX4FC) is a partnership of nine organisations based in OX4 working with and for people experiencing food poverty, which has been exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. Founded in April 2020, we quickly responded to local needs by delivering nutritious cooked meals to people experiencing food insecurity in the local area. We are now developing the partnership to move beyond the emergency pandemic-driven response to include services which help build community food resilience. These include free cooking for health and wellbeing courses for parents, 'Pay as you feel' community meals, and incubator support for food social enterprises including Damascus Rose Kitchen and No Vice Ice. As a coalition of organisations, our aim is to work with local communities to co-investigate and design flexible, community-led support and innovations that will help build food resilience in the local area, alongside ongoing emergency food support.

The Swan School Oxford Improving school food

Family dining enables all students and teachers to share a delicious hot meal together every day. No packed lunches are allowed.



We recreate a 'family' atmosphere. Everyone is encouraged to engage in conversation and take responsibility for different aspects of the service, for example laying the table, serving food, or tidying the table at the end of the meal.

Lunches at The Swan are vegetarian (meat is available at other times) for three main reasons:

- Quality – vegetarian meals allow us to provide better quality for the same price.
- Environment – reducing meat consumption decreases our carbon footprint.
- Community – all our students are able to sit together, regardless of their dietary preferences or religious requirements.



Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

Cherwell Collective

Stronger communities, reducing waste, alleviating poverty by growing, cooking, learning, and sharing together.

Started during COVID lock-down, Cherwell Collective was a response to food poverty, hardship, and isolation. We have developed our ambitions to empower our community, to increase well-being, to support the vulnerable, and to reduce waste and environmental impact in daily lives. We have over 5,000 users, hundreds of whom are supported weekly.

Our food services include three main groups:

Cherwell Larder: Friends feeding friends - alleviating food poverty, reducing food waste, and a community hub for distributing surplus of all kinds.

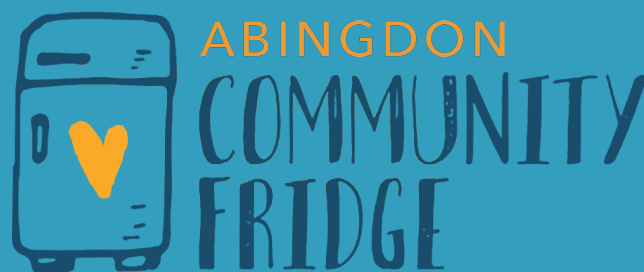
Harvest at Home: Food security from the ground up - supporting people to grow at home and in the community. Providing home-growing kits, skills training, support, and access to resources. We have helped over 900 people start growing food for the first time.

Climatarian Kitchen: Eat to save the earth! At our food surplus cafe we enjoy climate-friendly meals together, using surplus and locally grown food. 'Pay what you can' meals have suggested donations according to the carbon footprint of the dish. We also offer freshly made ready meals, meal kits, flexi recipes, shared equipment (via Oxford Party Library), and cooking courses.



Abingdon Community Fridge

Fighting food waste and building community



At Abingdon Community Fridge we are focused on reducing food waste by collecting surplus food from local organisations and making this freely available to the whole community. Over 85 tonnes of food has been redistributed since opening in July 2019. Local residents benefit from this access to healthy, nutritious food, with the fridge supporting over 150 visits each week. As a volunteer-led group we are extremely proud of maintaining this free resource and the real sense of community which has grown between the fridge-users, volunteers, and the wider community.

Orange Bakery, Watlington

Embedded in local community, supporting mental health, local producers, employment, and training

We started in our kitchen during lockdown to support mental health and help young people with focus, purpose, and an opportunity for creativity. Initially we baked for ourselves, then our neighbours who were isolating, and then through crowd-funding we were able to fund a shop front on the high street in Watlington.

We bake from the Scout Hut and now employ an apprentice from the local prison. We have learnt so much, from the basics of baking through to running a business. Being embedded in our local community has been vital to this journey - we have benefitted from the generosity of other bakers who offered their time, expertise, and equipment as well as those who crowd-funded us. More formal start-up support from small local enterprise schemes for mission-driven businesses via OSEP's Escalate scheme has been invaluable, particularly the opportunity to connect with peers and networks of like-minded organisations.



Play:Full

A local response to holiday hunger

Play:Full is a response to tackle holiday hunger experienced by many children who rely on Free School Meals during term-time. The evidence suggests that this group of children start the new term several weeks, if not months intellectually behind their more fortunate peers who have enjoyed a more wholesome diet and lots of activity during school holidays.

Play:Full was initiated in Banbury as part of the Brighter Futures project, and has since been trialled in the City and South and Vale. Healthy, nourishing food is embedded alongside enrichment activities and positive food experiences from trying new foods, preparing simple snacks and meals, and enjoying shared meal-times with friends. Sessions are open to all to avoid stigmatisation, but focused on the most deprived wards to target children most in need. The impacts of the programme are clear: children try new foods, learn through enrichment, have fun, and are less isolated. Play:Full helps parents and carers with extra holiday food bills, and connects vulnerable families to a wider network of support.



Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

Oxford City Farm

Growing food
and growing community



At Oxford City Farm we provide valued opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with farming and food production, animals, nature, and each other. The food we grow is shared with volunteers and distributed within our local community, enabling us to get fresh produce onto the plates of people who might otherwise have limited access to it.

We work with a range of local organisations to deliver engaging hands-on land- and kitchen-based social and educational opportunities related to food and farming and the environment. Participants include children, vulnerable adults, and people experiencing loneliness and mental health challenges. Not only can participants learn growing and cooking skills in our new on-site teaching kitchen, but also experience an increased sense of well-being and connectedness, greater confidence, team-working, and life skills.

Oxford City Council - Healthy Start Vouchers

Partnership working
to increase the uptake
of Healthy Start
Vouchers in Oxford



Healthy Start Vouchers support eligible pregnant women and young children to buy fruit, vegetables, and dairy and are funded centrally via the NHS. In January 2022 in Oxford City, around 240 eligible families were missing out on Healthy Start Vouchers, equivalent to £9,000 per week of unclaimed vouchers.

Through joined-up working across housing, health, and locality teams, the City Council has supported an additional 36 families to access the scheme since the start of 2022. Providing a dedicated contact point within the council to liaise with other teams and provide training, and communications materials has been pivotal to making this change happen.



Sandy Lane Farm

Organic and regenerative agriculture

We are a traditional, mixed, family run farm in the South Oxfordshire countryside, passionate about growing organic veg. The team produces a wide diversity of vegetables in the farm's sandy soil. This is partly to spread the risk that is inherent when you farm without pesticides, partly to keep the soil healthy, and also to champion locally grown veg. Selling vegetables directly to our customers means better value for them and us, and a good variety of produce throughout the year keeps things interesting. The Bennett's commitment to organic growing is both a passion and a mission, and they utilise traditional farming methods - firmly backed by modern science. Biodiversity (above and below ground) is at the heart of organic farming, and our approach is try to keep 'nature in balance' every step of the way. Each year the farm's fields are bordered by beautiful 'beetle banks,' areas of wildflowers and grasses, sown to encourage pollinators and 'nature's pest controllers' to the crops. Early in 2020, the teams also planted nearly 1000 trees on the farm, a mini-agroforestry project which should improve irrigation, provide a habitat for birds and other wildlife, as well as providing valuable aerial cover for the farm's 350 organic egg laying hens.



Salt Cross Garden Village

Ambition to create better food
environments in new developments,
navigating complex planning challenges.

'a place to grow, a space to breathe'

West Oxfordshire's Salt Cross Garden Village is a landscape-led proposal. It hopes to tackle climate change, is proposing a zero-carbon community, and 25% biodiversity net gain. It hopes to contain 2,200 homes, 50% of which will be affordable within walkable neighbourhoods; a park and ride with 6 minute connection to Oxford City; and utilise the local rail station to Oxford and London.



Salt Cross's edible garden community aims to embed sustainable food systems and maximise food growing opportunities. It will connect people to growing, production, consumption, and contribute to local, fresh food supply.

It proposes: private and community food growing gardens, doorstep allotments, and community orchards; people coming together to cook, learn about, and celebrate changing seasons; careful species selections, hedgerows, woodland edges providing foraging grounds; edible trees and plants along walkways; places for residents to engage with growing food and nature. Planning, delivery, and stewardship challenges are being carefully considered with committed leadership, vision, and ambition. Salt Cross will be an edible garden community that will contribute to Good Food Oxfordshire's sustainable food network, providing healthy, fair, and environmentally sustainable food for all.



We all need to act now to make this vision a reality

Ideas for local councils

- Adopt a whole systems approach to food, ensuring that food is considered within health, climate, and economy policies and programmes
- Embed healthy and sustainable food and healthy weight environments within existing policies, plans, and targets
- Develop a specific food policy that encapsulates key themes and recommendations defined in the strategy
- Champion the development of district level Food Action Plans in partnership with other stakeholders to agree specific council commitments and measure progress against these
- Promote and support community groups and businesses working for a better food system through public procurement and access to resources
- Support vibrant, healthy food communities through access to skills and spaces for growing, cooking, and sharing food
- Lobby national government using local evidence and action
- Appoint food champions at cabinet level as conduits for food issues and action



ACT
NOW

Ideas for community groups

- Sign the [Oxfordshire Good Food Charter](#) and join a movement of collective action for a better food system for everyone in Oxfordshire
- Connect with a range of partners in your local food system to work together to solve local food problems like community food services, cooking and growing groups, councils, farms, and food businesses. Together we can do more. Contact mail@gfo.org.uk to find out more
- Participate in the development of Food Action Plans for local areas, and agree specific commitments. Measure progress against these
- Join campaigns and events that bring communities together to grow, cook, and share food. Visit gfo.org.uk to find out more

Ideas for institutions and businesses

- Commit to buying more sustainably-produced local food for catering
- Participate in initiatives to scope and develop short, local supply chain solutions. Contact mail@gfo.org.uk to find out more
- Ensure food policies and reporting reflect health and sustainability targets, and link into net zero ambitions
- Participate in the development of Food Action Plans for local areas, agree specific commitments and measure progress against these
- Adopt accreditation and measurement schemes that support food targets
- Engage employees around healthy, sustainable local food. Support campaigns and events. Visit gfo.org.uk to find out more


Ideas for individuals

- Support local organisations working to tackle food poverty and food waste
- Join local growing schemes. Visit www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk and www.goodtogrowuk.org to find out more
- Use local sustainable food businesses and markets whenever possible
- Support and volunteer with campaigns and events that promote good food like cooking, nutrition, and growing programmes
- Participate in the develop of Food Action Plans for local areas
- Visit gfo.org.uk or email mail@gfo.org.uk to find out more



End of part 1



 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 6 MARCH 2024
Subject	SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24 QUARTER THREE
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Alison Borrett – Senior Performance Analyst. Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Three (Q3).
Annex	Annex A - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex B - Council Priorities report Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation.	That the Executive Resolves to: I. Note the 2023/24 Q3 service performance report.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The new Council Plan was adopted in January 2023 and the Action Plan, setting out how the priorities within the Council Plan will be delivered, then followed. Additionally, following on from the external audit report in August 2023 which included a recommendation to review performance management to match the Council Plan and measure performance, a new performance framework has been developed to include a Corporate Action Plan Tracker and a Priority Report alongside the service output metrics.
- 1.2** A high-level Commissioning Framework was approved by the Executive in October 2020, which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica provides the necessary information, including a range of performance indicators, to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard.
- 1.3** The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT

- 2.1** Progress on actions in the Corporate Plan for Q3 include:
- The Climate Team, in collaboration with other Oxfordshire authorities, has secured £298k of Innovate UK funding to enable nature-based carbon offsetting in Oxfordshire.
 - Officers continue to process and analyse the feedback received from the latest Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, which concluded in October with the aim of additional consultation in spring 2024.
 - Witney Christmas Market witnessed approximately 15,000 shoppers at the Marriotts Walk shopping centre, marking a 59% increase compared to the same period in 2022 and a significant 70% surge from the previous week's visitor count.
 - Waterways Day, a successful event with over 100 attendees, featured talks from organisations such as Thames Water and the Environment Agency.
 - In November, the Executive approved a new delivery model, jointly developed by Green Axis and Homes England, for the zero-carbon housing development at Waterbush Road, Chipping Norton, with legal agreements currently in progress.
 - The Deer Park South Access Project is ongoing, with completed footpath improvements and the installation of a bench offering views over the site's balancing ponds.
 - Planning permission granted in November for the decarbonisation of Carterton Leisure Centre.
 - Westhive, the Crowdfunding website, in collaboration with Spacehive, launched in October with five projects currently crowdfunding.
- 2.2** An overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan is attached at Annex A and the Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex B.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

- 3.1** Service performance above target:
- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (89.98% against a target of 85%)
 - Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3.21 days against a target of 5 days)

- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.1% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (98.64% against a target of 90%)
- Building Control Satisfaction (100% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (86.49% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (96.43% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Missed bins per 100,000 (94.73 against a target of 100)
- Number of visits to the three leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (4387 memberships against a target of 4102 memberships and 193,012 visits against a target of 148,440)

3.2 Service Performance below target:

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected (84.36% against a target of 87%)

During Q3, the collection rate was 2.54% higher than this time last year and just shy of the target, with collection rates c. 2% lower than pre-pandemic levels. The service indicates that many businesses since the pandemic have opted to extend the payment of Business Rates over 12 months instead of the usual 10 months to evenly distribute the cost over the year.

The Resolution: The service recently completed a thorough improvement programme designed to enhance operational processes. As a result, successful dashboards were implemented, providing detailed insights into individual performance and establishing smart targets for objective measurement of success. Process mapping was conducted to identify areas for optimisation and efficiency, leading to the implementation of weekly work programmes and increased automation. This has facilitated a more streamlined approach to service delivery, leading to a considerable reduction in the backlog of work.

Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (21.5 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (6.32 days against a target of 4 days)

Q3's standalone figures show that Council Tax New Claims are being processed in 14.51 days, against the target of 20 days and Housing Benefit Changes of Circumstance are being processed in 4.56 days against a target of 4 days, however, as the targets are cumulative the rolling statistics are above target for average processing days.

(Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events however remains well within the target of 5 days.)

The Resolution: Automation of the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers remains at a level of 60-70%, allowing for a heightened focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is actively investigating improvements to the data sent to local authorities via a Working Group. Once implemented, there is potential, in collaboration with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The automation of processing applications for the DWP and the trial for reduced phone line opening hours at Cotswold and West has released capacity for officers to process claims, contributing to the reduction in the outstanding workload and processing times.

During Q3, the service effectively reduced the outstanding workload to clear the backlog by December. However, partly due to the Christmas break, there has been a natural increase in the number of outstanding applications.

It's important to emphasise that the processing times commence from the moment the service receives an application, irrespective of its completion status. Therefore, even incomplete applications are included in the count from receipt, potentially exaggerating the figures.

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (70.5% against a target of 90%)

The Council's performance has fallen below the 90% target this quarter, standing at 70.5%. However, there is a notable improvement compared to the same period last year, with an increase of 16.6% completed within 10 days.

The Resolution: During this quarter, the answering teams have continued to face challenges with resourcing issues which is attributed to the decrease in performance since last quarter. Performance meetings are scheduled to address team issues and processes, aiming to ensure targets are met, although much remains in the hands of individual respondents within services.

The service would benefit from all searchable records being digitised and standard procedures being in place for system use. This would in turn streamline searches. Further training and discussions with internal consultees are planned to ensure good practice.

Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (126 against a target of 138)

Sixty-six properties including 41 for affordable rent and 25 for shared ownership have been delivered during Q3 at Hailey, Woodstock, Witney, Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham and Carterton with 126 delivered during Q1 and Q2.

The Resolution: The service notes variations in completions throughout the year, as housing developments typically span at least 12 months, and some projects are phased over several years. The slight decrease in numbers is attributed to delays in handovers due to legal and highway work scheduling. This has affected expected completions in Carterton and Enstone, potentially leading to their delivery in Q1 24-25.

Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (60% against a target of 90%)

There were five notifications received within Q3, with three being assessed within one day. Two notifications were not assessed within one day—one involving an electrical fault with a hairdryer, later determined to be misclassified as a high-risk notification upon further review. The second notification involved an oil leak, which, due to resourcing constraints within the team, was not assessed within one day.

3.3 A full report is attached at Annex C and should be looked at in conjunction with this report.

3.4 As previously agreed, where possible, broader benchmarking has been included in the full performance report to gain a more robust and insightful evaluation of performance. Where

benchmarking data is not currently available or outdated, this is noted, and further investigations will be undertaken to look at options.

4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4.1** This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 29 February 2024; and any comments from the Committee will be recorded and shared with relevant Cabinet Members.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no direct financial implications from this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** None specifically because of this report. However, a failure to meet statutory deadlines or standards in some services may expose the Council to legal challenge and/or financial liability.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** Contained in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** None

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** Contained in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1** None

(END)

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Corporate Strategy Action Tracker

		Our Focus	Actions	Quarter 3 Update	Start Date	Date Due	Status
Page 95	Putting Residents First	<p>The Council will listen and act in the best interests of residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being an outward facing, accessible, inclusive and open Council, improving our use of technology to increase understanding and access to what we do, how we work and the decisions we take -Providing easy to use platforms for public consultations that are effective, accessible and timely so that the voice of residents can be heard in planning and other Council decisions -Positively engaging with and listening to locally elected representatives on Town and Parish Councils -Actively seeking the voice of the seldom heard, including those of young people, to understand their particular needs and ensure that the Council is taking decisions that meet these needs. 	Explore how the Council leads Youth Engagement, ensuring youth are engaged across the wide range of activity it undertakes.	Additional resources to enable a dedicated role to support the area of young people are being sought by the Comm Wellbeing manager at this time - if that is forthcoming then we will be in a position to focus fully on engagement activities with young people.			Not Scheduled to Start
			Customer Experience Improvement Programme	Channel Choise project delivering very positive results with new phone contact system working well.	01/07/2020	01/01/2024	On Target
	Putting Residents, Young and Old, at the Heart of What We Do	The Council will act with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability, with high standards of governance and trustworthiness.	<p>Proposal to implement a robust system and process for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > the allocation of matters to the councils' forward plans > report preparation, consultation and approval > transparency and publication of decision making; and > decision tracking. 	Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan amd Council Constitution published to Modern.gov	01/05/2021	31/12/2023	On Target

1.3		The Council will actively manage Council budgets, delivering good levels of service through the wise and efficient use of funds available as well as enabling those budgets to grow so that the Council can take action towards the priorities of this Council Plan.	Procurement: Publica-wide project to embed climate, ecological and social value considerations in procurement processes to maximise the use of sustainable suppliers and support local businesses.				Ongoing
1.4		The Council will seek to attract inward investment in our towns, villages and rural areas so that they can flourish and be sustained with new jobs and housing and infrastructure that are designed to meet the needs and aspirations of our current and future residents.					Ongoing
			Adopt and implement CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy).	The appointed consultants have continued to prepare their draft viability assessment. An updated timetable has been requested and the consultants have indicated that the draft report will be complete by the end of January. It had been anticipated that a draft CIL charging schedule would be reported to the Executive in February but this is now likely to slip to March.	01/11/2019	31/08/2024	On Target
			Commission (Sport England) Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) through Max Associates to inform a West Oxfordshire Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Strategy which will define a more holistic leisure provision offer (inc. arts, culture, entertainment and sport). The SOPM will also inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (and Local Plan Review) and Town Centre regeneration plans.	Residents online survey went live in December and is due to run until 19th January. Draft copies for Stage 1 and 2 of the report expected end of January. Task and Finish Group proposed to be established early January.	01/09/2023	01/04/24	On Target

2.1

Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All

Ensure the timely provision of built and green infrastructure which meets the needs of existing and incoming residents and that supports health and care to enable physical and mental well-being, community cohesion and delivers a high quality of life.

Explore opportunities for green investment for strategic development areas eg through the Carterton Masterplan and also through the Pan-Regional Partnership.	BE Group and Hyas have been commissioned to prepare a Strategic Plan for Carterton to feed into the Local Plan review process and also provide the Council with more general advice to inform actions through non-planning related activities. The consultants work will progress in three distinct phases: 1.Undertake a socio-economic profile for Carterton, including a SWOT analysis. 2.Prepare an action plan. 3.Prepare a delivery plan Phase 1 started with inception and site meetings together with scoping of communication plan and approach to stakeholder engagement. Green finance is a key workstream in the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. Green finance in relation to SDAs will be considered as part of the Local Plan review.			Not Scheduled to Start
Explore how the Local Plan can address the issue of securing long term maintenance of green infrastructure on large SDA's.	Officers have continued to process and analyse the responses to the most recent Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation which closed in October and have begun to draft potential policy content with a view to further consultation in spring 2024. It is anticipated that this will include the topic of maintenance and stewardship of community assets including green infrastructure.	31/08/2022	31/08/2025	On Target
Consideration of community stewardship and maintenance of Strategic Development Areas – how do we enable this?	As above.	31/08/2022	31/08/2025	On Target
Work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to increase the opportunity for residents to travel around and beyond the District on foot or by bike, or on public transport, to reduce car dependence and benefit from the health and economic benefits of doing so.	OCC approached to be involved in the transport delivery of the Community Action Plan for Zero Carbon Energy (CAPZero). Charlbury Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) drafted. Charlbury Town Council submitted a UKSPF funding proposal to improve active travel around the town.			On Target
Strategic Housing Project: Internal management and modelling – proposals to be presented to Executive in paper compiled by Publica Assistant Director Planning and Sustainability to November Executive.	Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper approved by Exec with the suggestions to be explored, in order to increase the supply of affordable homes within the district	01/04/2023	15/11/2023	On Target
Strategic Housing Project: Assessing scope for investment and modelling.	In recruitment phase for Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place

2.2

The Council will be a hive of activity to help build and support thriving towns and villages that provide residents with a high quality of life by supporting a vibrant local economy, homes and infrastructure that meet people's needs, excellent health and wellbeing and ensuring equal access to opportunity for all.

Explore the scope for alternative means of delivering the range of homes in the District that meet the diverse needs of our communities, such as investment in tenures and sizes of homes that the market does not currently deliver enough of.

Strategic Housing Project: Overview of modelling options and delivery. Proposed approach to the November Executive.	Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper approved by Exec with the suggestions to be explored, in order to increase the supply of affordable homes within the district	01/04/2023		On Target
Further exploration of the best route to be more interventionist in housing delivery via direct provision – clarity needed over the desired objectives of establishing the council owned housing company or pursue an alternative route eg via a Joint Venture (OxPlace/Oxfordshire wide).	In recruitment phase for Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place
Development of business cases for existing Council owned sites – initial focus should be on Woodford Way – a housing scheme which integrates carparking (what is needed/tie in with EVPC). Key landowners/development partners.	In recruitment phase for Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place
Further exploration of modular building – how, where and with whom including visits manufacturers. To understand options for	In recruitment phase for Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place
Emergency accommodation – Acquisition of - consider the balance – single/couple and family accommodation).	Discussions commenced with Oxford City on key development site			Not Scheduled to Start
Completion of housing development at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton.	Executive paper approved, Heads of Terms drawn up and agreed, now with legal. TRI agreed and SI06 being reviewed. Land transfer to take place in February 2024, with start on site expected in the Summer of 2024.	01/10/2021	31/07/2023	Off Target but Mitigation in Place
Deliver the Local Authority Housing Fund as a means to relieve pressures on short term accommodation and bridging hotels with a longer term of objective to see the housing being used for more general affordable purposes.	Cottsway and Miller Homes in delivery phase for an additional 23 affordable units supported by government funding.	01/04/2023	31/09/2024	On Target
Work with Carterton Town Council and other relevant stakeholders to identify economic regeneration priorities for the town and immediate area following completion of the Strategy and plan for reinvigorating the District's Charter Markets	Climate team have fed into the masterplan vision to ensure it considers climate change and carbon reduction. The consultants have met with a number of different parties including Carterton Town Council and adjoining parishes.			Not Scheduled to Start
				On Target

2.4	Work with partners to support a vibrant local economy which gives residents the opportunity to prosper and fulfil their ambitions through secure jobs and exciting careers, entrepreneurship and developing new skills to participate in and contribute to the local economy.	Take an active role as member of Cotswolds Plus Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and engagement with neighbouring LVEP's.	Lead role in Cotswolds Plus LVEP - eight work streams agreed with associated action plans being drawn up for each activity area: sustainability (transport & active travel); sustainability (business practices & biodiversity); accessibility & inclusion; skills & training; research & data; business support; travel trade; conferences and meetings			On Target
		Set future project priorities for Council and Stakeholders to secure the long term viability of our Market Towns via enhancements inc wayfinding & signage, public realm and support for independent retailers and appropriate market promotions/attractions.		01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target
		Oxfordshire County Council improvements to Witney Town Centre linked to Marriotts Walk redevelopment where appropriate.	Witney Christmas Market witnessed approximately 15,000 shoppers at the Marriotts Walk shopping centre, marking a 59% increase compared to the same period in 2022 and a significant 70% surge from the previous week's visitor count. Work to deliver food and drink festival in the spring under way			On Target
2.5	Support the retention of existing and development of new services and facilities that contribute to the local economy, community	The commissioning of the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (through Max Associates) to inform the development of a West Oxfordshire Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Strategy.				Not Scheduled to Start
		Guide the future delivery of Salt Cross new garden village and associated infrastructure to enable delivery of Salt Cross Science Park.	<p>Area Action Plan (AAP) - Examination complete. Net Zero legal challenge - hearings held 14,15 November 2023. Awaiting judgement outcome. (Anticipated early 2024.)</p> <p>AAP explainer film. (3-4 mins) Content drafted and agreed. CGI rendering now progressing.</p> <p>Housing - Salt Cross self build / community led affordable homes toolkit including design code being drafted.</p> <p>Business Park - SQW consultants have finished drafts for for parts 1 and 2. Part 3 will be started in January 2024.</p> <p>A40 Improvements. - WODC await OCC revised programme timeline and OCC presentation of the impacts of the reduced scheme.</p>	01/01/2018	31/12/2034	Off Target but Mitigation in Place

Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife

contribute to the local economy, community wellbeing and cohesion.

Marriotts Walk – implementation of CBRE recommendations inc. securing new tenants, public realm improvements & making enhanced use of the square.

Work continuing with CBRE recommendations.

On Target

Development of the Carterton Strategic/Master Plan to regeneration the town and in doing so redressing balance between housing development with investment in the town centre, leisure and culture facilities, community space and business opportunities. Will seek to determine the best way to maximise the economic benefit of the RAF's largest airbase for the town and immediate area.

BE Group and Hyas have been commissioned to prepare a Strategic Plan for Carterton to feed into the Local Plan review process and also provide the Council with more general advice to inform actions through non-planning related activities. The consultants work will progress in three distinct phases:

1.Undertake a socio-economic profile for Carterton, including a SWOT analysis. 2.Prepare an action plan. 3.Prepare a delivery plan
Phase 1 started with inception and site meetings together with scoping of communication plan and approach to stakeholder engagement. Green finance is a key workstream in the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. Green finance in relation to SDAs will be considered as part of the Local Plan review.

01/02/2022

31/05/2025

On Target

Ubico Grounds Maintenance Contract – review contract with aim of securing both biodiversity enhancements and budgetary savings.

01/03/2025

01/03/2026

Not Scheduled to Start

Biodiversity Land Management Plans - Working with Ubico to change land management processes across key WODC sites, for example reduced mowing frequency, creation of urban meadows, changes to floodplain meadow management, invasive species action, subsidence works, to improve them for both wildlife and people.

Ubico started winter works, including subsidence areas around Deer Park estate. RC to meet with Laurence Sutton in Jan 24 to review the years works and make a plan for the next year.

01/02/2022

01/03/2026

On Target

Support DEFRA funded Landscape Recovery Project (contiguous with the Evenlode and Windrush Catchments) in partnership with the North East Cotswolds Farmer Cluster and the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership.

Further consideration being given to these matters as part of the scoping of the next stages of the Local Plan.

On Target

Work with others, and fulfil our statutory obligations, to ensure that land, air and water support biodiverse habitats, reduce pollution and bring about nature recovery to the District, putting it at the forefront of local decision making.

			Windrush in Witney funding bid, in partnership with Wychwood Forest Trust - Landscape-scale enhancements across the Witney Floodplains, working with OCC, WTC and Wychwood Forest Trust to introduce grazing, improve floral diversity, pollard willow trees, establishment of a new volunteer group and delivery of a series of community engagement / rural skills training events. Linked to 3.5.	RC, ND and Wychwood Forest Trust on development application phase. New stakeholders include Cogges Farm and Witney Blanket Hall. Application to be submitted end of Feb 24.	01/05/2022	01/03/2025	On Target
3.2	The Council will be a progressive custodian of our environmental resources, supporting a healthy natural landscape and functioning ecosystem which is rich in wildlife and habitats that are enjoyed by and benefit all.	Recognise and support the vital role of farming in natural ecosystem conservation, local food production and economic resilience, and the role that environmentally sustainable farming can play in achieving this.	Engaging with farmers as part of a wider consideration of the District's rural economy. How can WODC work to support (within its powers) a strong local rural economy, including diversification and the visitor economy.	Farming forum and officer group to meet in the New Year.			Not Scheduled to Start
3.3		Help people to connect with nature by improving understanding of and public access to green spaces and the countryside.	Deer Park South Access Project – Infrastructure improvements to enhance public access to woodland adjacent to strategic development area.	One bridge has been raised and any concerns have been resolved. Footpath works have been completed. A bench looking out over the site's balancing pond has been installed. RC to go to the Windrush Place to engage with children on nature trail creation. Designer for the interpretation panels has been contacted.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target
3.4		Be an active participant in the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and contribute to the production of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to establish priorities and map proposals for action to drive nature's recovery, achieve Biodiversity Net Gain and provide wider environmental benefits specific to West	Officer group to convene with Local Nature Partnership- maintain relationship with LNP and work with partners to develop workstreams.	Officers are attending LNP sub-groups including Policy, Biodiversity advisory group, BNG group, Natural capital/green finance, LNRS and Health group.	01/07/2022	01/07/2025	On Target
			Explore the potential for the Council to acquire land for Biodiversity Net Gain and nature-based carbon sequestration.	Climate team, in collaboration with other Oxfordshire authorities, secured £298k Innovate UK funding for enabling nature-based carbon offsetting in Oxfordshire.	8/12/2024	31/03/2026	On Target
			Support of the Catchment Partnerships including the promotion (where appropriate) of other water quality campaigning groups. Sewerage and Water Agency Group continue to facilitate (Links with the Pan Regional Partnership – Scoping and Modelling Work).				Not Scheduled to Start

3.5		Work with others to facilitate environmentally sensitive flood management of our river catchments.	Delivery of the Local Plan – overview including how can the site allocations process through the Local Plan review play a positive role in water management? Coordination of policy. Linked to 4.2.	Ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency in relation to the 'Spheres of Influence' Project which is intended to help inform model local plan policies on the water environment. Recent local plan consultation closing in October included a call for sites and Officers have begun to scope how those sites will be assessed in terms of potential suitability.	01/06/2022	31/12/2024	On Target
4.1	Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency	Drive down carbon emissions from Council operations including leisure, waste and street cleansing and running of the Council's estate, and in so doing lead by example to inspire others to take action to collectively reduce the overall carbon emissions of the District.	Decarbonisation of council owned buildings, including leisure centres and sports pavilions – secure external PSDS funding and extend the MEES project to include the full decarbonisation of tenanted buildings.	Heat decarbonisation plans for Elmfeld Council Offices, 3 Welch Way and the Old Court House underway. PSDS 3c application submitted to Salix on 7/11/23.			Ongoing
			PSDS 3b funded Carterton Leisure Centre decarbonisation - Carbon reduction through the replacement of the heating and hot water system of the building with a low-carbon alternative and increasing the amount of solar PV on site.	Planning approval granted. IGP delayed by contractor and received 11th December although initially incomplete. Original proposal is not viable SSEN informed Kier in December that it requires electricity infrastructure upgrade which SSEN cannot provide until 2030. Capital costs very high due primarily to market cost pressures. A Plan B scheme is now being developed which retains radiant panels in the sports hall and soft play areas which then reduces the electricity demand to a level that SSEN can supply. Scheme redesign and costs being reviewed for Plan B. Grant administrator, Salix informed and their provisional agreement to proceed with Plan B agreed. Formal variation needs to be agreed.	31/10/22	31/03/25	Off Target but Mitigation in Place
			Waste Vehicle Strategy - Supporting the Waste team on the development of the strategy to reduce emissions from the Council's waste vehicle fleet.	Initial discussions held on vehicle investment with the aim of balancing climate, financial and operational, considerations. Workshops to discuss green fleet transition and EV trials to be held in the New Year.			On Target
			Carbon Action Plan to 2030 and Climate Change Strategy to 2050 - Update of the Carbon Action Plan and Climate Change strategy to include scope 3 emissions, district carbon budgets, route maps to net zero, and actions.	Draft CAP issued to Cllr Prosser for review. Action tracker and resource plan underway. Joint tender brief for the carbon baseline drafted and sent to Cherwell District Council for review.	01/07/23	30/6/2024	On Target

Page 103

			Climate Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) – Develop the tool as a mandatory requirement on projects so as to embed climate and nature considerations in council decision making.	Continued to work on the assessment recommendations with a view to consulting with other teams in the New Year.	01/02/2023	01/04/2024	On Target
			Solar PV project for tenanted buildings - A Publica-wide long-term project to install rooftop solar panels on council owned buildings, increasing the amount of renewable energy generated in the District.	Financial appraisals have been undertaken for each site and discussed with the CFO.	01/08/2022	01/12/2023	On Target
4.2	The Council will be a community leader in responding to the challenges of climate change, including rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing the District and its communities for the impacts of climate change to ensure a fair transition for all to a future that will be defined by climate change.	Encourage the use of nature based solutions to sequester carbon and combat the risks arising from climate change at a river catchment scale, such as restoration of meadows and trees to reduce flooding and improve water quality.	Biodiversity Action Plan – Develop and deliver workstreams to restore nature and enhanced biodiversity in the District.	Internal officer, eNGO and public consultation completed on the BAP.	01/03/2023	01/03/2024	On Target
4.3		Work with partner organisations and residents to facilitate the retrofit of carbon reduction measures in homes and businesses and pursue a drive to net zero carbon buildings in new developments through planning policy	Consider how proactive should WODC be in facilitating retrofit for the 'able to pay' market.	Innovate UK funding bid for the FutureFit Oxfordshire project was unsuccessful. In discussion with other Oxfordshire authorities as to how this work is taken forward without significant external funding.			Ongoing
			Greenlight – nature and online hub to facilitate community action for a greener future.	A nature quiz was included on Greenlight. Information kept current.			Ongoing
			Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) project for tenanted buildings - A Publica-wide review of tenanted buildings to determine what measures are needed to bring the EPC rating up to a B or above by 2030.	Executive paper has been drafted and is under review.	01/07/2023		On Target
			Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2) - A countywide scheme to upgrade energy efficiency and low carbon heating for low-income householders in the worst performing off-gas grid homes.	Continued comms to promote the HUG2 scheme.	01/06/2023	01/03/2025	On Target
4.4		Encourage renewable energy generation at appropriate sites in the District, improving local energy and economic resilience and supporting the community benefits that this resilience will bring.	Explore opportunities with partners to encourage renewable energy within the District.	Discussed with the Low Carbon Hub and Green TEA WODC's role in CAPZero delivery. Report finalised. Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) working group meeting held.			Ongoing

4.5		Work with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver on our joint commitment to active travel and public transport, including through improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and better public transport services.	Install EV charging points across the District.	OXLEVI bid submitted. Tender brief to procure supplier drafted. Long list of sites reviewed. EV car club pilots in Eynsham and Witney underway.	26/05/2023	01/01/2025	On Target
5.1	Working Together for West Oxfordshire	Target available Council grant budgets to proposals by other organisations that will deliver on Council priorities.	Enable delivery of agreed project interventions on Government approved Investment Plan under UKSPF and REPF.				On Target
			Successful implementation of new Grant Scheme: a) Crowdfunding, b) Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements and c) Youth initiatives.	Crowdfunding Westhive launched in October 2023 with a range of marketing and promotional information released to raise awareness of community crowdfunding. Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements At its September meeting the Executive agreed the maximum SLA award will be £25,000 per annum, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Commissioning approach agreed and application process designed. Launch event for interested organisations took place on 5 October. Business Support Grants In 2023/24 there is £140,000 in REPF capital funding that will be apportioned in 28 grants of £5,000.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target
5.2	The Council recognises that to deliver on our aspirations and the priorities in this Council Plan for West Oxfordshire, working collaboratively with others will be essential	Work with existing businesses and new start-ups to access support available to enable their success.					
5.3		Support Town and Parish Councils to represent their communities energetically and take action on issues important to their locality.	Towns and Parish Biodiversity project– UKSPF funded project to provide case studies for communities on how to enhance biodiversity in different habitats.	Demonstrators are now mostly complete. Draft toolkit issued to RC in the last week of December for review. A series of events to be organised to promote the demonstrators to Town and Parish Councils.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target

5.4		Support the Voluntary and Community Sector to continue to undertake activity which serves the needs of residents including established organisations and more informal groups working to address particular needs such as access to food, youth support and cultural provision.	Community Grants	Various grant schemes are operating across the organisation - Westhive and 3 year grant programmes included in that. There are also smaller schemes operating around Asylum seekers, Ukrainian guests and the groups that support them. Away from grant support there is ongoing collaboration with the VCS sector across Community Wellbeing - also in the Climate team. This work is supporting the sector with intelligence, development expertise, additional in kind resources, links to complementary services and support around sources of funding.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target
		Make a dedicated effort to further understand and meet the needs of our young people and support their mental health, including children, teenagers and young adults leaving school, entering the world of work and/or seeking to set up home in the District.	Focussed programme of engagement with young people, and other groups, on mental and physical health, local facilities and spaces for young people, to ensure future leisure, sport, culture and arts provision in the District best provides for these.	Additional resources to enable a dedicated role to support the area of young people are being sought by the Comm Wellbeing manager at this time - if that is forthcoming then we will be in a position to focus fully on engagement activities with young people Other groups engagement - Comm Wellbeing continuing various forums with voluntary and statutory sector partners to ensure needs are understood and services meet needs - eg Health and Wellbeing Alliance			Not Scheduled to Start
			Have Your Say Events – focussed topic event for young people.	Additional resources to enable a dedicated role to support the area of young people are being sought at this time - if that is forthcoming then we will be in a position to focus fully on engagement activities with young people			Not Scheduled to Start
5.6		Look to invest in the building of homes that meet the diverse housing needs of our residents at all stages of their lives, including for those seeking to downsize or affordable social housing.					

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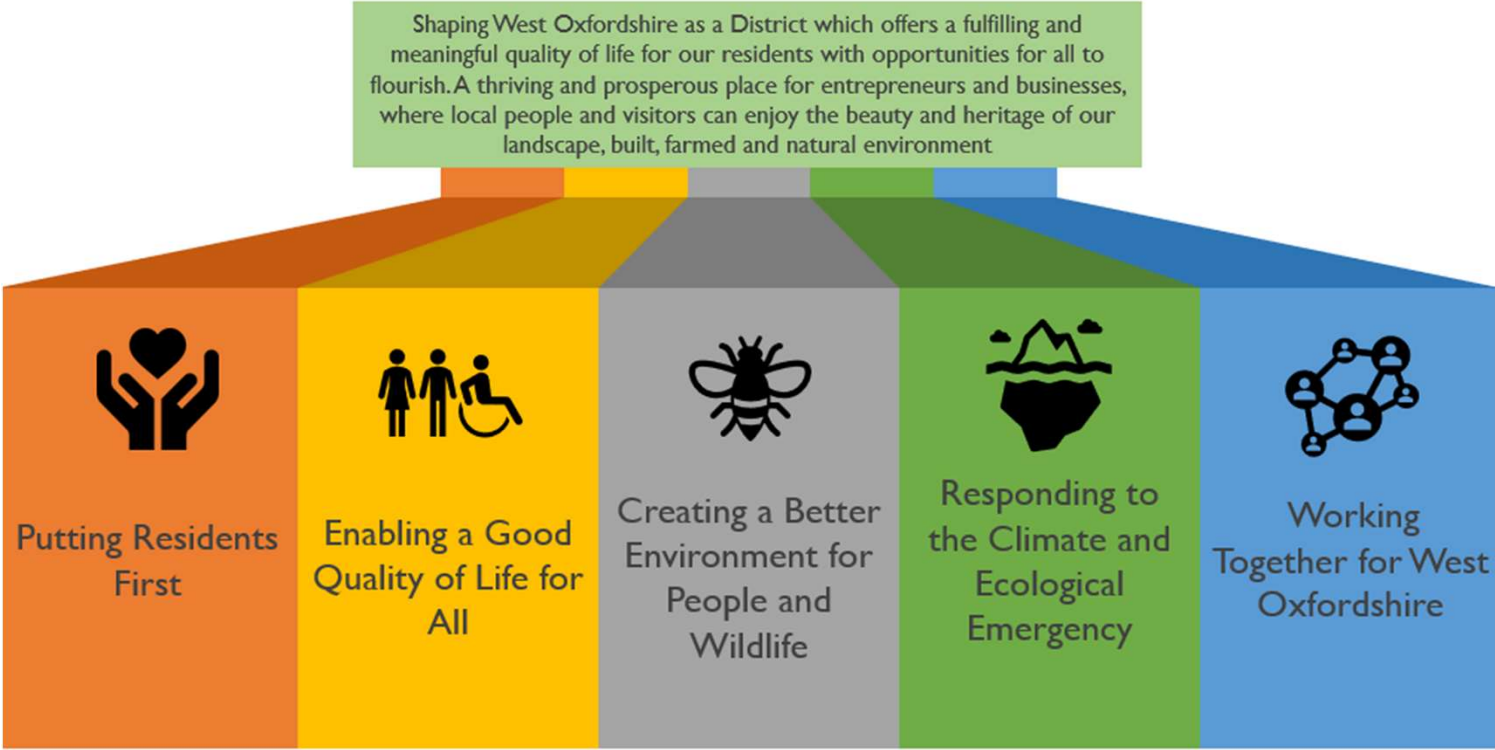


WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT
October 2023 – December 2023

Background

The Executive Action Plan was created to outline the steps needed to carry out the vision of the Executive after the new Council Plan was adopted in February 2023. In the Council Plan, the Executive looks to the district's future and establishes a vision for West Oxfordshire. In addition to updating the public on the status of each priority at regular meetings across the plan's four-year duration, a new performance framework has been created to offer timely updates for actions taken in relation to the priorities.



Putting Residents First



Actions we are taking

The Council is working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, district and city councils, town and parish councils and parish meetings to develop a shared charter. The charter will be a commitment of principles to support successful partnership working across all councils in Oxfordshire. An event has been hosted where representatives of our local councils were invited to share their reflections to help shape the content of the charter. An online survey providing further opportunity for councillors to shape the priorities, aims and principles of the charter is now live (<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ox-councils-charter>). It is intended that the Charter will be brought to Executive for endorsement in April, following a Town and Parish Forum to discuss it in February 2024.

Our House launched in 2018 and is run by Cottsway Housing in partnership with WODC and specialist support provider Aspire. Funded by the Government's Community Housing Fund, the project offers accommodation and support to up to 12 individuals, known as 'trainees', and offers assistance to get them back into employment, education, or occupational training. The Council continues to work together with partners and the community to combat homelessness and ensure safe and secure housing options for everyone. The current funding arrangements were set to expire in October 2023, but the Council's commitment to the safety and well-being of its residents has led to the decision to continue supporting this vital initiative for a further year, until November 2024.

Following a car park review, the Council has implemented permanent free long-stay parking in Woolgate Car Park to support local workers in Witney Town Centre. Survey results on car park usage informed this decision, including planned maintenance and repairs for areas like disabled bays in Woolgate. The Council surveyed over 1100 residents, identifying high usage in Hensington Road Car Park (Woodstock) and Guildenford Car Park (Burford), leading to further studies for those towns.

Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All



Actions we are taking

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge introduced by the Government through the Planning Act 2008 to provide a fair and transparent means for ensuring that development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure it will rely upon, such as schools and roads. In March 2023, the Council's Executive agreed that fresh viability evidence should be commissioned to inform a new draft CIL charging schedule. The Council is actively moving forward with the adoption and implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Progress has been made with additional supporting information supplied to the appointed consultants, Dixon Searle Partnership, with discussions underway regarding the development typologies to be tested and the preferred approach to the consultation process with key stakeholders, including landowners and developers. A consultation survey is due to be sent out imminently by the Council on behalf of the consultants to gather input from the community for a well-informed and collaborative implementation of the CIL.

The Strategic Housing Project at the Council is undergoing significant developments with the planned recruitment for a Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager. This new role will lead project work focused on identifying and advancing innovative ideas and models for increased affordable housing. The project includes assessing the scope for investment and modelling, exploring the best route for more interventionist housing delivery, developing business cases for existing Council-owned sites, and further exploration of modular building options. This comprehensive strategy underscores the council's commitment to addressing housing challenges through proactive planning and innovative solutions.

The Weavers Fold development, comprising eight 2 and 3-bedroom zero carbon homes available through a discount market sale in Chipping Norton, offers buyers the unique opportunity to custom-build their homes, influencing design and specifications. Although there have been delays in the project, the Executive approved a new delivery model proposal in November, jointly developed by Green Axis and Homes England, with legal agreements currently in progress.

The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) is an innovative capital fund that supports local authorities in England to obtain housing for those who are unable to find settled accommodation on resettlement schemes. The Council were successful in their bid for funding to relieve pressures on short term accommodation with a longer term objective of seeing the housing used for more general affordable purposes. Following the exchange of contracts between Cottsway and Miller Homes for the construction of 23 additional affordable units in the district, the project has entered the delivery phase.

Salt Cross Garden Village is a proposed new standalone settlement, self-contained with its own village facilities, such as schools, community resources and employment opportunities. The initial garden village proposals set out in the Local Plan include 2,200 new homes and a new science business park which will give local people an alternative to driving to work in Oxford. Nearby Hanborough railway station together with a new Park and Ride facility to the north of Eynsham will give people an alternative to using their cars. The Area Action Plan (AAP) has undergone a thorough revision, encompassing modifications identified during the examination process in preparation for its adoption. After the Inspector's report was received, a legal challenge was submitted focusing on the conclusions reached by the Inspector in relation to the soundness of AAP Policy 2 – Net Zero Carbon Development. The case was heard in the High Court on 14-15 November 2023, with the judgement due in early 2024.

A Market Towns Study was commissioned as part of the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Levelling Up scheme to help identify issues to be addressed through the fund. The study recommended establishing town partnerships in order to identify detailed projects in each of the towns, for which £158,000 has been allocated to Witney Town Partnership has been established as the first of the Town Partnerships with the priorities for the Witney Town Partnership agreed as:

- Develop a long term strategic plan for the Town
- Promote the town to increase footfall
- Improve wayfinding and signage

The latter is being informed by a detailed audit of signage and wayfinding issues with officers from both planning and parking teams involved to ensure that any proposals will be acceptable in planning terms and are aligned with existing WODC work to update carparking signage in Witney.

Residents have been encouraged to shape the future of the Council's leisure and wellbeing services through a district-wide survey. The survey, running for 6 weeks from 11 December 2023, aims to understand residents' views on physical activity, local leisure facilities, and potential barriers to being active, with results informing the development of accessible, inclusive, and community-oriented services. The survey seeks community perspectives for a strategic approach to future services.

Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife



Actions we are taking

The Council has committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan covering the period up to 2041. The emerging plan is currently at the 'Regulation 18' stage of plan preparation, where views are sought on the content of the plan and different options and alternatives are considered and tested. An initial public consultation, 'Your Voice Counts' took place from August – October 2022 seeking general views on what sort of issues the new plan should focus on. More recently, a further public consultation took place from 30 August – 25 October 2023, and sought specific views on potential draft objectives for the new plan, along with different scenarios for the potential future pattern for growth and ideas/opportunities for how land might be used across the District, as well as a call for sites which Officers are assessing their potential suitability. The consultation was held predominantly online via the Council's digital engagement platform, citizenlab, but also included a number of 'in-person' events. 225 individuals and stakeholder organisations responded through citizenlab and a further 180 representations were received via email or letter. Further public consultation will take place in the new year as the Local Plan moves forward through further Regulation 18 consultation. It is anticipated that this will comprise a series of preferred policy approaches, building on the consultation feedback to date and emerging technical evidence on issues such as housing need. The Environment Agency has launched their 'Spheres of Influence' Project, for which WODC is one of three pilot areas nationally. Participation in this initiative will help shape local plan policies related to the water environment.

A Biodiversity Land Management Plan has been created in collaboration with Ubico which aims to establish habitat enhancements, including decreasing mowing frequency, establishing urban meadows, adjusting floodplain meadow management, implementing invasive species control, and addressing subsidence issues. Ubico have started winter works, including subsidence areas around Deer Park Estate.

The Deer Park South Access Project is progressing with infrastructure improvements designed to enhance public access to the woodland adjacent to the strategic development area with the installation of two new bridges over the Colwell Brook. Footpath improvements have been completed, with a bench installed looking out over the sites balancing ponds. Additionally, the project team is collaborating with a local artist and local schools to craft a woodland trail, which provides an opportunity for young people in the local area to influence the shaping of this space.

Over the past year, the Council and Thames Water have worked collaboratively to improve sewage treatment, infiltration systems, and planning processes, addressing water pollution, flooding, and sewage pollution hotspots. The Council ensured transparency for residents by implementing Thames Water's interactive map for tracking discharges and an online reporting tool for sewage issues. Successful initiatives, including a Waterways Day with over 100 attendees, highlighted ongoing efforts to address environmental concerns. Real-time sewage discharge mapping and flood zone reviews signify progress in collaboration with Thames Water, with future plans focusing on enhanced river and brook management to reduce flood risks in partnership with landowners and the Environment Agency.

Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency



Actions we are taking

In June 2019, the Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and pledged to become a carbon-neutral council by 2030. In January 2020, the Council published a report on Climate Action for West Oxfordshire, which set out a proposed framework for developing a Carbon Action Plan to deliver the Council's carbon-neutral commitment and develop a Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire.

The decarbonisation of Council owned buildings continues with funding secured via the Local Carbon Skills Fund for heat decarbonisation plans at Elmfield Council Offices and Welch Way. Commissioned work includes the preparation of a heat decarbonisation plan for Windrush Leisure Centre, aligning with the objectives of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3c (PSDS3c) to return leisure centre emissions to Scope 1. Under the previous phase of the scheme, the Council secured funding for the works at Carterton Leisure Centre, focusing on carbon reduction through the replacement of the heating and hot water systems with a low-carbon alternative and the expansion of on-site solar PV with a planning application submitted in late August and subsequently granted in November 2023.

The Council is working on a Carbon Action Plan for 2030, covering scope 3 emissions, district carbon budgets, route maps to net zero, and actionable steps. The plan, still in draft, underwent market testing for the Climate Change Strategy's carbon baseline. Reflecting its sustainability commitment, the Council is testing the Climate Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) with the aim of making it a mandatory requirement and embedding climate and nature considerations into decision-making processes.

The business case and Council investment for solar PV and battery storage at the Council's offices at Woodgreen and two other tenanted sites was agreed upon by the Executive and Council in July. System design discussions are now well underway with the appointed installer, with the expectation of installation before the end of the year. The installation of electric vehicle charge points are delayed but ongoing, with a funding application submitted for the charging points at Woodgreen.

The Greenlight initiative, launched on July 17, 2023, is a nature and online hub fostering community action for a greener future. It features a greenspace competition, Q&A sessions, local group events, and recently added a nature quiz, along with regular updates to keep the information current.

The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) is a countywide initiative aimed at enhancing energy efficiency and promoting low carbon heating solutions, particularly targeting low-income households residing in the least energy-efficient off-gas grid homes. The council, in collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council, are highlighting the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2) to those residents that may be eligible, with communications to residents outlining the Welcome the Warmth Oxfordshire Scheme.

Working Together for West Oxfordshire

Actions we are taking



The Community Infrastructure Fund, hosted on the Westhive platform (<https://www.spacehive.com/movement/westhive/>), aims to revitalise and grow local infrastructure as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Levelling Up scheme. It offers capital grants of up to £20,000 or 50% of the project's crowdfunding target. With a generous budget of £40,000 for this financial year and a total of £226,000 over two years, the fund supports projects fostering community restoration, local pride, belonging, and positive contributions to health and wellbeing. The Council encourages submissions emphasising environmental sustainability, aiding vulnerable communities, and addressing exclusion due to mental health, physical or mental disability, or financial hardship. There's a particular focus on projects for or by young people, aligning with the Council's commitment to empower young voices. The Spacehive team hosted a well-attended project creators workshop to guide potential applicants in developing and securing funds for project delivery. The Council pledges up to £10,000 for eligible projects, in addition to public contributions via the platform. Currently, five projects are crowdfunding, with Cotswolds Arts Through Schools and Cycles of Good having surpassed 50% of their goals.

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Wild Oxfordshire, a charity which seeks to create a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all, is working with Officers to update a Biodiversity Toolkit that will provide guidance for Town and Parish Councils wishing to manage their land in nature-friendly ways. Three pilot projects in Asthall, Eynsham and Filkins & Broughton Poggs will be used to demonstrate the toolkit in action and produce case studies that will assist other parishes in working towards nature recovery through the management of their land. A series of events are being organised to promote the demonstrators to Town and Parish Councils.

The Council aims to revitalise local markets in town centres, responding to a decline in stalls and visitors. A review by Wild Property Consultants has provided recommendations, emphasising collaboration with town partnerships and existing stallholders to create vibrant markets at Carterton, Witney, and Chipping Norton. Following the success of the Witney Christmas Market, which saw a 59% increase in footfall and a 70% surge in town centre footfall, the Council plans to extend positive impacts to all local markets throughout the year.



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Delivering great services locally

**PERFORMANCE REPORT:
October 2023 - December 2023**

Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Revenues, Benefits and Housing	Percentage of Council Tax Collected		6
	Percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected		7
	Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims		8
	Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events		9
	Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances		10
	Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay		11
	(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties		12
	(Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels		13
Customer Experience	Customer Satisfaction - Telephone		14
	Customer Satisfaction - Email		15
	Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face		16

Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Customer Experience	Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time		17
	Complaints		18
	Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days		20
Development Management and Land Charges	Building Control Satisfaction		21
	Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		22
	Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		23
	Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)		24
	Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice		25
	Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed		26
	Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days		27
	Number of affordable homes delivered		28

Summary Index

Area	KPI Name	RAG	Page
Waste and Environment	Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action		29
	Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales		30
	Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day		31
	Percentage of household waste recycled		32
	Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)		33
	Missed bins per 100,000		34
Leisure	Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships		35

A note on performance benchmarking

Benchmarking can be a useful tool for driving improvement; by comparing our performance with other similar organisations, we can start a discussion about what good performance might look like, and why there might be variations, as well as learning from other organisations about how they operate (process benchmarking).

When we embark on performance benchmarking, it is important to understand that we are often looking at one aspect of performance i.e. the level of performance achieved. It does not take into account how services are resourced or compare in terms of quality or level of service delivered, for example, how satisfied are residents and customers? Furthermore, each council is unique with its own vision, aim and priorities, and services operate within this context.

Benchmarking has been included wherever possible and additional investigations are underway to provide it for those metrics that are missing comparisons.

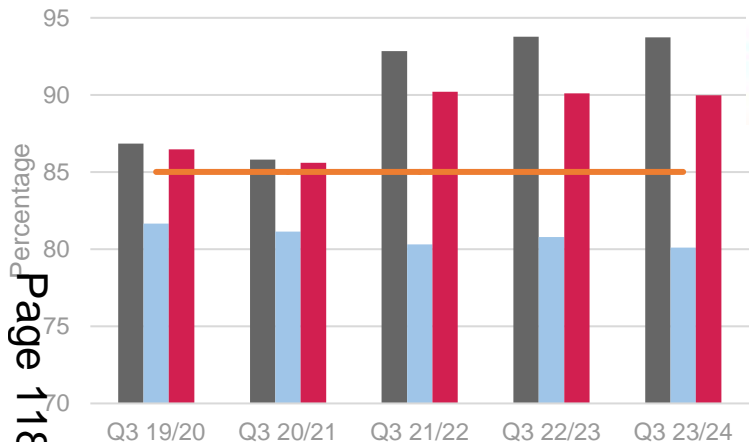
A RAG (red, amber, green) status has been applied to each KPI to provide a quick visual summary of the status of that KPI for the quarter. Additionally, RAG status has been added to the direction of travel for each metric to show how the performance against last quarter and the same quarter compared to last year is progressing.

Overall Performance

The Council's performance has been mixed, with commendable progress in Missed bins per 100,000 and Processing times for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit. However, there are some indicators that are exhibiting a negative trend including Official Land Charge Search Times and the Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day.


The Council remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and actively investing in the development and implementation of automation and self-serve options for customers. By providing accessible and efficient self-help tools, customers can address their queries and concerns independently, leading to a decrease in the need for repeated interactions with services. It will continue to monitor and assess the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

Percentage of Council Tax Collected



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter N/A

Against last Year 
Slightly declined since last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target 85%

Actual 89.98%

Target for 2023/24 - 99 %

How do we compare?

Council tax collected by 31 March 2023 as a % of amount collectable - SPARSE
There are 181 district councils in England. All 3 councils are predominantly rural

2022-23 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	97.97	52/181	3/6	32/72	Second
Forest	97.76	70/181	4/6	40/72	Second
West	97.12	94/181	4/5	49/72	Third

An audit of the Council Tax Services indicated that a significant sum of arrears had accumulated during challenging circumstances associated with the pandemic. While the recovery of arrears had been suspended for a time, it has since been reinstated and the current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

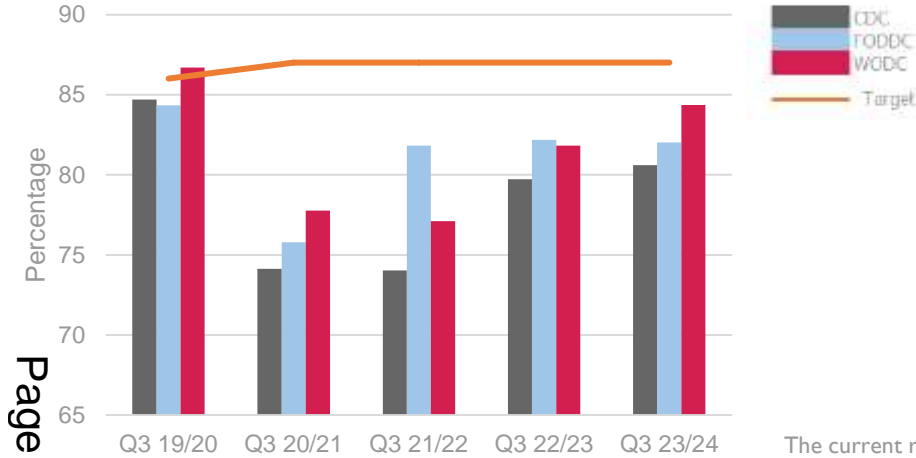
2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
26.19%	24.96%	25.56%	£4,676,704.73

By the end of March 2023, authorities in England had collected £35.7 billion of council tax that related to 2022-23 (plus an additional £800 million of aged debt) and achieved an average in-year collection rate of 96.0%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points over 2021-22 (source: gov.uk).

The collection rates are above target; however, they are slightly lower than this tie last year by 0.13%.


The service recently completed a thorough improvement programme designed to enhance operational processes. As a result, successful dashboards were implemented, providing detailed insights into individual performance and establishing smart targets for objective measurement of success. Process mapping was conducted to identify areas for optimisation and efficiency, leading to the implementation of weekly work programmes and increased automation. This has facilitated a more streamlined approach to service delivery, leading to a considerable reduction in the backlog of work.

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter N/A

Against last Year 

Improved since last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target 87%

Actual 84.36%

Target for 2023/24 - 99 %

How do we compare?

Non Domestic Rates collected by 31 March 2023 as a % of amount collectable - SPARSE
There are 181 district councils in England. All 3 councils are predominantly rural

2022-23 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	94.07	177/181	6/6	71/72	Bottom
Forest	95.97	161/181	5/6	67/72	Bottom
West	98.39	53/181	2/5	20/72	Second

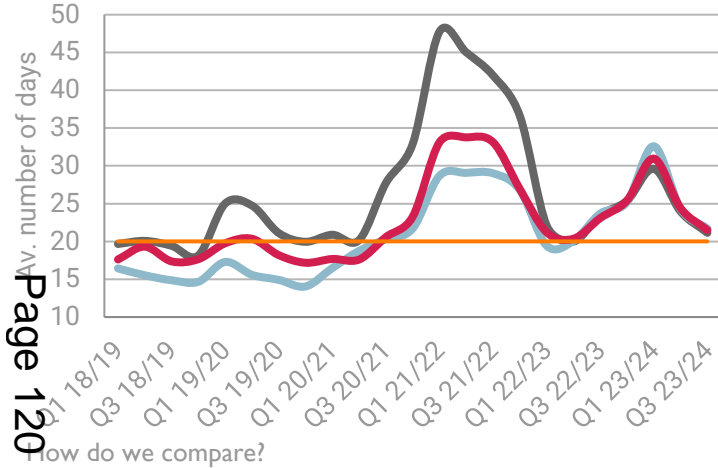
The current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
43.57%	55.42%	42.72%	£1,087,460.11

The arrears outstanding for previous year's debts for Business Rates include some data where the amount outstanding now is greater than that brought forward at the beginning of the financial year. There are some processes that can increase the amount that needs to be collected, such as Rateable Value changes and amendments to liability. As Business Rates deal with large amounts of money, the outcome can outweigh the amount that has been collected.

During Q3, the collection rate was 2.54% higher than this time last year and just shy of the target, with collection rates c. 2% lower than pre-pandemic levels. The service indicates that many businesses since the pandemic have opted to extend the payment of Business Rates over 12 months instead of the usual 10 months to evenly distribute the cost over the year.

Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Lower is Good

Target

20

Actual

21.5

Gov.uk produces tables to show a snapshot of the number of CTS claimants at the end of each financial year. The below table shows number of claimants at the end of March 2023 and the percentage change from Q4 2022 for each authority, plus the data for all authorities in England

	Number of Claimants at end of March 2023	Percentage Change since March 2022
Cotswold	1,926	-0.7%
Forest	2,240	-4.1%
West	1,745	-2.0%
England	1,393,323	-1.9%

The processing times for new CTS claims during Q3 are consistently below 20 days, averaging 14.51 days. Nonetheless, since the target is cumulative over the year, the Council has slightly exceeded the 20-day processing target. Notwithstanding this, it's notable that the cumulative Q3 processing times represent the lowest Q3 timings since Q3 20/21, with a decrease of 2.91 days across from the last quarter.

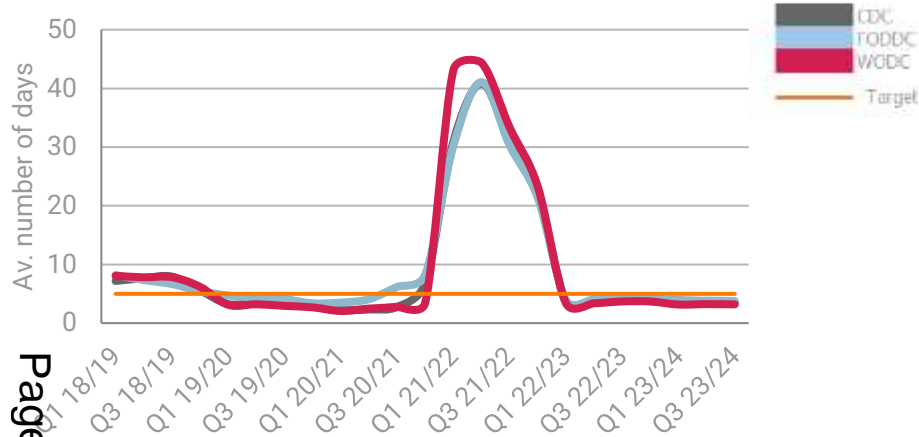
Automation of the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers remains at a level of 60-70%, allowing for a heightened focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is actively investigating improvements to the data sent to local authorities via a Working Group. Once implemented, there is potential, in collaboration with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The automation of processing applications for the DWP and the trial for reduced phone line opening hours have released capacity for officers to process claims, contributing to the reduction in the outstanding workload and processing times.

During Q3, the service effectively reduced the outstanding workload to clear the backlog by December. However, partly due to the Christmas break, there has been a natural increase in the number of outstanding applications.

It is worth making clear that, especially for HB COCs, our main sources of HB changes come about after Christmas and in early January, when we receive uprating information & rent increases from housing associations. The service indicates that processing days should reduce, but it will not be a rapid process.

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Page 121

Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Decreased since last quarter last year

**Q3 – Lower is
Good**

Target

5

Actual

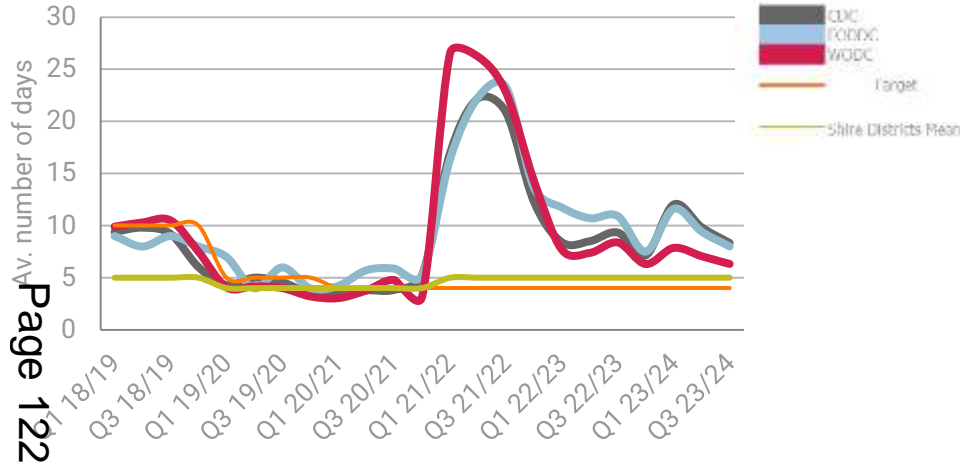
3.21

The processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events continue to comfortably meet the target of 5 days, with processing times decreasing compared to both the last quarter and the previous year.

How do we compare?

Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Lower is Good

Target

4

Actual

6.32

How do we compare?

SPARSE provide benchmarking data on the speed of processing for HB CoCs. The latest data set is 2022-23

2022-23 Benchmark	Days	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	7	143/176	2/5	59/70	Bottom
Forest	8	155/176	3/5	63/70	Bottom
West	6	137/176	4/4	57/70	Third

Please see [Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims.](#)

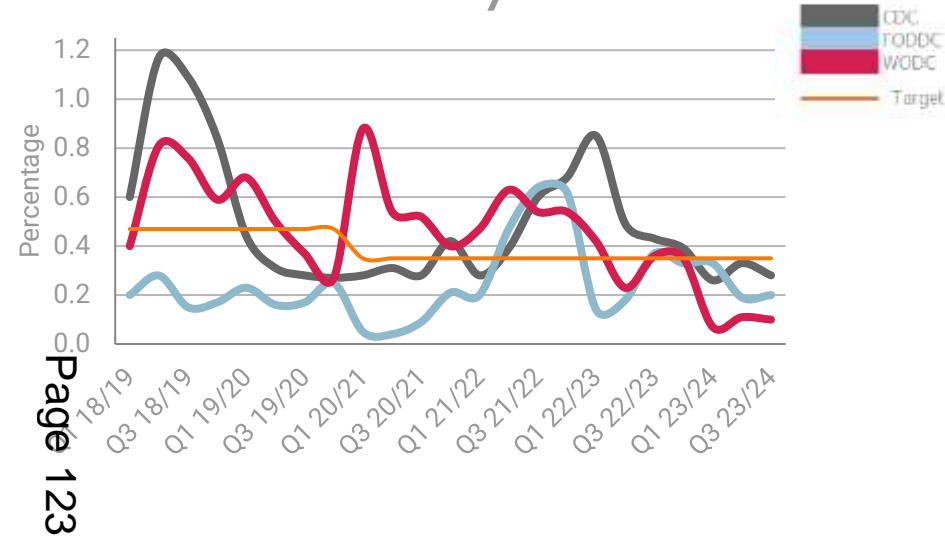
At the end of Q3, the average days to process HB changes decreased, with the Council averaging 4.56 days; however, since the target is cumulative, the ongoing statistics show higher figures. Despite being above the target, the decrease in HB Change applications amplifies the impact of delays in assessing an application due to outstanding evidence required on average processing days. It's important to emphasise that the processing times commence from the moment the service receives an application, irrespective of its completion status. Therefore, even incomplete applications are included in the count from receipt, potentially exaggerating the figures.

As a significant amount of changes that affect HB are usually received during Q4, we may potentially see a decrease in processing times. It should be noted that the number of expected changes that would affect Housing Benefit are reducing significantly, as can be seen by the number of HB changes assessed compared to the number of CTS changes assessed.

HB Changes - 872
CTS Changes - 3643

Managed migration of HB to Universal Credit is being rolled out from April 2024 across the country.

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Lower is Good

Target

0.35%

Actual

0.1%

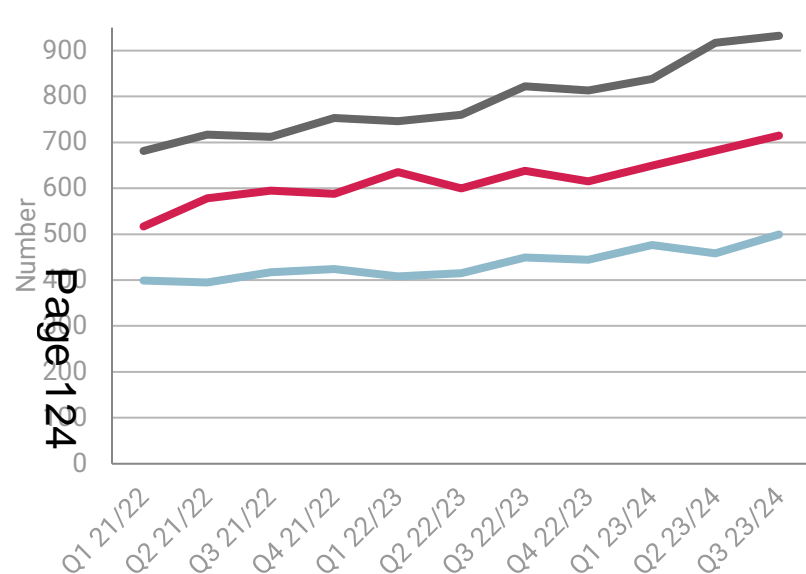
Measures are in place to ensure that HB overpayments due to local authority errors are reduced as much as possible. Around 20% of the HB caseload is checked by Quality Assurance officers, who target areas with high error rates, such as calculation of earnings. In addition to this work, the service is signed up to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) initiative to tackle fraud and error.

How do we compare?

TBC

Note: the national target is 0.47%. In 2020-21, the service set a more stringent target of 0.35%

(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Increased since last quarter and last year

**Q3 – Lower is
Good**

No Target

715

Properties continue to be added and removed from the list, but as the graph indicates, there is an upward trend.

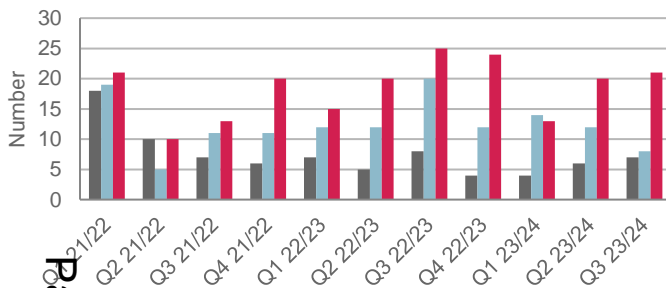
Maintaining registers of long-term empty properties can help monitor the situation, target interventions, and communicate with property owners more effectively. The LTE list is constantly being addressed, with all owners being contacted by email, phone or letter, in an attempt to bring properties back into use.

How do we compare?

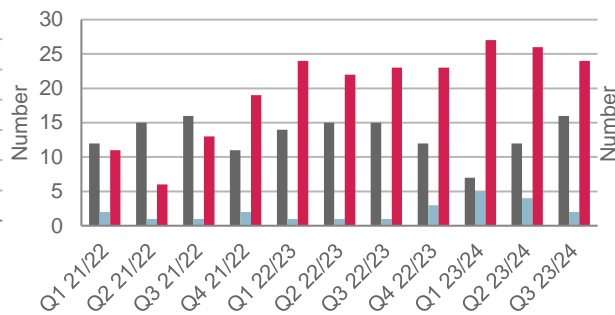
No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

(Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels

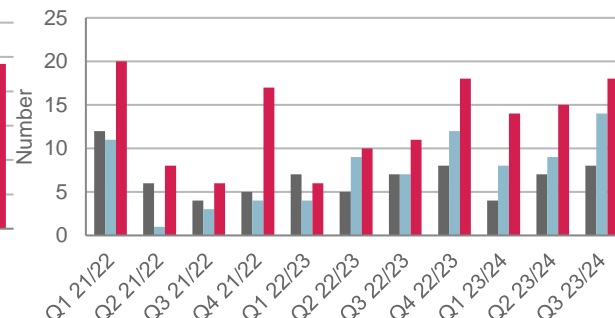
Households in B&B/hotel type accommodation



Households in hostels



Successful 'Move on' into suitable independent/LT accommodation



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter	B&B/Hotels	↑
Against last Year	B&B/Hotels	↓
Against last Quarter	Hostels	↓
Against last Year	Hostels	↑
Against last Quarter	Move Ons	↑
Against last Year	Move Ons	↑

Homelessness continues to be an issue, and pressures on the Housing services, systems and pathways remain high. During Q3, the number of homeless rose, attributed to the change in weather conditions. In comparison to last quarter, there has been a slight increase in households in temporary accommodation, with a slight increase in move-ons in comparison to last quarter.

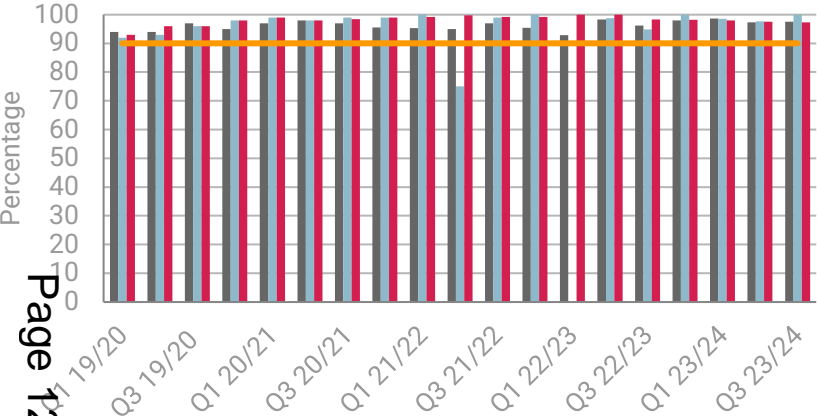
Hostels are still running at capacity. There are 2 hostels in West, one of which presently operates at roughly 80% capacity due to ongoing maintenance issues.

The team persistently works towards preventing homelessness, successfully averting homelessness for 212 households so far this year—I 12 within the statutory 56-day period and 100 before statutory duties were triggered. It's important to note that these figures are approximations and have not yet been officially confirmed through the reporting system.

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



Direction of Travel



Q3 – Higher is Good

Target	90%
Actual	97.27%

Slightly declined since last quarter but improved since last year

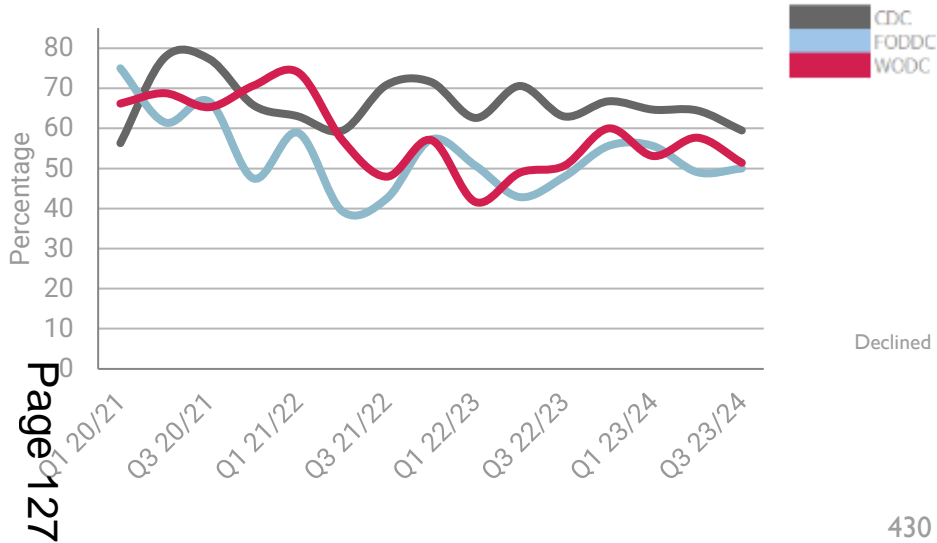
Services provided via the telephone consistently yield high satisfaction.

The Council continues to achieve top-tier performance levels when a sufficient number of surveys are included in the Satisfaction Index. Although this is a very small proportion of our calls, the numbers are comparable to those of other District Councils, hence the 'league tables' being a useful comparator.

How do we compare?
The Govmetric Channel Satisfaction Index is a monthly publication of the top performing councils across the core customer access channels. At least 100 customers need to be transferred to the survey to be included in the league table so even if satisfaction is high, it may not be included i.e. September for the partnership in the below table. This is a national comparator

	Oct Rank	Oct Net Sat.	Nov Rank	Nov Net Sat.	Dec Rank	Dec Net Sat.
Cotswold	2	95%	3	96%	N/A	N/A
Forest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
West	1	97%	6	91%	N/A	N/A

Customer Satisfaction - Email



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Declined since last quarter but steady compared to last year

**Q3 – Higher is
Good**

No Target

51.4%

430 residents responded to the survey, of which 221 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 51.4% satisfaction for the quarter, down from 57.67% during Q2.

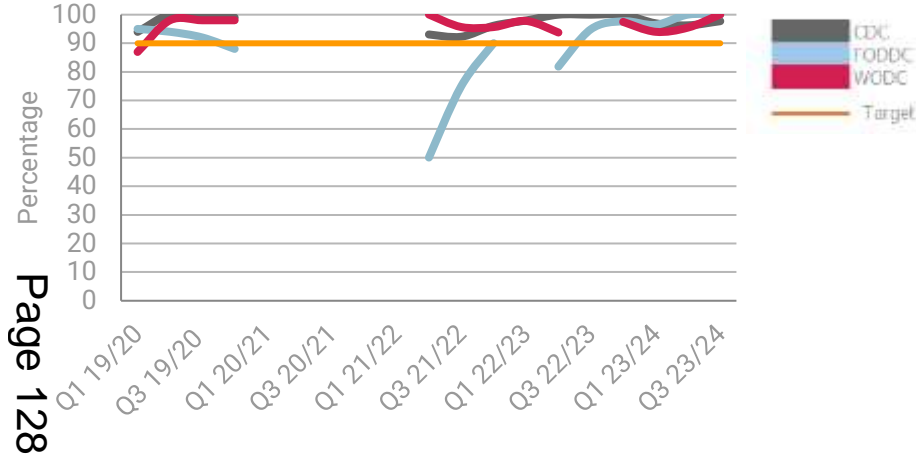
All outbound emails sent by customer services from Salesforce contain a link to the survey.

A piece of work was undertaken to review the responses from the email surveys due to the more negative responses. Upon review, it appears to be dissatisfaction surrounding service failures such as missed bins, container deliveries, responses from Planning or Housing etc. System and process improvements by the individual services are being implemented, which may affect these figures in the future.


How do we compare?

Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year N/A

Improved since last quarter

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target	90%
Actual	100%

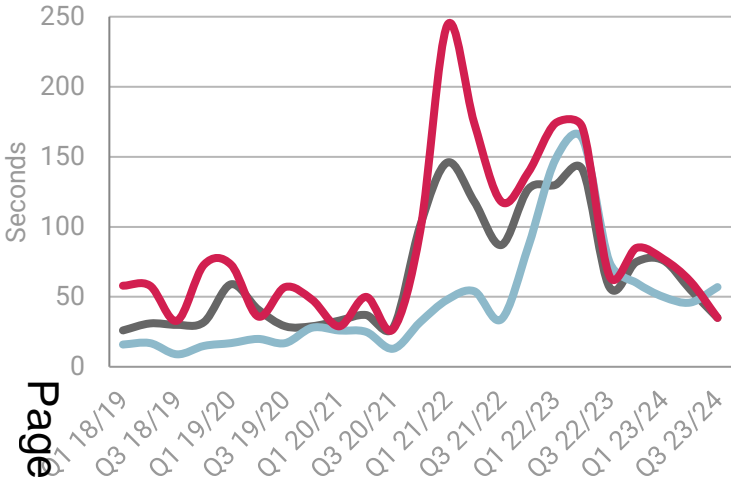
Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high, with a 100% satisfaction rate for the quarter, with all 28 individuals surveyed satisfied with the service.

How do we compare?

Benchmarking currently not available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options.

Note that any gaps in the data indicate no surveys were returned. This is especially apparent when the offices were closed during the pandemic.

Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Lower is Good

No Target

35 Seconds

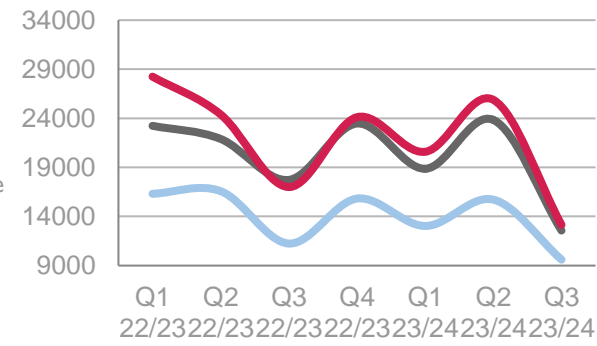
Page 129

How do we compare?

SPARSE are investigating pulling together Customer Services benchmarking data and if there is sufficient demand and suitably similar metrics to provide comparison across similarly rural local authorities we will work with them to assess any crossover in metrics and potential presentation.

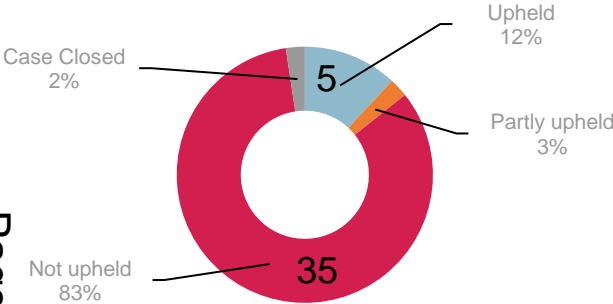
The average waiting times for Q3 have decreased by 26 seconds compared to the previous quarter. The decrease in average waiting times can be attributed to the ongoing phone line trial. This trial allows for scheduling employee breaks after the phone lines close, ensuring that advisors are available throughout high volume lunch times.

Call numbers decreased in comparison to last year and last quarter, as can be seen from the chart to the right. The data indicates an overall decline in call numbers over time, which is expected to continue with further work surrounding Channel Choice encouraging customers to self-serve where possible. The service is proactively working with other services to reduce processing times and repeat contact by using direct links to back office systems, resulting in an improved customer experience.



Number of complaints upheld

Complaints by Status



Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1

Against last
Quarter



No Target

Against last
Year



Steady since last quarter but increased since last year

Page 130

How do we compare?

The complaints and enquiries received in the period by the Ombudsman
The decisions made in the period by the Ombudsman
Compliance with recommendations recorded during the period by the Ombudsman

2022-23	Received	Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations	Percentage Satisfactory Remedy
Cotswold	10	1	100%	N/A	0%
Forest	6	1	100%	100%	0%
West	12	2	50%	N/A	100%
Similar Organisation			59%	100%	15%

During Q3, the Council experienced an increase in complaints received from last quarter. The majority of the cases were not upheld.

See the table on the following page for a breakdown of those upheld and partially upheld.

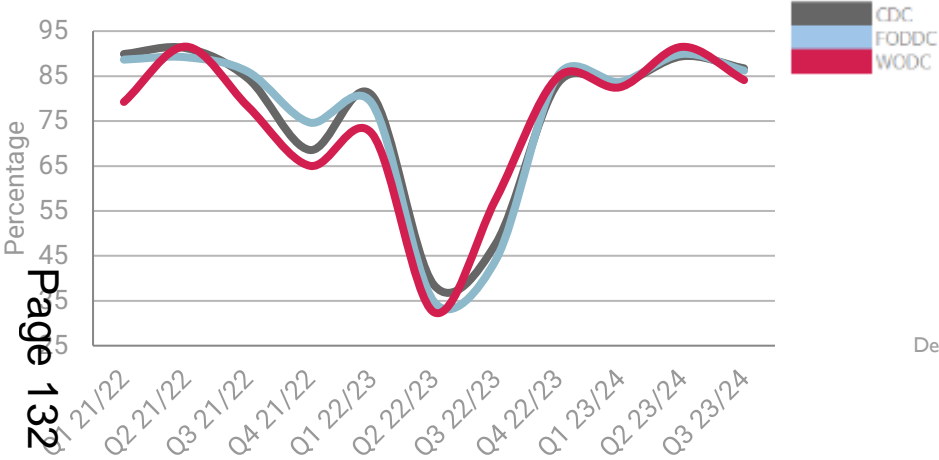
A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st October 2021.
The new process has the following stages:

- Stage 1: Relevant service area responds to complaint within 10 working days
- Stage 2: Complaint is reviewed by Corporate Responsibility Team, response is signed off by relevant Business Manager, and sent to complainant within 10 working days
- Stage 3: Complaint is reviewed by relevant Business Manager, signed off by relevant Group Manager, and sent to complainant within 15 working days

Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
Housing	Upset with lack of communication and assessment	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	40
Waste and Recycling	Continued missed Garden Waste collections	Dealt with by Depot/Contact Monitoring Officer	Upheld	10
Revenues and Benefits	Case has not been concluded in 10 months	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	16
Revenues and Benefits	Lack of response	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	10
ERS	Accurate charging schedule not on website and officers unhelpful	Prices updated on website	Upheld	5
Waste and Recycling	Consistent lack of collection	Dealt with by Depot/Contact Monitoring Officer	Partly Upheld	2

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



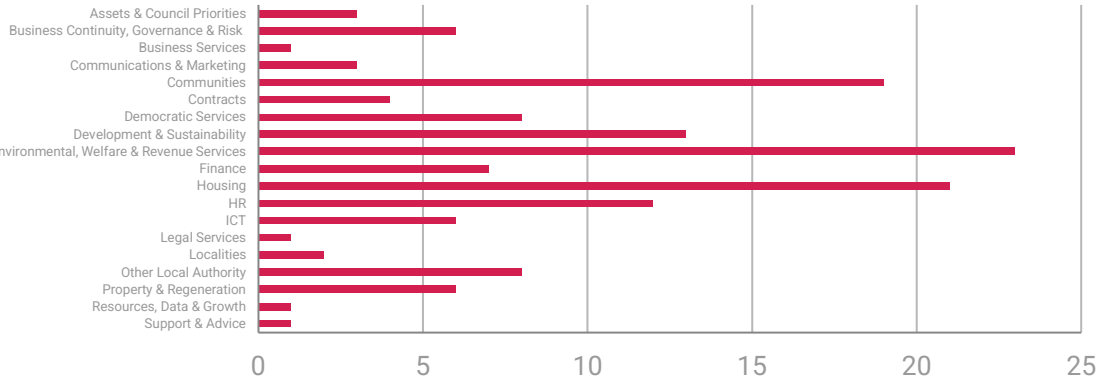
Declined since last quarter but improved since last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

No Target

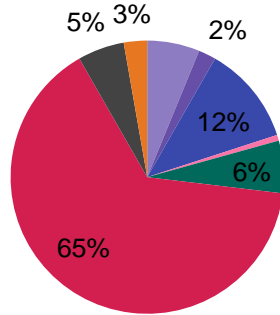
84.14%

Requests by Service Area



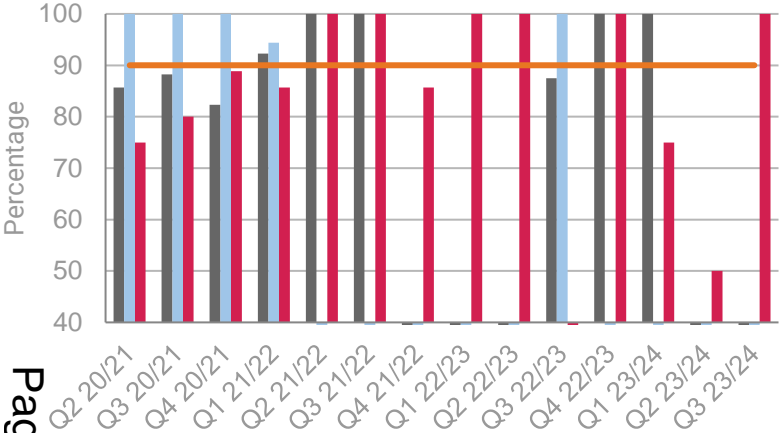
Response Type

- Directed to other Local Authority
- Directed to Website
- Duplicate
- Exemption Applied
- FOI Closed - no clarification
- Information Not Held
- Information Provided in Full
- Information Provided in Part
- Transferred to DPO
- Transferred to ERS
- Outstanding



Note: This is a new metric and the Data Team would welcome comments on the preferred observations

Building Control Satisfaction



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year

N/A

Improved since last quarter
No data from last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target

90%

Actual

100%

Page 133

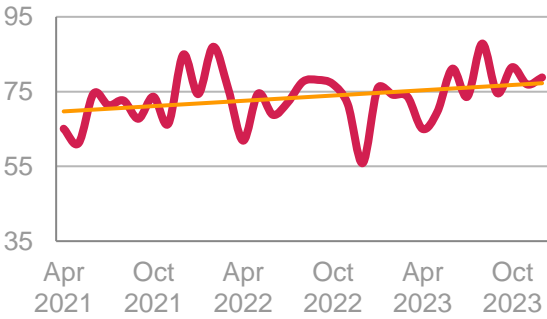
How do we compare?
Percentage of share in the market

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Number of Apps for Quarter
Cotswold	48%	63%	53%	108
Forest	69%	64%	57%	85
West	82%	77%	79%	141

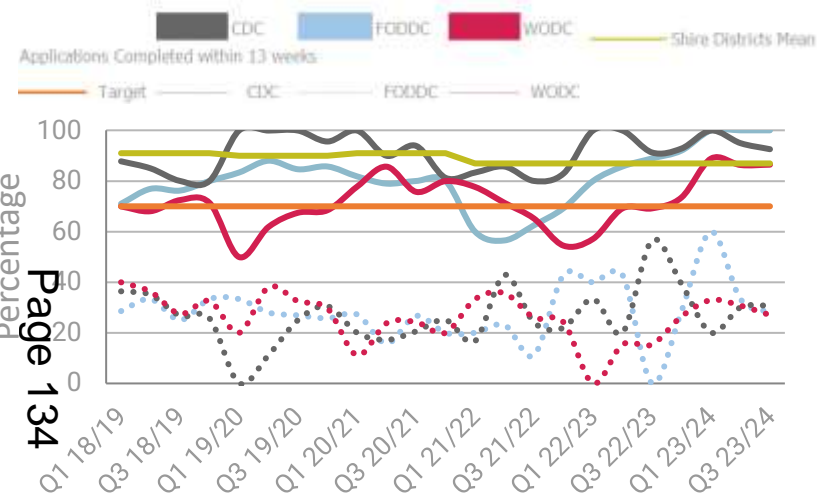
Each month, the service conducts telephone interviews with customers who have received a completion certificate during the month. The customer rates the service on helpfulness of staff, quality of technical advice and other information, responsiveness, value for money, and overall satisfaction.

The data on satisfaction surveys still faces challenges with a low number of returns, as only four surveys were received during Q3, all of which indicated satisfaction.

Building Control had 141 applications in Q3 and retains a strong share of the market. The below chart shows market share over time.



Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter →
- Against last Year ↑

Steady since last quarter but improved since last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target	70%
Actual	86.49%

How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time
PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

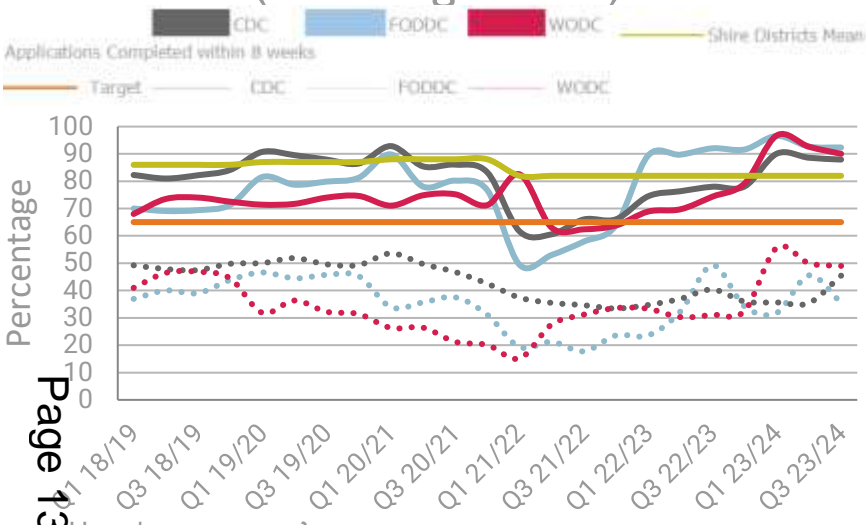
June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	90.00	83/164	3/6	29/59	Second
Forest	96.77	31/164	1/6	9/59	Top
West	83.33	117/164	5/5	43/59	Third

The service has also performed very well processing Major applications within time, slightly increasing by 0.13% in comparison to last quarter, from 86.36% to 86.49% for Q3, but notably increasing by 17.26% in comparison to the same period last year.

Fifteen major applications were determined during Q3.

[See slide for Minor Developments for further narrative](#)

Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year ↑

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target 65%

Actual 90%

Slightly declined since last quarter but improved since last year

Page 135

How do we compare?

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time
PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	82.21	97/164	4/6	33/59	Third
Forest	93.18	25/164	1/6	6/59	Top
West	85.58	83/164	2/5	27/59	Third

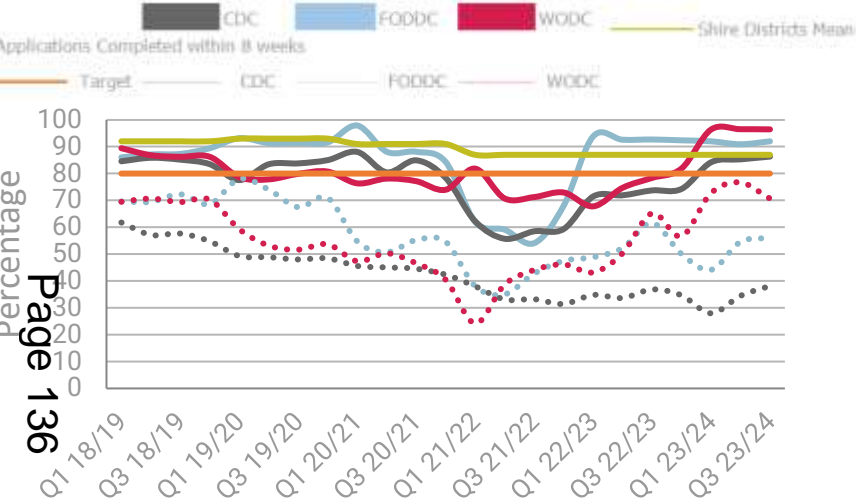
The service has performed very well processing Minor applications within time. 75 minor applications were determined in Q3.

Performance for Development Management continues to improve across the application types.

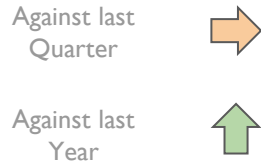
The key findings requiring Member authorization from the PAS report, presented to the Executive last quarter, are currently being implemented across the partnership. The first to be rolled out is the Negotiation Protocol, already sent to Planning Agents in anticipation of its publication on the Councils' individual websites during Q4.

The service reports that they are actively addressing the resourcing concerns, particularly the absence of an ecology officer, which is expected to cause delays in decisions on some major applications.

Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



Direction of Travel



Q3 – Higher is Good

Target	80%
Actual	96.43%

Steady since last quarter but improved since last year

How do we compare?

Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time
PLEASE NOTE SPARSE PROVIDE BENCHMARK DATA FOR CALENDAR YEARS AND THE CHART ABOVE AND STATS IN THE NARRATIVE ARE ROLLING

June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	77.33	154/164	6/6	55/59	Bottom
Forest	91.90	68/164	1/6	21/59	Second
West	89.49	85/164	4/5	30/59	Third

Determination times for Other applications have slightly decreased since last quarter by 0.06% but remain markedly improved since this time last year by 18.1%.

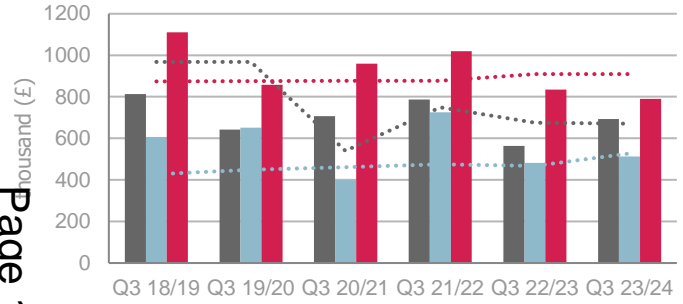
216 Other applications were determined in Q3.

[See slide for Minor Developments for additional narrative](#)

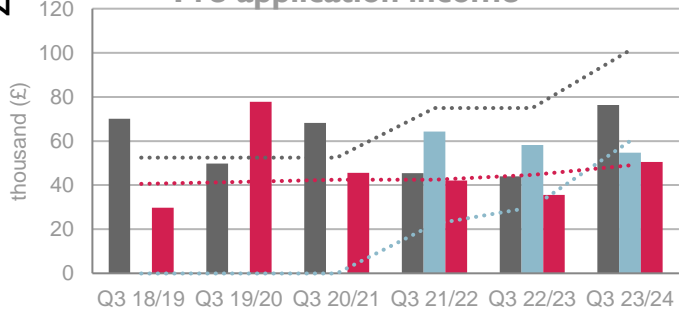
Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice



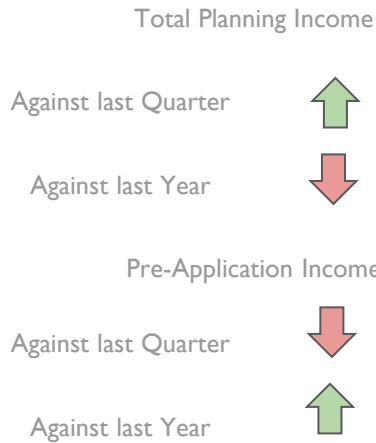
Total planning income



Pre-application income



Direction of Travel



Total Income increased since last quarter but declined since last year
Pre-App Income declined since last quarter but increased since last year

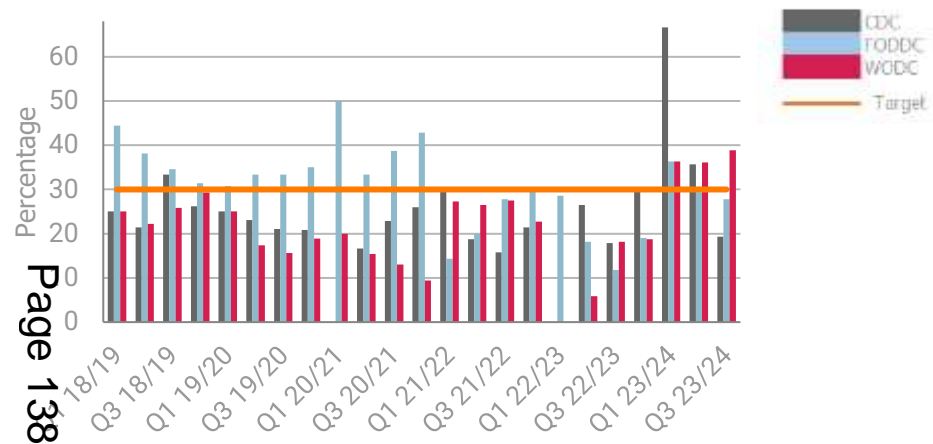
At the close of Q3, the Council's total planning income remained slightly below the target and fell short of the income generated in Q3 2022-23. Notably, pre-application income experienced a significant 50% increase during the same period, surpassing the Q3 target.

The service indicates that, despite currently being below target for income, there is an anticipation of improvement during Q4, with a couple of larger applications expected to be submitted.


Q3 – Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)	
Target	909,000
Actual	789,528
Pre-Application Income (£)	
Target	49,029
Actual	50,551

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Lower is Good

Target	30%
Actual	38.89%

This indicator seeks to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed (low is good).

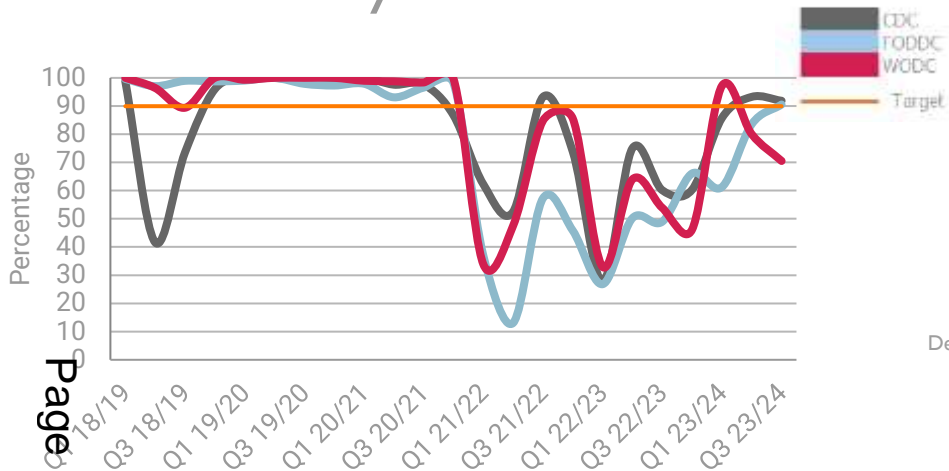
Between 1 October 2023 and 31 December 2023, nine appeals were decided, of which five decisions were supported. This results in a quarter-specific percentage of 44.4%, exceeding the target. However, the cumulative total for the year stands at 38.89%, slightly above the target. As this metric is cumulative, it may well reduce throughout the year depending on how many appeals are received.

The enforcement project, focusing on enhancing the front end for registering enforcement issues, is currently in progress, with the testing of a new form completed during Q3. It is anticipated to result in a decrease in repeat customer contact/chasing, as well as a reduction in the number of non-breach cases due to improved online reporting facilities and back office triage.

How do we compare?

The Data and Performance Team have been in touch with the Planning Inspectorate to obtain a full data set.

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Declined since last quarter but improved since last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target

90%

Actual

70.5%

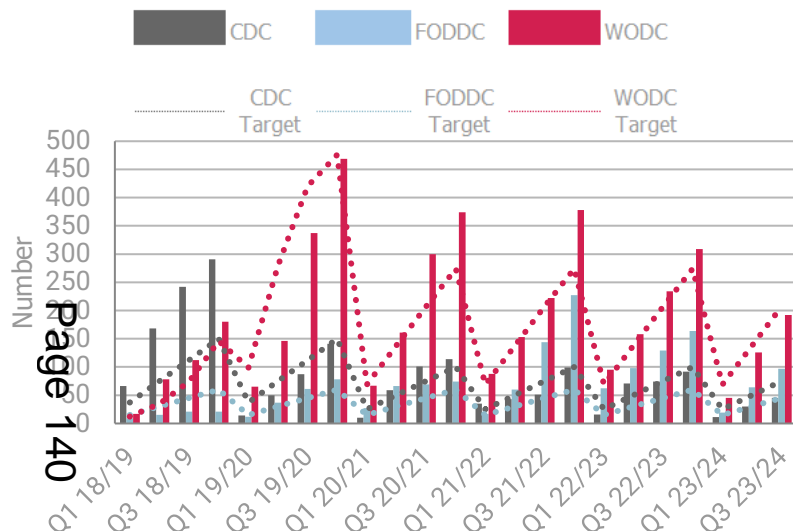
The Council's performance has fallen below the 90% target this quarter, standing at 70.5%. However, there is a notable improvement compared to the same period last year, with an increase of 16.6% completed within 10 days.

During this quarter, the answering teams have continued to face challenges with resourcing issues, which is attributed to the decrease in performance since last quarter. Performance meetings are scheduled to address team issues and processes, aiming to ensure targets are met, although much remains in the hands of individual respondents within services.

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Decreased since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target

192

Actual

207

Sixty-six properties, including 41 for affordable rent and 25 for shared ownership, have been delivered during Q3 at Hailey, Woodstock, Witney, Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham and Carterton. Handover delays, attributed to legal, drainage, and highway work scheduling, have affected the expected completions in Carterton and Enstone. As a result, there is a possibility that the deliveries may be pushed to Q1 2024-2025.

The service reports that completions fluctuate over the year. A housing development period is at least 12 months, with some schemes phased over several years.

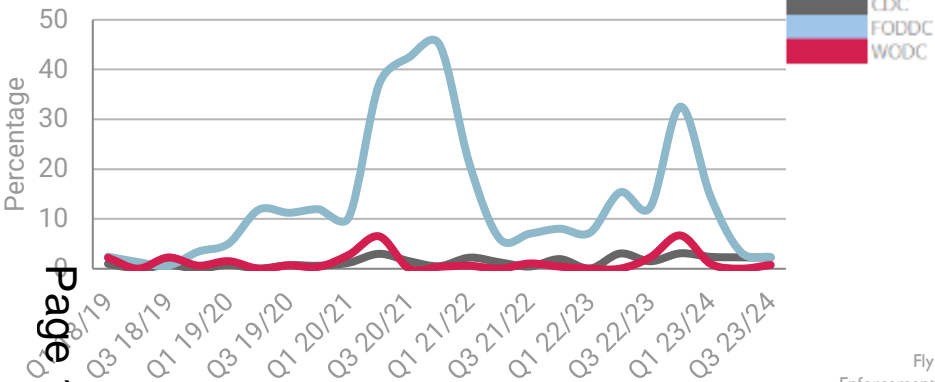
How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

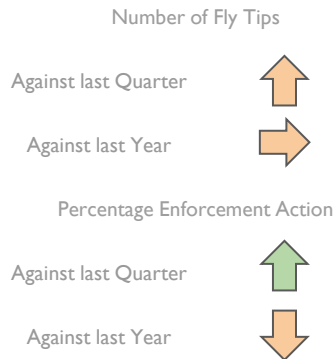
Note: this data is collected cumulatively from the beginning of the financial year to account for peaks and troughs

Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action

(defined as a warning letter, fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)



Direction of Travel



No Target

Number of Fly Tips Collected

118

Percentage Enforcement Action

0.74%

Fly Tips – Slightly increased since last quarter and but steady since last year
Enforcement Action – Slightly increased since last quarter but slightly decreased since last year

How do we compare?

Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2022-23 for Local Authorities in England
There are 301 authorities with a total of 995545 Fly Tips reported (Range - 34830)

	No. Fly Tips for 2022-23	% Total Fly Tips	Absolute Value from Highest No. Fly Tips	Absolute Value from Lowest No. Fly Tips
Cotswold	1092	0.11	33738	1092
Forest	1569	0.16	33261	1569
West	1150	0.12	33680	1150

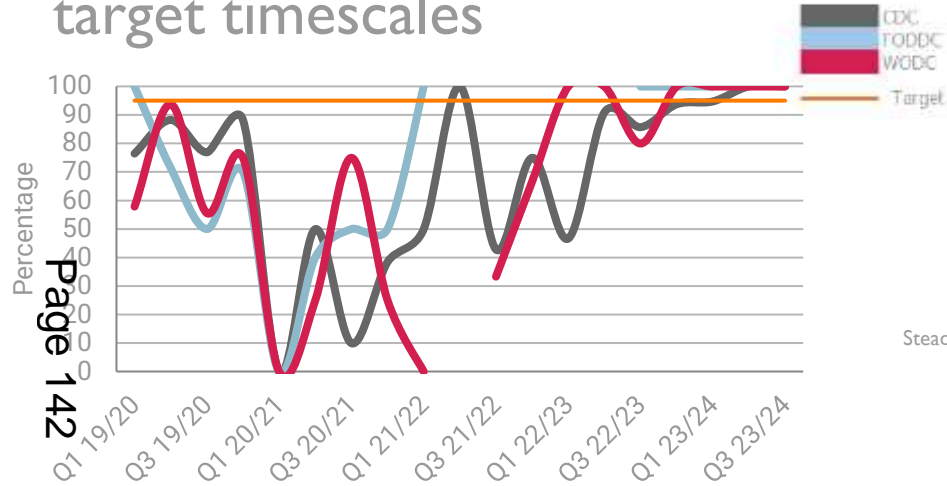
There was a marginal rise in the number of fly tips collected compared to the previous quarter.

The enforcement action percentage has slightly declined at Cotswold and Forest but has increased at West since the last quarter.

In Q3, the Executive accepted an amendment for enhanced powers for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), allowing for an increase in the upper limits for various FPNs, including:

- The maximum fine for fly-tipping, increasing from £400 to £1,000.
- The maximum fine for litter or graffiti, increasing from £150 to £500.
- The maximum fine for those breaching their household waste duty of care, increasing from £400 to £600.

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year ↑

Steady since last quarter but increased since last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target

95%

Actual

100%

The Council had eight inspections, all of which were inspected within the timescales. The inspection rate for Q3 remains above target.

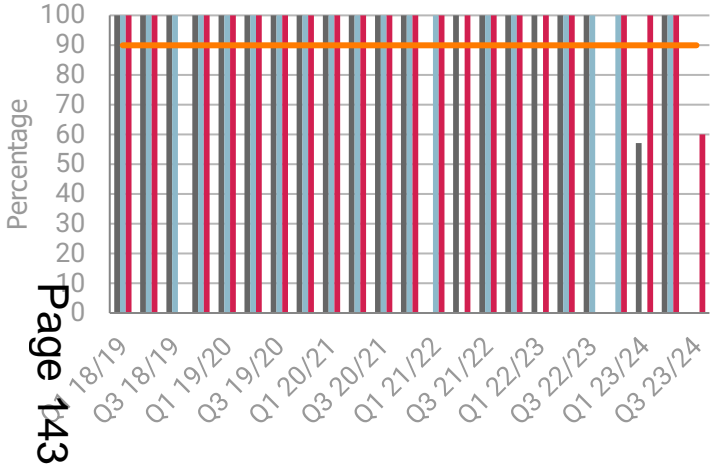
High risk work is naturally prioritised, which can have an impact on lower risk scheduled inspection rates. The service now has a useful dashboard, which is helpful for monitoring team performance and tracking lower risk scheduled inspections within the team.

How do we compare?


APSE performance networks are introducing benchmarking for environmental sectors for 2023-24

Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day

(including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year N/A

Declined since last quarter with no notifications last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

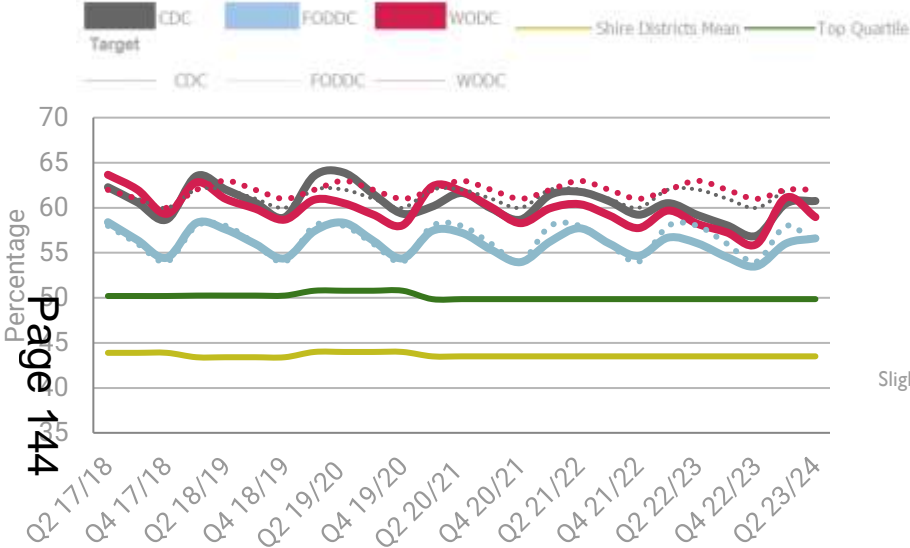
Target	90%
Actual	60%

There were five notifications received within Q3, with three being assessed within one day. Two notifications were not assessed within one day—one involving an electrical fault with a hairdryer, later determined to be misclassified as a high-risk notification upon further review. The second notification involved an oil leak, which, due to resourcing constraints within the team, was not assessed within one day.

How do we compare?

No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

Percentage of household waste recycled



Page 144

How do we compare?

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting

2021-22 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Mainly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	59.20	9/174	1/6	2/37	Top
Forest	54.30	25/175	3/6	8/37	Top
West	57.70	15/175	3/5	4/37	Top

Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Slightly declined since last quarter but slightly improved since last year

**Q2 – Higher is
Good**

Target

62%

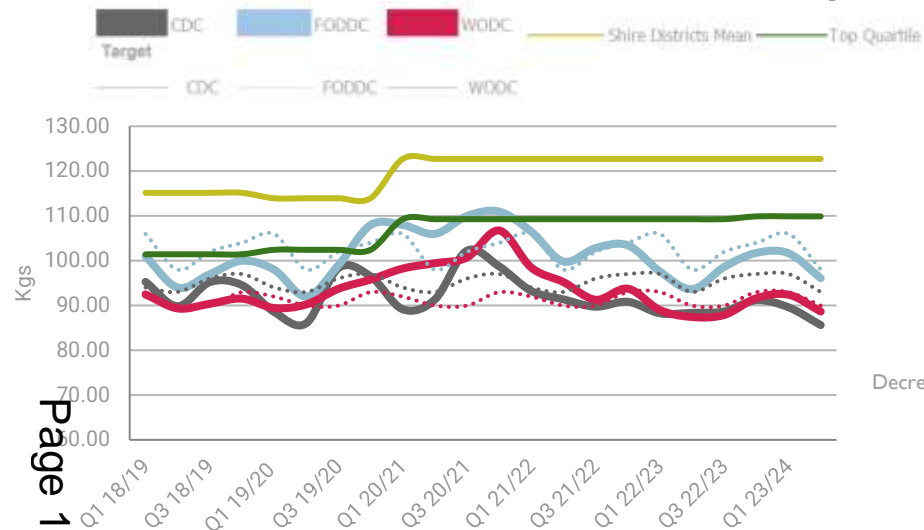
Actual

58.96%

The data regarding recycling rates is received by the data team from Oxfordshire County Council, but it is a quarter behind. Therefore, the narrative and graphs pertain to Q2 2023/24 (July-September).

During Q2, recycling rates saw a slight decline of 2.17% from the previous quarter. Compared to the same period last year, rates showed a modest improvement of 0.75%.

Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



Page 145

How do we compare?

Residual household waste per household (kg/household)

2021-22 Benchmark	Tonnage	District Rank	County Rank	Mainly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	364.70	16/174	2/6	4/37	Top
Forest	412.10	38/174	4/6	12/37	Top
West	377.90	23/174	4/5	10/37	Top

Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Decreased since last quarter but slightly increased since last year

**Q2 – Lower is
Good**

Target

90

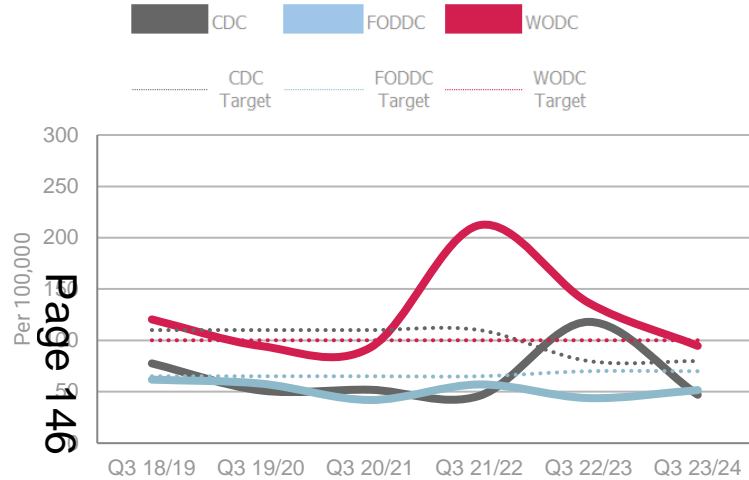
Actual

88.68

The data regarding tonnage is received by the data team from Oxfordshire County Council, but it is a quarter behind. Therefore, the narrative and graphs pertain to Q2 2023/2024 (July-September).

In Q2, West saw a decline in the tonnage of household waste in comparison to last quarter, decreasing by 3.75kg to 88.68kg (it is noteworthy that an input error recorded the Q1 figure as 107.79kg, but after investigation it was corrected to 92.43kg). In comparison to Q2 2022-2023, the tonnage has increased by 1.22kg.

Missed bins per 100,000



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Q2 – Lower is Good

Target

100

Actual

94.73

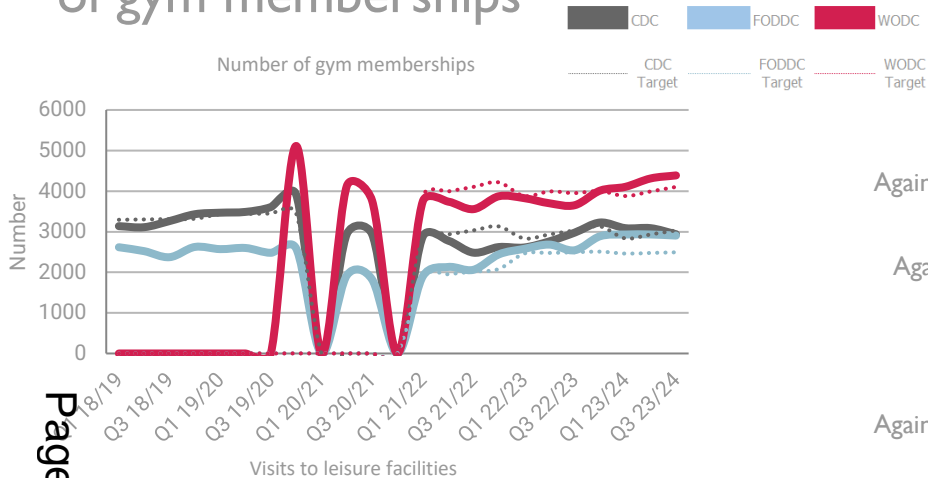
Despite the Christmas break, the number of missed bins per 100,000 fell below the target for Q3, marking the lowest misses since Q3 2020-21. However, ongoing resourcing challenges persist due to the frequent non-attendance of agency staff. Nevertheless, there's a positive trend as the number of missed bins per 100,000 has decreased by almost a third since last quarter, and the issue of misreporting Service Failures has been resolved

How do we compare?

The Data Team are currently working with partners to compile the data return for APSE performance networks which will then provide benchmarking for this metric.

Note: since the implementation of In-Cab technology, the data source for missed collections is Alloy, In-Cab's back office system. This data source is more accurate than the previous data source.

Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships



Direction of Travel

Gym Memberships

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Leisure Visits

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Gym Memberships - Improved since last quarter and last year
Leisure Visits- Improved since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Gym Memberships

Target

4102

Actual

4387

Leisure Visits

Target

148,440

Actual

193,012

The leisure targets underwent a review at the end of 2021-22, resulting in increases in the target for visitor numbers. Visits to leisure facilities increased by 14k compared to the last quarter, and gym memberships continue to rise, both in comparison to the previous quarter and Q3 of 2022-23.


However, there was a minor dip in the Learn to Swim figures this quarter, a trend not uncommon in this flexible programme during the winter months. Additionally, a bid has been submitted for Capital Grant Funding to improve the energy efficiency of leisure facilities, with the results delayed until Q4.

Note: Gym memberships were frozen during the first and third lockdowns. No targets were set for 2020-21

How do we compare?

The Data Team are currently working with partners to compile the data return for APSE performance networks which will then provide benchmarking for this metric.

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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 – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24 QUARTER THREE</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance. Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Madhu Richards – Director of Finance. Email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Georgina Dyer – Chief Accountant. Email: georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Detailed Revenue Budget Comparison; Annex B – Capital Spend Against Budget</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter Three 2023-2024.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter Three 2023-2024; 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to review and repurpose earmarked reserves to mitigate against the four main financial risks identified in the report.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees</p>	<p>Nil.</p>

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - Budget Monitoring

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Quarter 3, 1st April to 31st December 2023

Quarter 3				
Original Budget 2023/24	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£	£

Service Area

Democratic and Committee Services	1,194,664	963,670	981,356	17,686	25,783
Environmental & Regulatory Services	594,312	397,494	484,552	87,057	126,600
Environmental Services	8,041,444	5,184,103	5,477,062	292,959	384,293
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,035,476	1,427,243	1,459,239	31,997	(353)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,210,013	2,732,270	2,730,659	(1,612)	1,794
Land, Legal & Property	1,147,227	941,742	956,701	14,959	53,446
Leisure & Communities	1,282,513	(91,892)	(715,830)	(623,938)	(907,211)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,174,379	975,969	1,178,050	202,080	285,813
Revenues & Housing Support	1,406,799	(321,050)	(347,340)	(26,290)	53,002
Investment Property and Retained Services	(3,125,286)	(1,077,954)	(222,663)	855,291	1,107,100
Total cost of services	14,961,541	11,131,595	11,981,785	850,189	1,130,267

Plus:

Investment income receipts	(1,102,228)	(957,921)	(1,373,421)	(415,500)	(554,000)
Publica surplus returned to the Council at year end					(250,000)

Cost of services before financing:	13,859,313	10,173,674	10,608,364	434,689	326,268
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The 2023/24 budget was approved by full Council in February 2023 and set a deficit revenue budget of £350,129, balanced by a contribution from General Fund balances. This report sets out the revenue budget position as at Quarter 3 and a forecast position for the year end.

The methodology for forecasting the outturn position is still evolving and represents the best estimate with the information on hand at the time of drafting this report. This is an evolving process which will improve over time.

As at Q3, there is an overall overspend compared to the profiled budget, of **£434,689**. The position at Q2 was an overspend of £323,686. The key factors driving our revenue position are the waste and leisure contracts, development management and the underperformance of some income budgets (primarily relating to investment properties).

The position at year end is forecast to be an overspend of £326,268. The equivalent figure at Q2 was £783,170. The outturn position has significantly improved due to the contribution of £554,000 in additional Treasury Management investment income and an expected £250,000 reimbursement from Publica relating to early delivery against savings targets and a slightly higher employee turnover position.

The quarterly Treasury Management reports this financial year have highlighted the increase in interest income from Treasury Management investment activity and the corresponding fall in capital value of our pooled funds. This has been the result of global economic conditions and has now started to reverse with interest rates thought to have hit their peak and inflation falling. The “windfall” from investment interest is a one off that we are unlikely to see repeated. The capital values of our pooled funds have recovered significantly in the last quarter, with our treasury advisors forecasting a full recovery of capital values by the end of 2025.

SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES

A full list of variances by cost centre is included in Annex A. The most significant variances, listed by Service Area (as set out in the table above), are as follows:

Environmental Services

1.1 Recycling

At the end of Q3 the Suez contract is £179,000 overspent. This is forecast to rise to £244,000 by year end. This is due to a significant increase in tonnage of recycling collected which in turn has increased handling costs. With the contract ending in the autumn of 2024 the Waste team have issued a tender for this contract, the results of which are due by the end of February. The Waste team are committed to improving service delivery models to bring this spend down and to achieve sustainable ongoing savings for the Council. There is an additional overspend of £40,000 on recycling bins so far this year, representative of the additional number of homes built in the district in recent years and resident's desire to recycle their waste rather than send it to landfill.

1.2 Green Waste

Income is £42,000 below budget and the service is forecast to be £32,000 overspent at year end. This is an improved position to the one reported in Q2, due to lower than anticipated printing costs and equipment purchases.

1.3 Trade Waste

Trade Waste is invoiced in April & September therefore the full income for the year has already been raised. Income has exceeded target by £26,000 and tipping charges to the County Council are £20,000 underspent but expenditure on boxes is £10,000 overspent. The overall position of £36,000 underspent is not expected to change by year end.

Environmental & Regulatory Services

1.4 Building Control

Income is £79,000 below budget, a decline of 18% compared to the same period last year. Current economic conditions are impacting the service with the forecast year end position being an under achievement of income of £110,000 compared to £100,000 in Q2. The income target in the 2024/25 budget has been reduced by £93,000 and the fees have been increased by 6.7%. Fees are set on a cost recovery basis so are affected by salary increases and general inflation.

Land, Legal & Property

1.5 Land Charges

Similar to Building Control, Land Charges struggle against competition from the private sector. In Q2 income was £39,000 below target increasing to £55,000 below target in Q3 and forecast to be £82,000 at year end. Direct competition from the Personal Search companies has significantly impacted our Land Charges income over the last 3 years taking 70% market share, aided by the requirement that we provide access to our data free of charge to Personal search companies and any individual who requests it. In 2024/25 the income target has been reduced by £55,000 to make it more achievable and fees have increased by 6.7%. Fees are set on a cost recovery basis so are affected by salary increases and general inflation.

Leisure and Communities

1.6 The inclusion of a £575,813 income contingency in the 2023/24 budget was due to significant uncertainty, at the time of setting the budget in February 2023, around the level of income achievable from the leisure contract. Invoices are being raised for the contractual amount, which is producing a significant underspend, as shown in Annex A, of £557,602. Various options are being explored to increase the financial sustainability of this contract for both parties. Proposals for options will be brought to Members when the appropriate due diligence has been carried out.

Planning & Strategic Housing

1.7 Development Management

Income from Planning applications is difficult to forecast as it is not consistent throughout the year and there is no discernible pattern over the longer term. Last year income was significantly below target until two major applications were received in Q4 which turned the outturn position into a surplus from the deficit that had been reported in the first three quarters of the year.

Major applications often have an extended timeline and it is difficult to predict when exactly they will be submitted. General economic conditions like interest rates are thought to have reached their peak, which may have a positive impact on planning application volumes as both individuals and developers are able to estimate their costs more confidently.

At Q3 income is £95,000 below target, a 5.5% drop from the same period last year with income forecasted to be £118,000 below target at year end. The government increased Planning Application

fees by 25% in December 2023, the impact of which will be reported in future Budget Monitoring reports.

1.8 Development Management Appeals

External legal spend has increased dramatically since 2020, a significant proportion of which relates to Planning Appeals & Inquiries. Development Management Appeals are £101,000 overspent at Q3 with a forecast of a £150,000 overspend at year end. A single Planning Inquiry can cost the Council up to £55,000 for significant sites and an average of £20,000-£30,000 for more standard sites as well as the requirement to pay the opponent's court costs for certain matters. The budget for 2024/25 has been increased by £90,000 but this is only a short term solution. Only the reduction in the number of planning appeals will return this expenditure to a sustainable level.

Investment Property and Retained Services

1.9 Bank Charges

There is currently an overspend of £75,000 relating to the costs incurred to process debit & credit card payments to the Council. A new contract has been in place since 1st February 2024 which will save the Council £80,000 a year based on current volumes and cost per transaction. The forecast overspend at year end is reduced to £68,000. The new contract is expected to bring Bank Charges back within the existing budget so no additional growth will be required in 2024/25.

1.10 Non Distributed Costs

There are two elements to the pension contribution the Council makes for its employees. Firstly, there is the amount paid monthly through payroll which is balanced by a secondary cash element paid direct to the LGPS that keeps the payroll contribution at a steady rate and funds historic pension liability. The primary contribution of 17.6% has not changed in 5 years, but the secondary cash contribution this year is higher than the budget and will be £141,000 overspent by the end of the year. The 2024/25 budget includes a confirmed secondary pension cost from the actuary of £766,000, an increase of £116,900.

1.11 Investment Property

The Q3 position is an overspend of £643,126, due to void units, service charges and rent free periods as highlighted in Q1 & Q2. The forecast for year end is an overspend of £813,350, driven mainly by Marriotts (£339k), Des Roches (£180k) and the delay in renting out Elmfield (£98k). This is a significant overspend and shows that the 2023/24 budget does not represent a realistic position.

The 2024/25 budget has been revised due to the variances in 2023/24. The 2024/25 budget is based on a detailed cashflow as well as including a budget for service charges and business rates. Several new tenants have moved into our properties in the last 9 months, reducing our void levels, with an increase in income for Des Roches, Talisman, Marriotts and Elmfield coming through in 2024/25. As reported in the Budget Report 2024/25, Between Towns Road is expected to be vacant for the whole of the next financial year, reducing our income by £350,000. A report will come to Executive on the future of the building in due course.

The Council have owned Marriotts for 13 months. It took over a development that had suffered from an absent landlord who had not invested in the scheme in the last few years of ownership resulting in a high void ratio and disaffected tenants. The Council has already seen success in the

regeneration of this site with the letting of the largest empty unit to Sports Direct, lease extensions and new leases being negotiated. The focus is on upgrading the landscaping and seating to encourage increased footfall and a local community feel. This development is key to the local economic development of the whole town, but it will take time to get to full occupancy and for the full economic benefits to be seen.

In 2024/25 Income from Investment & Operational Property represents 23% of our funding:

Business Rates	£5.932m	30.39%
Council Tax	£5.950m	30.48%
Property	£4.535m	23.22%
Government Grants	£3.108m	15.91%

Revenues & Housing Support

1.12 Homelessness

It was reported in Q1 that the Government had provided an additional £220,541 of funding to relieve the pressure placed on the Homelessness service from the Afghan & Ukrainian Refugee schemes. Homelessness is currently £97,000 underspent representing a timing difference between the grant and the expenditure against it. All grant monies must be spent by 31st March 2024 or be returned to the government. At year end Homelessness will therefore be close to budget.

Risks and Mitigation

1.13 There are four main risks, identified in the Budget Paper for 2024/25 and listed below for ease of reference, which could have a significant impact on the Council's revenue position and financial stability in the coming years.

1.14 Publica Review

The return of a majority of employees and services to the Council from Publica may have a material impact on the revenue budget over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In the next 2 years there will inevitably be one off costs relating to the transfer of services but it is not yet known what the full financial impact will be after the transfer is complete. The partner Councils and Publica are at the early stages of the due diligence and planning of the project with more detailed financial information coming forward later in the year.

The Executive have already approved the use of £200,000 of earmarked reserves for the initial project team set up costs and for external legal and HR advice. As and when more detailed costings become available the requirement for the use of earmarked reserves will be identified by the Director of Finance.

1.15 Investment Property

Given the natural cycle of voids and rent free periods, it is recommended that an Investment Property reserve is set up to augment the revenue outturn position and reduce reliance on general fund reserves in years where there is significant impact on the revenue budget as has been the experience in 2023/24. This will support our MTFS as it will protect the General Fund reserves and allow the Council to be more able to set a balanced budget in the future.

1.16 Local Government Funding

In July 2022/23, the Executive approved the setting up of a specific budget deficit earmarked reserve to reduce the budget gap over the life of the MTFS and it would be prudent to continue to build up this earmarked reserve until the long term impact of funding changes can be accurately assessed. The full impact of funding changes is expected in 2026/27 when it is believed that the delayed Business Rates reset will come into effect. The MTFS estimates the potential impact of this change as a 37.5% loss of Business Rates income and assumes a level of dampening from the government that is optimism rather than guaranteed.

1.17 Statutory Override

The statutory override for Financial Instruments (pooled funds), which requires fair value gains and losses to be taken to an unusable reserve unless the fund is sold, is set to end in 2025/26. The ending of the override would require any gains and losses realised or unrealised, to be recognised in revenue thus having an impact on our revenue budget. Unrealised losses would reduce available resource to fund core services, while unrealised gains would not represent genuine resource increases that could be used. Unrealised gains or losses will occur where there is a change in value of a pooled fund but we have not liquidated it, therefore we have not suffered the gain or loss in cash terms.

Any unrealised loss would have to be moved to the General Fund in 2025/26 if the statutory override is not extended and capital values have not fully recovered. It is therefore advised, by our Treasury advisors Arlingclose, that it would be prudent to create an earmarked reserve to smooth out the impact of any such unrealised gains or losses that will have to be accounted for through the General Fund, to protect our revenue position and our ability to fund front line services.

Our Pooled funds currently have a capital value below their purchase price because of changes in global economic conditions over the last 18 months causing high interest rates. We have seen capital values start to recover throughout Q3 with our treasury advisors projecting a full recovery over the next 18 months to 2 years, barring any further economic turbulence.

1.18 Delegated Authority

It is requested that authority is given to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to review and repurpose some of the earmarked reserves to create the four specific risk reserves mentioned above. Reserves that could be repurposed include the Covid Impact Reserve and the Housing Benefits Subsidy smoothing reserve.

Council Tax & Business Rates Update

1.19 In recognition of previously identified Covid related arrears issues, this report includes an update on the Council Tax and Business Rates position.

The tables show the arrears specific to 2020/21 to 2022/23, which have been most effected by the Pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis and compares the Q2 position to that at 31st March 2023.

Council Tax Arrears	20/21	21/22	22/23	Total
	£	£	£	£
31.03.2023	1,282,456	2,209,117	2,993,806	6,485,379
Collected in Q1, Q2 & Q3	-297,098	-549,081	-930,464	-1,776,643
Liability movement	-69,609	-1,813	-132,281	-203,703
Balance 31.12.23	915,749	1,658,223	1,931,061	4,505,033

Business Rates Arrears	20/21	21/22	22/23	Total
	£	£	£	£
31.03.2023	400,670	749,187	1,319,753	2,469,610
Collected in Q1, Q2 & Q3	-290,310	-435,574	-979,207	-1,705,091
Liability movement	81,471	-74,271	116,335	123,535
Balance 31.12.23	191,831	239,342	456,881	888,054

The above tables show that in the first 3 quarters of the year £3,481,734 (£1,776,643 council tax + £1,705,091 business rates) has been collected in relation to 2020/21, 2021/22 & 2022/23 arrears.

Over and above amounts recovered through direct payments to the Council there are also amounts of refunds and credits for reliefs that have been applied for in the current financial year and backdated where appropriate.

Conclusion

I.20 The Q3 revenue outturn is consistent with that reported in Q2 with the forecast for the year end significantly improved due to the return on Treasury Management activity and the Publica surplus due back to the Council in March 2024.

Four key risk areas, in the revenue budget have been identified and the proposed mitigation, of repurposing some of our earmarked reserves, is recommended for approval.

Financial Implications

I.21 There are no financial implications arising from this paper as it outlines Q3 financial performance.

Legal Implications

I.22 There are no legal implications.

Risk Assessment

I.23 None required as a result of the content of this report.

Equalities Impact

I.24 No direct equalities impact with regards to the content of this report.

Climate Change and Ecological Emergencies Implications

I.25 None

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Annex A - Comparison of Q3 Budget Monitoring

	Q3 position			
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
	£	£	£	£
Democratic Services				
DRM001-Democratic Representation and Mgmt	97,943	101,173	3,230	4,845
DRM002-Support to Elected Bodies	346,907	344,198	(2,709)	1,500
ELE001-Registration of Electors	84,464	105,662	21,198	26,498
ELE002-District Elections	74,200	78,495	4,295	8,590
HLD309 - Newspapers	0	54	54	0
SUP001-Administration	360,156	343,006	(17,150)	(15,650)
Total - Democratic Services	963,670	981,356	17,686	25,783

ELE001- The estimated year end position represents the additional expenditure for the new voter ID measures and postage which has only partially been offset by one off New Burdens funding

SUP001- Employee costs are £17k underspent from the vacant Director of Governance post until filled in July 2023.

	Q3 position			
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
	£	£	£	£
Environmental & Regulatory Services				
BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work	(49,079)	30,237	79,316	110,000
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning	3,366	2,498	(868)	0
EMP001-Emergency Planning	10,609	9,071	(1,538)	(3,076)
ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt	77,227	81,776	4,550	5,000
PSH002-Private Sector Housing	2,250	0	(2,250)	(3,000)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	(5,401)	(5,401)	(5,401)
REG002-Licensing	(26,583)	(31,241)	(4,658)	(2,500)
REG009-Environmental Protection	184,679	172,922	(11,757)	(11,757)
REG011-Authorised Process	(8,890)	(9,847)	(957)	(2,000)
REG013-Pollution Control	93,854	105,126	11,271	14,089
REG016-Food Safety	109,462	108,187	(1,274)	(1,274)
REG021-Statutory Burials	(1,250)	4,614	5,864	7,330
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	1,850	16,611	14,761	19,189
Total - Environmental & Regulatory Services	397,494	481,469	87,057	126,599

BUC001 - Fee income is £94k below target and is forecast to be £125k below target at year end. Income losses are partially offset by an underspend of £12k for IT licences which is forecast to be £15k at year end. Fee income budgets have been reviewed as part of 24/25 budget setting and have been set at an achievable level.

REG009- the Out of Hours service, which was outsourced, ended in July 2023 providing a £9k year to date saving and an ongoing reduction in base budget of £33k from 2024/25.

REG013- there is an £8k overspend in lab testing fees related to Private Water Supplies which is forecast to be £14k at year end

TAC309 - Market income is £16k below target. It was agreed by the Executive in December, that we would seek a commercial market operator to take over the running of the markets in Witney and Chipping Norton for an initial period of 2 years. This would provide a modest saving to base budget in 24/25 & 25/26.

	Q3 position			
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
	£	£	£	£
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement				
SUP003-Human Resources	142,485	139,509	(2,976)	(2,976)
HLD319 - New Initiatives	458	458	(0)	0
SUP009-Accountancy	303,587	307,164	3,577	4,471
SUP010-Internal Audit	100,041	102,007	1,966	2,457
SUP011-Creditors	32,581	28,261	(4,320)	(4,320)
SUP012-Debtors	45,351	39,363	(5,988)	(5,988)
SUP013-Payroll	42,263	40,032	(2,231)	0
SUP019-Health & Safety	25,818	25,673	(145)	0
SUP020-Training & Development	22,433	27,235	4,803	6,003
SUP033-Central Purchasing	29,061	29,061	0	0
SUP035-Insurances	7,534	7,454	(80)	0
Total - Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,427,243	1,459,239	31,997	(353)

Q3 position			
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£

ICT, Change & Customer Services

SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research	123,156	124,510	1,354	0
SUP005-ICT	760,950	765,037	4,088	5,110
SUP006-Telephones	(3,750)	(2,815)	935	1,169
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	457,833	452,540	(5,293)	(6,616)
SUP014-Cashiers	110	110	0	0
SUP041-Business Solutions	9,085	8,988	(97)	(121)
TMR001-Street Naming & Numbering	0	(695)	(695)	(869)
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(12,076)	(6,380)	5,697	7,121
TOU002-Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	14,469	6,869	(7,600)	(4,000)
Total - ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,732,270	2,730,659	(1,612)	1,794

Q3 position			
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£

Land, Legal & Property

ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	37,874	34,913	(2,961)	(4,441)
ADB302-Guildhall	15,916	4,047	(11,869)	(11,869)
ADB303-Woodgreen	211,453	205,825	(5,628)	(5,628)
ADB304-Elmfield	122,066	143,459	21,393	21,393
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	524,636	520,904	(3,732)	0
ADB306-Depot	(45,444)	(48,736)	(3,293)	(3,293)
LLC001-Local Land Charges	(113,223)	(62,522)	50,701	79,000
SUP004-Legal	201,920	174,483	(27,437)	(19,500)
TAC303-Swain Court & Newman Court Witney	(13,456)	(15,672)	(2,216)	(2,216)
Total - Land, Legal & Property	941,742	956,701	14,959	53,446

ADB302- £8k invoiced to Chipping Norton Town Council ref Service Charges & Utilities for prior years plus £4k underspend in Business Rates

ADB304 - the timeline for renting out Elmfield has slipped. Currently rental income is £56k behind target and there have been £10k of expenditure related to an upgrade to the heating system and an additional £16k liability for Business Rates. This has been offset by a £61k saving on utilities as the building has been vacant since the end of August 2023. Terms have now been agreed with the tenant and the expectation is that full rent will be received in 24/25.

LLC001- there is a £55k shortfall on income with a forecast shortfall of £82k at year end. This is consistent with reporting throughout this financial year and 2022/23. The 24/25 budget has been reviewed to set an achievable income target.

SUP004 - the underspend is a collection of smaller underspends against software, books and professional fees.

Q3 position			
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£

Leisure & Communities

CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	73,251	34,102	(39,149)	(35,000)
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	14,909	20,010	5,102	10,204
CCR301 - Communities Revenue Grant	233,820	234,161	341	0
CCT001-CCTV	69,581	75,435	5,854	8,780
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	66,841	62,408	(4,433)	(5,500)
CUL001-Arts Development	43,523	30,569	(12,954)	(11,000)
ECD001-Economic Development	104,671	106,386	1,715	2,143
ECD010 – SPF Community and Place	(22,647)	(22,593)	54	0
REC001-Sports Development	(108,402)	(112,357)	(3,955)	(3,955)
REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	42,311	45,551	3,240	3,240
REC003-Play	83,787	76,493	(7,294)	(3,647)
REC301-Village Halls	11,284	11,165	(119)	0
REC302-Contract Management	(922,669)	(1,480,270)	(557,602)	(863,477)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	83,879	82,990	(889)	0
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	133,970	120,120	(13,849)	(9,000)
Total - Leisure & Communities	(91,892)	(715,830)	(623,938)	(907,211)

CCR001- £31k underspend in Professional Fees, a similar position to 22/23. The budget has been reviewed for 24/25 with a saving of £35k taken against this legacy budget. There has also been receipt of an £8k grant which has not yet been spent.

CUL001 -underspends against legacy budgets for professional fees, commission and subscriptions have been reviewed in the 24/25 budget to provide an £11k saving

REC302 - a prudent income contingency is included in the 23/24 budget which represents the uncertainty, in February 2023, of the level of achievable income from the leisure contract. Discussions are being held with GLL to review the nature of the leisure contract subject to a change of HMRC policy on VAT recovery and the potential impact of the PSDS project at Carterton. Income invoiced in the year to date is £137k more than budgeted and the income contingency provides an underspend of £431k.

TOU001 -there is a £13k underspend against the legacy budgets of marketing, software and printing. The 24/25 budget has been reviewed to amend these legacy budgets and provide a saving of £7k.

Q3 position			
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£

Environmental Services

CCC001-Climate Change	174,198	176,090	1,891	2,500
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	12,359	14,076	1,717	1,717
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	199,435	199,132	(303)	2,500
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	367,753	365,332	(2,420)	(3,026)
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	66,523	63,334	(3,189)	(3,189)
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage	131,935	169,302	37,368	37,368
REG004-Dog Warden	45,818	69,528	23,709	29,637
REG018-Pest Control	1,045	137	(908)	0
REG019-Public Conveniences	100,270	121,066	20,796	21,500
REG023-Environmental Strategy	61,481	60,378	(1,103)	(1,103)
RYC001-Recycling	2,467,731	2,684,211	216,480	289,000
RYC002-Green Waste	(676,153)	(643,781)	32,372	32,372
STC001-Street Cleansing	28,733	28,614	(118)	0
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	829,937	838,453	8,517	10,646
STC011 – Abandoned Vehicles	0	(3,082)	(3,082)	(3,082)
TRW001-Trade Waste	(185,566)	(224,523)	(38,957)	(36,000)
TRW002-Clinical Waste	125	(208)	(333)	(333)
WST001-Household Waste	1,518,287	1,514,915	(3,372)	(3,372)
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	25,569	31,913	6,344	7,930
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney	14,625	12,176	(2,449)	0
Total - Environmental Services	5,184,103	5,480,145	292,959	384,293

FLD001- £ 17,393 Ditch clearance works related to 22/23 charged in 23/24 with a further £20k charged for 23/24.

REG004 - the overspend relates to the cost of the third party contract to collect stray dogs and the kennelling fees. The 24/25 budget has been amended and the third party arrangement has been updated. The net effect on the 24/25 budget is a saving of £10k.

REG019 - fee income is £15k below target and there have been repairs due to vandalism of £5k.

RYC001 - £179k overspend on Suez contract, forecast to be £244k at year end. Boxes & bins overspend is £35k in Q3 and likely to be £45k at year end.

RYC002 - Fee income is £42k below budget with a £10k underspend for printing and postage costs. The recommendation for the 24/25 budget is an increase in the green licence fee by £5 a year to £50.

TRW001-income is £26k above budget & there is a £20k underspend on disposal costs paid to OCC and a £10k overspend on boxes & bins.

Q3 position			
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£

Planning & Strategic Housing

DEV001-Development Control - Applications	(77,812)	17,078	94,891	118,613
DEV002-Development Control - Appeals	131,636	232,875	101,239	150,000
DEV003-Development Control - Enforcement	129,995	129,225	(770)	0
ENA001-Housing Enabling	82,186	86,186	4,000	4,000
ENI301-Landscape Initiatives	43,459	46,126	2,667	3,000
HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning)	111,266	111,266	0	0
PLP001-Planning Policy	380,743	387,610	6,867	7,000
PLP003-Implementation	(773)	(765)	8	0
PLP004-Conservation	81,979	82,679	700	700
PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv	93,291	85,769	(7,522)	2,500
Total - Planning & Strategic Housing	975,969	1,178,050	202,080	285,813

DEV001 - fee income is £102k below budget, £50k worse than the same period last year. In 22/23 fee income was below budget until Q4 due to the timing differences of major applications coming in. 23/24 is following the same pattern in terms of lower income but it is not clear if any substantial additional income will be received before year end. The government announced a 25% increase in planning application fees from 6th December 2023 and the budget for 24/25 has been updated to reflect this increase. There is also an unbudgeted spend of £37k on temporary staff & consultants offset by £47k of grant income not yet spent.

DEV002 – there is a £100k overspend on external legal fees, incurred through Planning Appeals and Inspections. An additional £90k has been included in the budget for 24/25 but this could be insufficient.

Q3 position			
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	Forecast Year End
£	£	£	£

Investment Property and Retained Services

COR002-Chief Executive	225,247	252,991	27,743	30,000
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	56,844	55,678	(1,166)	0
COR004-Public Relations	19,132	17,039	(2,094)	0
COR005-Corporate Finance	414,977	435,470	20,493	25,000
COR006-Treasury Management	18,525	9,443	(9,082)	(13,500)
COR007-External Audit Fees	60,750	58,559	(2,191)	76,000
COR008-Bank Charges	67,375	143,269	75,894	68,000
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(395,402)	(401,324)	(5,922)	7,000
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	(626,358)	(595,358)	31,000	161,000
FIE343-Talisman	(610,371)	(576,438)	33,933	(41,000)
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(268,425)	(91,548)	176,877	180,000
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	(115,024)	(45,084)	69,940	98,000
FIE346 - Marriotts	100,078	415,173	315,095	339,000
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	486,825	593,142	106,317	141,000
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(124,180)	(126,088)	(1,908)	0
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	(377,831)	(338,827)	39,005	47,350
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(5,991)	(20,885)	(14,894)	(7,000)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	(4,125)	(7,875)	(3,750)	(3,750)
Total - Retained Services	(1,077,954)	(222,663)	855,291	1,107,100

COR002 - there is £10k unbudgeted contribution to the Oxford to Cambridge PRP and £18k overspend on employee costs which includes advertising costs for the Director of Finance and Monitoring Officer roles recruited to in the year.

COR005 - the net cost of having the S151 Officer post vacant and employing an interim Director of Finance is £24k.

COR007 - external audit fees have increased, over and above the scale fee due to the delays and additional work required for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 audits. The Housing Benefit audit fee has also increased resulting in an estimated year end overspend of £76k. New scale fees for 24/25 have been set by the PSAA and the budget has been updated accordingly.

FIE342 -the overspend represents the lost income from Between Towns Rd being vacant since mid November. At year end there will be a deficit of £118k for Between Towns Road and ££43k for Chawley Park which will be vacant from the beginning of Q4. The 24/25 budget has accounted for the income reduction for our Investment Properties and any additional associated costs i.e. business rates and security.

FIE343 - income is £67k below target but there are underspends of £27k in repairs and £7k in utilities that bring the overspend down to £33k at Q3. At year end the forecast is an underspend of £41k due to the £56k income contingency and the proportionately larger underspends in repairs and utilities.

FIE344 - Rental income is £78k below target due to the first floor of the building being vacant for the start of the year and the current rent free period that is in place. At year end the income deficit will be £187k. We hold an earmarked reserve for the rent free period which is being used to fund £99k of this deficit. In addition the Council has incurred £55k liability for Business Rates, £12k advertising costs and £25k of repairs to bring the building up to a rentable standard.

FIE345 - the budget includes £100k for renting out Elmfield from Q2 of the year.

FIE346 - the overspend comes from void units, service costs, business rates and rent free periods. The income position will be markedly improved in 2024/25

NDC001 - Non Distributed costs are the secondary pension contribution the Council pays monthly to cover the historic liability of the pension fund. This amount changes year on year and has been updated in the 24/25 budget following confirmation from the Actuary.

TAC305 – the base budget is overstated by £47,350 which has been adjusted in the 24/25 budget

	Q3 position			Forecast Year End
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend	
	£	£	£	
Revenues & Housing Support				
HBP001-Rent Allowances	402,869	407,049	4,180	4,180
HBP003-Local Housing Allowance	0	57	57	0
HBP005-Benefit Fraud Investigation	4,369	4,444	75	0
HOM001-Homelessness	326,397	228,648	(97,749)	0
HOM004-Refugees	0	400	400	0
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accommodation	0	1,424	1,424	(2,000)
HOM006 - The Old Court	0	37,287	37,287	39,822
HOM007-Afghan Resettlement Programme	(252,813)	(252,813)	0	0
HOM008-Homes for Ukraine	(1,069,028)	(1,069,028)	0	0
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	172,857	167,688	(5,169)	0
LTC002-Council Tax Support Administration	5,351	5,505	155	0
LTC011-NNDR Collection	94,400	102,636	8,236	6,000
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	39,242	38,761	(481)	0
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	(44,694)	(19,398)	25,296	5,000
Total - Revenues & Housing Support	(321,050)	(347,340)	(26,290)	53,002

HOM001 - the underspend is due to Homelessness Prevention Grant that has been received but not yet spent. Whatever grant is not spent before year end will be returned to DLUHC as per the grant conditions.

HOM006 -Council Tax bills received in the year relating to 22/23 in the amount of £39k were not budgeted for in 23/24, causing the overspend seen in the table.

PSH004 - the overspend relates to the additional costs incurred in the year to employ the contractors who undertake minor works i.e. installing ramps, key safes, handrails on the Council's behalf.


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Annex B

Capital Programme 2023/24

Scheme	2023/24 Original Budget	Funded By	Actual Expenditure Q3	
Agile Working	2,150,000.00	Borrowing	343,985	a
Replacement dog and litter bins	25,000	Borrowing		
Chipping Norton Roof Replacement	1,000,000	Borrowing		
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	2,000,000	Borrowing	373,527	b
Update to Planning System (Idox)	150,000	Borrowing		
Update to Finance System (ABW)	25,000	Borrowing		
Electric vehicle charging points	200,000	Borrowing		
Investment Strategy for Recovery	5,000,000	Borrowing		
CCTV - Upgrading	255,635	Capital Receipts		
Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000	Capital Receipts		
Affordable Housing in Witney (Heylo)	212,125	S106	253,500	c
Improvement Grants (DFG)	800,000	Grant	513,073	
Carterton Leisure Centre PSDS Project	1,300,000	Grant		d
UKSPF	0	Grant	22,831	
Carterton Leisure Centre Phase 2	0	Earmarked Reserves	179,275	
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	100,000	Revenue contribution	113,167	
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	200,000	Revenue contribution		
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000	Revenue contribution		
Community Grants Fund	200,000	Revenue contribution	75,666	
Windrush Public Art		S106	20,251	
Weavers Fold	378,000	S106		
Play Parks	100,000	S106		
EVCP Woolgate	167,000	S106		
Chipping Norton Creative	8,297	S106		
Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106)	44,500	S106		
Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000	S106		
Developer Capital Contributions		S106	668,411	
	14,440,557		2,563,685	

- a. The refurbishment of the Committee rooms and Council chamber has now been completed and work on Reception is almost complete. Further work on the ground floor will continue with slippage of the capital budget requested as necessary as part of the year end outturn report.
- b. A Waste Fleet Strategy Project team has been set up including members of the waste team, climate change, finance and Ubico. The aim is to produce a fleet replacement strategy for the 25 waste vehicles that are at the end of economic life in 2024. Approval was given to purchase four new waste lorries in February with delivery expected in October. The replacement strategy is expected to be complete in June.
- c. This is the final contract payment for the housing scheme delivered last financial year
- d. The original option for the Carterton PSDS project has been deemed unviable as the necessary electrical infrastructure is unavailable until 2030. Alternative options have been costed to test their financial viability which will go before Members in February.

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE POLICY</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Duncan Enright – Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development. Email: duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Assistant Director, Resident Services. Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Mandy Fathers – Business Manager, Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Services. Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To consider a new policy for the administration of Temporary Road Closure applications.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Temporary Road Closure Policy Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the report and approve the Temporary Road Closure Policy; 2. Agree to implement the Temporary Road Closure Policy following the standard call-in period, but no sooner than 1 April 2024; 3. Agree to amend the Officer Scheme of Delegation and insert that the determination of Temporary Road Closure applications will be made by an appropriate officer in consultation with a legal representative, where there is no objection from any statutory consultee; and, 4. Approve the fees as set out in paragraph 4 of the report for Temporary Road Closure applications.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director, Interim Managing Director (Publica)

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 the Council have powers to make an Order to temporarily close a road to prevent obstruction of the streets in times of public processions, rejoicing or illuminations, and in any case where the streets are thronged or liable to be obstructed.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 Parades and events occur on a regular basis throughout West Oxfordshire and are an important part of its culture.
- 2.2 These events can either take place on or off the highway network. Parades that are proposed to use the highway network require careful management to ensure that they can legally proceed and are safe for those taking part. For an event to be able to use the highway it is necessary to restrict or close the affected section of road to remove traffic that could conflict with the event taking place
- 2.3 Although the legislation defines the circumstances when the District Council can make a road closure order, introducing the Temporary Road Closure policy will assist officers in determining applications and ensure consistency.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to implement the Temporary Road Closure Policy; however, this would not be a recommended option.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The work involved in making an order is considerable and involves officer time, consultation with the police and highways department, transport and emergency services and other organisations, as well as the legal costs of drafting, signing and sealing of the official order.
- 4.2 A cost recovery exercise has been undertaken, and to support the Council with the administration the following fees are proposed:
 - a) Orders with limited impact - £151.75+ VAT.
 - b) Road closures of significant size and/or multiple road closures - £220.50 + VAT.
 - c) Commercial events - £ 330.75 + VAT.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has authority under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to make these orders. The proposed policy would allow the Council to assess applications in consistent way.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1** There are none associated with this report; however, by not adopting the Temporary Road Closure Policy could lead to inconsistencies within the application process and increase the risk of challenge and reputational risk to the Council.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** An equality impact assessment has been completed and the policy does not impact adversely on any group identified in the legislation as having protected characteristics.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1** None

(END)



Temporary Road Closure Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Policy sets out the requirements and responsibilities relating to applications for temporary road closures made to West Oxfordshire District Council (the Council), under the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (the Act).
- 1.2** The Act gives local authorities powers for preventing obstruction of the streets in “times of public processions, rejoicing or illuminations, and in any case when the streets are thronged or liable to be obstructed”. These powers enable the Council to make an Order to temporarily close a road.
- 1.3** Closure of major trunk roads, through roads or longer-term closures must be facilitated by application to the County Council for a Closure Order under the Provisions of the Road and Traffic Regulations 1984.
- 1.4** The Council are unable to make a Road Closure Order for roads that are not adopted by the County Council, such as private roads/lanes.
- 1.5** Reference in this Policy to ‘Applicant(s)’ means the person making the application to the Council.

2. Applying for a Temporary Road Closure

- 2.1** Applicants wishing to close a road on a temporary basis to hold a parade, street party or social gathering, require formal permissions to do so, and prior approval must be given by the Council before a road may be closed.
- 2.2** The application, fee and relevant documents must be submitted using the Councils ‘Road Closure Application’.
- 2.3** Applications usually take a minimum of 6 (six) weeks to process. Therefore, an Applicant should apply in good time to ensure there is time to validate the application and request for correct / further information if required. Applications submitted less than 6 (six) weeks before the event will usually be rejected.
- 2.4** The Application Form, Policy and Guidance will be made available on the Council’s website and can be posted out from Front of House on request.
- 2.5** An application will only be considered as valid if it has been fully completed with all the relevant information and fee paid. This is to allow for full consideration of the application by the necessary authorities, including the Police and County Council.
- 2.6** An application should demonstrate suitable arrangements for alternative routes and/or access, and that any highways network disruption will be managed effectively.
- 2.7** Where there are residents, businesses and public transport operators which may be affected by the closure, the Council would expect the Applicant to engage with those parties prior to making an application and provide evidence that this has been undertaken. The Applicant should demonstrate their consideration and engagement of any responses.
- 2.8** For all events which require a road closure order, the Applicant will need to provide a risk assessment which consists of:
 - A map indicating positions of road closure/route diversion

- A map indicating positions of stewards
- A risk assessment identifying risks and appropriate control measures associated with the event
- A management plan for setting out the closure
- A contingency plan, which should identify measures that are in place to ensure safety of the public and participants and access for emergency services in the event of any unforeseen circumstances
- A road signage schedule
- £10 million Public Liability Insurance

2.9 It is expected that all signs created by the Applicant will be in accordance with the advice contained in Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual and the requirements of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994.

2.10 The Council expects signage warning of the closure to be displayed by the Applicant a minimum of 10 days in advance of the event. In addition, the Applicant is responsible for ensuring that all signage is removed as soon as reasonably possible at the conclusion of the event.

3. Fees – Road Closure Orders

3.1 A non-refundable fee will usually apply to make an application for a Road Closure. Fees and Charges are published on the Council's website. The fee must be paid on making the application.

3.2 If the closure requested is solely for an event of national importance, such as commemorative occasions, then the Council reserves the ability to waive the fee in those cases. The decision whether to waive the fee is solely at the discretion of the Council. If Applicants are unsure whether a fee will apply, they are advised to contact the relevant department and obtain confirmation before making their application.

3.3 All advertising, signage, notices and any other associated costs remain the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

4. Procedure and Determining Applications

4.1 Road closures will affect the movement and accessibility of all residents and businesses for the duration of the event and applications will have to be reviewed by the Council before any approvals can be given.

4.2 Upon receiving a valid application, the Council will give notice of the proposed road closure on the Council's website. This notice will invite comments in favour or against the road closure by a specific date. Comments can be made by email or post to addresses which can be located on the Council's website.

4.3 The Council will reasonably consider any relevant comments for example relating to public safety or travel disruption. Such comments will be considered in the context of the application as a whole before a decision is made.

- 4.4** If there are comments objecting to the road closure this does not automatically mean the event cannot go ahead, but the objections will be fully considered by the Council when making its decision whether to make the road closure.
- 4.5** The Council will expect that in the first instance the Applicant will engage with those making any comments objecting to the road closure to attempt to resolve the matter informally and without the need for the Council to intervene.
- 4.6** Where objections are received from the County Council, Thames Valley Police or another partner organisation and their concerns cannot be adequately addressed, the Council will not proceed with the order and the application will be refused. Any fee paid in relation to the application will not be refundable.
- 4.7** Accordingly, the Council reserves the right to refuse a road closure, the reason for the refusal may include (but not limited to) one or more of the following:
- The event organiser has not given the Council enough time to process the application;
 - There is a risk to public safety;
 - The road closure covers heavily trafficked roads, a main bus route or there is likely to be too much disruption to traffic flow;
 - The event organisers risk assessment identifies unacceptable risks;
 - The requested closure closes the road for too long a period;
 - There is no satisfactory emergency services access to the road closure;
 - There are objections that cannot be resolved;
 - The application relates to an inappropriate event which the Council considers falls outside the scope of the legislation;
 - The road closure requirement falls outside of the Act provisions; and
 - The application is vexatious or not made in good faith.
- 4.8** Determination of applications will be made by the appropriate officer in consultation with a representative of Legal Services. The Council will provide a notice of the decision in writing.
- 4.9** If an application is granted, the Council will provide a scanned copy of the sealed Order to the Applicant. The Applicant will then need to place copies of the sealed Order in prominent location(s) on the road subject to the Road Closure Order (See also 2.10 above). The Applicant should then confirm in writing to the Council that the signage has been displayed in accordance with 2.10 above. Ideally pictures should be taken of the signage displayed. The Council will also take steps to update its website to confirm when the Order will come into effect.
- 4.10** If the Council refuses an application, there is no statutory right of appeal. The only method of challenge would be to judicially review the Council's decision. The Council would strongly suggest obtaining professional legal advice from a solicitor before considering this type of application.
- 4.11** If the Council refuses an application, this does not necessarily prevent a further application. However, a further fee would usually be required. This is subject to the Council's discretion not to charge a fee where it considers the circumstances to be appropriate.

5. Signage and Managing the Road Closure

5.1 The Applicant is solely responsible for ensuring that all safeguards, signage, barriers and stewards are in place. The Council will not be held responsible for any damage to property or injury to any person(s) arising from or in connection with the event or closure.

6. Emergency Access

6.1 An Applicant must consider emergency access during the road closure. Access points must be maintained for emergency access and egress at all times during the road closure.

6.2 If hard barriers are to be used, these must be staffed at all times to ensure emergency access and egress. Space must be identified and maintained within the closure site for an emergency vehicle to be able to park if required to respond

Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the 'protected characteristics' may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Mandy Fathers

Date of assessment: 31.01.24

Telephone: 01285 623571

Email: mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE POLICY

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

To introduce a new policy to support the application process of temporary road closures as well as ensuring consistency within the administration and approval

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

The Town Police Clauses Act 1847

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Oxfordshire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Benchmarking and reviewing of neighbouring authorities policies and guidance
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

N/A

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

N/A

If NO please outline any planned activities

N/A

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	✓
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People			✓	inclusive to people of different age groups, but it is not specific to age	
Age – Old People			✓	inclusive to all ages	
Disability			✓	inclusive to people with disabilities but is not specific to disability	
Sex – Male			✓	inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Sex – Female			✓	inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			✓	inclusive to people of all races, but it is not specific to race	
Religion or Belief			✓	inclusive to people of all religions, but it is not specific to religion	
Sexual Orientation			✓	inclusive to all types of sexual orientation, but it is not specific to sexual orientation	

Gender Reassignment			✓	inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	inclusive to people who are pregnant and/or on maternity, but it is not specific to this group	
Geographical impacts on one area			✓	inclusive to the whole of the West Oxfordshire district	
Other Groups			✓	inclusive to all other groups that are not mentioned	
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.			✓	inclusive to the whole of the West Oxfordshire district	

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

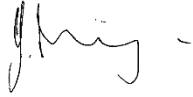

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
Implement Policy following the mandatory democratic procedures	M Fathers	Lauren Hanratty	1.4.24
Work with finance on fees / changes may be required to webpay	M Fathers	Lauren Hanratty	As soon as approved to ensure can start charging from 1.4.24
Update officers responsible for the administration	M Fathers	Lauren Hanratty	As soon as approved

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?

n/a

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where a negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Mandy Fathers	Date:	31.1.24
Line Manager:		Date:	31.01.24
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:		Date:	31.01.24

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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 – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION – FIXED PENALTY NOTICE POLICY</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment. Email: Lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Assistant Director, Resident Services. Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Mandy Fathers – Business Manager, Environmental, Welfare and Revenue Services. Email: mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider a new policy for the administration of Fixed Penalty Notices.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Fixed Penalty Notice Policy Annex B – Equality Impact Assessment</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the report and approve the Fixed Penalty Notice Policy; 2. Agree to implement the Fixed Penalty Notice Policy following the standard call-in period.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director, Director of Finance (Publica)</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides that local authorities can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to a person believed to have committed specified environmental offences.
- 1.2** Fixed penalties can be an effective and visible way of responding to environmental crimes and provide a quicker and proportionate alternative to prosecution through the courts. They allow the person believed to have committed an offence the opportunity to discharge their liability to conviction for that offence by the payment of a fixed penalty.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The Council deals with a range of offences, several of which can be dealt with by way of an FPN. A FPN can be served on an individual or business for an offence.
- 2.2** It offers the recipient the opportunity to pay a penalty rather than being taken to court and prosecuted. By paying the FPN the recipient discharges their liability to conviction for the offence for which the FPN was issued.
- 2.3** This Policy is designed to inform members of the public what they can expect from the Council in terms of how it serves Fixed Penalty Notices. It also sets out how we will respond to appeals and makes it clear when the Council will issue FPNs in terms of offence.
- 2.4** The policy covers the following environmental crime offences:
 - Duty of Care
 - Failure to produce a Waste Transfer Note or Duty of Care Certificate
 - Fly Tipping
 - Littering
 - Dog Fouling
 - Abandoned vehicles
 - Fly Posting
 - Commercial waste receptacle offences

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1** The Council could decide not to implement the Fixed Penalty Notice policy.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** It is not intended that the FPN regime acts as an additional source of income for the authority and use of the receipts of FPNs is set out in legislation.
- 4.2** In general, as the success of any FPN is advertised, the public should become more compliant and fewer offences should be committed and less money will be received.
- 4.3** Any income will be used to offset costs associated with issuing the fixed penalty notices which will be met from existing budgets, as well as environmental campaigns to increase education and compliance.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The offences for which a fixed penalty notice can be issued are set out in various Acts and the enforcement procedures and processes will need to comply with the relevant legislation.
- 5.2** In addition to the legislation relating to the offences, there are other areas of legislation that will also need to be considered and complied with, these include but are not limited to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in connection with the investigation of offences.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

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

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** An equality impact assessment has been completed.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Effective and visible enforcement is key to tackling environmental crime and supporting council priorities. Reducing environmental crime will enhance the local district and reduce land contamination.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1** None
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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

FIXED PENALTY NOTICE POLICY

	Page(s)
Introduction	3
Scope of Policy	3
Duty of Care	3-4
Fly tipping	5
Littering	5
Dog Fouling	5
Abandoned and Nuisance	6
Fly Posting	6
Household and Commercial Waste	7
Dealing with Non-compliance	7
Levels of Enforcement	7-8
Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices	8
Issuing Fines	8-9
Appeals	9

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides that local authorities can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to a person believed to have committed specified environmental offences.
- 1.2 Fixed penalties can be an effective and visible way of responding to environmental crimes and provide a quicker and proportionate alternative to prosecution through the courts. They allow the person believed to have committed an offence the opportunity to discharge their liability to conviction for that offence by the payment of a fixed penalty. However, if an alleged offender does not pay a FPN fine then the matter would be put forward for prosecution for the original offence.
- 1.2 This policy sets out West Oxfordshire District Councils FPN procedures and compliments West Oxfordshire District Councils Corporate Enforcement policy.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This policy covers waste and local environmental quality issues experienced across the district as follows: -
 - Duty of Care
 - Failure to produce a Waste Transfer Note or Duty of Care Certificate
 - Fly Tipping
 - Littering
 - Dog Fouling
 - Abandoned vehicles
 - Fly Posting
 - Commercial waste receptacle offences
- 2.2 Enforcement action to deal with these offences is essential in maintaining a clean and safe environment.

3. Duty of Care

- 3.1 West Oxfordshire District Council provides a comprehensive waste collection service through Ubico, including recycling materials from residents, non-recyclable waste, commercial waste, bulky goods, green waste, and white goods. These services enable residents and businesses to dispose of their waste safely and legally.
- 3.2 The duty of care applies to all controlled waste as follows:

- Household waste
- Industrial/commercial waste, including any commercial activity run from a household.

3.3 Households (occupiers of domestic property). Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 requires all occupiers of domestic properties to take reasonable measures to ensure that waste produced on their property is only transferred to an authorised person for disposal.

3.4 In all investigations of breaches of household waste duty of care, individuals will be given the opportunity to demonstrate they took reasonable steps to determine the person that took their waste was authorised to do so. If fly-tipped waste is traced to an individual, and they are unable to identify who took their waste, or the carrier that they identified is unauthorised, then it is reasonable to believe they have not met their duty of care.

3.5 Bulky Waste. Householders have a duty to ensure that only a registered waste carrier removes households, garden, or construction waste from their property. They should also be able to provide documentary evidence of a waste transfer note, upon request.

3.6 Waste Producers (Businesses). The duty of care applies to all businesses whose activities produce waste. This includes private sector businesses such as shops, offices, factories, and tradespersons such as builders or glaziers, and public sector services such as schools and hospitals, as well as charities and voluntary and community groups. It also includes permitted operations or exempt facilities that produce waste as part of their activities. If, in carrying out a waste operation, the nature or composition of the waste changes, the business will be regarded as a producer of waste.

3.7 Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on businesses to take all reasonable and applicable measures to ensure that:

- Waste is not stored, transported, treated or disposed of illegally or in a way that causes pollution or harm
- Waste is safely and securely stored so that it cannot escape
- Waste is transferred to an authorised person or for authorised transport
- When waste is transferred, it is accompanied by a full written description of the waste and a completed Waste Transfer Note enabling others to avoid contravention of the duty of care

3.8 Businesses must be sure that their waste is transferred to a company licensed by the Environmental Agency to take it and transport, recycle, or dispose of it safely.

4. Fly-Tipping

4.1 Fly-tipping is an offence under section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Act does not provide a comprehensive definition of litter or refuse; however, it is considered that a single plastic sack of rubbish should normally be considered fly tipping rather than litter.

- 4.1 FPN's for fly-tipping offences can be served on any identified perpetrator, including homeowners/occupiers, business owners and registered keepers of vehicles witnessed depositing larger amounts of waste from a vehicle.

5. Littering

- 5.1 Section 87 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990 states than an offence is committed if anything is dropped, thrown, left, or deposited that causes defacement, in any place open to the air that the public have access to with or without payment.
- 5.2 Litter includes cigarette ends, chewing gum, bags of dogs' faeces and waste/litter found to have come from commercial or household premises.
- 5.3 Section 98(5a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 states that certain smoking-related materials, such as cigarette ends, and discarded chewing gum and the remains of other products designed for chewing, are specifically items of litter, when dropped. These items are problematic and expensive to clean up and do a lot of damage to the environment and waters. Placing a cigarette end down a drain or in a stream is also an offence and will result in the issuing of an FPN.
- 5.4 West Oxfordshire District Council provides litterbins in High Streets and other locations across the district, including parks and open spaces. Litterbins are also provided by many retail and commercial premises, especially those selling food and drink. If there isn't a bin available, it is the responsibility of the person(s) to take their rubbish with them either to another bin or to dispose of at home.
- 5.2 Littering from vehicles is an offence under section 89(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and as such the council has powers to issue FPNs to the owner of a vehicle where an officer is able to show that litter was thrown from a vehicle in the council's district. West Oxfordshire District Council, as a local authority has a duty to keep land in its authority, including the highway and roads clean, so far as practicable.

6. Dog Fouling

- 6.1 Dog fouling is the most unacceptable and offensive type of litter on our streets Dog -fouling carries an FPN in the following circumstances -
- Dog fouling and the failure to clear up the faeces - on all public and open land in the district
 - Failing to produce a receptacle for picking up faeces when asked to do so by an authorised officer
- 6.2 If a person fails to meet these requirements or to comply with a request from an authorised officer of the council, they could be issued with the FPN.

7. Abandoned Vehicles and Nuisance Vehicles and Repair of Vehicles on the Road

- 7.1 Section 2 of The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 (RDA Act 1978) makes it an offence to abandon a motor vehicle. Part 2, clause 10 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Bill inserts two new sections in the RDA Act 1978, 2A and 2B.
- 7.2 Section 2A gives an authorised officer of a local authority the power to issue a fixed penalty notice in respect of an offence of abandoning a vehicle, offering the offender the opportunity to discharge any liability for the offence.
- 7.3 Section 2B enables an authorised officer of a local authority to require the name and address of the person to whom he proposes to issue a fixed penalty notice. A person commits an offence if he gives false or inaccurate details.
- 7.4 Under Section 3 of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 it is an offence to expose vehicles for sale on a road.

A person is guilty of an offence if at any time—

- he leaves two or more motor vehicles parked within 500 metres of each other on a road or roads where they are exposed or advertised for sale, or
 - he causes two or more motor vehicles to be so left.
- 7.5 Under Section 4 of the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 A person who carries out restricted works on a motor vehicle on a road is guilty of an offence, subject as follows.

For the purposes of this section “restricted works” means—

- (a) works for the repair, maintenance, servicing, improvement or dismantling of a motor vehicle or of any part of or accessory to a motor vehicle.
- (b) works for the installation, replacement or renewal of any such part or accessory.

8 Fly Posting

- 8.1 FPN’s for fly posting are used under section 43 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2023.
- 8.2 Maintaining and improving the physical appearance and condition of the local environment enhances the quality of life of the community. Flyposting undermines this objective and can be a blight on an area.
- 8.3 Fly posting is putting up without consent from the owner, posters or stickers on properties, lamp posts or other structures on the street such as:
- Sticking posters onto boarded up shop advertising an event
 - Attaching a poster to a lamp post advertising a business

9 Household and Commercial Waste Receptacles

- 9.1 FPN's for receptable offences are issued under section 46 and 47 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 9.2 Businesses have a duty to ensure that their waste is stored, presented and disposed of in accordance with the waste Duty of Care. FPN's will be used after a notice has been issued and when the waste is likely to cause a nuisance or be detrimental to the amenities of the locality. This includes:
- Bins left on the pavement outside of agreed collection days and times
 - Bins blocking the highway
 - Bins with size, construction or maintenance issues
- 9.3 Household have a duty to comply with the requirements of the Council for the collection and removal of the waste receptacles in accordance with Section 9.2.

10 Dealing with non-compliance

- 10.1 The Council will take a firm and fair approach in the implementation of its enforcement procedures and will take a robust stance towards offences. Negotiation, education, advice, and support will also be used where appropriate.
- 10.2 The Council reserves the right to resort to enforcement action in the first instance, if the circumstances warrant this, rather than following a policy of education, advice and support.
- 10.3 Enforcement procedures will always follow statutory requirement. The Council will seek to deal with offences expeditiously by the use of FPN's, using prosecutions only when these options are not available or in the case of persistent offenders and serious environmental crime offences.
- 10.4 Investigations into fly tipping are resource intensive and can be lengthy and complex. Therefore, the maximum legislative FPN amount will be imposed for any person(s) found to have committed an offence under section 33(1)(a).

11 Levels of Enforcement Action

- 11.1 Enforcement is any formal or informal enforcement action to prevent or rectify infringements of legislation. Whilst the enforcement options may differ depending on the legislation applied, the principles of application remain consistent. The council will engage with individuals, businesses or the community to educate and enable compliance when and where it is appropriate.

Enforcement tools include:

- Visits
- inspections for the purpose of checking compliance with the law

- verbal and written advice on legal requirements and good practise
- written warnings
- simple cautions
- issuing FPN's
- prosecution
- liaison and co-operation with other enforcement authorities and organisations where appropriate, such as the Police or the Environmental Agency

12 Issuing of FPN's

12.1 A FPN will only be issued when all of the following apply:

- Evidence of an offence has been committed
- a FPN is a proportionate response
- there is evidence to support prosecution if the offender does not pay the FPN
- the offender understands why the FPN is being issued

12.2 An FPN will not be issued if any of the following apply:

There is no criminal liability:

- the person in question is exempt; for example, a blind person whose dog has fouled in an area where a PSO applies
- the offender is under the age of 18, when the child's parent or guardian may be informed

If enforcement action is inappropriate or would be disproportionate for the offence:

- it is not in the public interest to do so
- the offender is vulnerable; for example, someone who suffers from a mental impediment

If prosecution is more suitable:

- the offence is major; for example, where an extensive quantity of waste is fly tipped or where the content of the waste is hazardous
- the offence is committed by a persistent offender
- the offender is violent or aggressive

13 Issuing Fines

13.1 FPN's will be issued when an Authorised Officer observes or has evidence that an offence has been committed. The FPN gives the alleged offender an opportunity to avoid prosecution by payment of the penalty. A FPN is therefore only issued where there is adequate evidence to support a prosecution. The efficient use of FPNs will improve the effectiveness of the

enforcement process, resulting in officers being able to focus on more complex and serious cases.

- 13.2 Payment of FPN: The FPN must be paid within 28 days of it being served, with a reduction of the fine, if it is paid within 14 days. If the FPN is not paid, a reminder letter will be issued, requesting payment, and setting out what action the Council will take to recover the outstanding payment. If after such time the FPN still remains unpaid, a 'letter before action' will be sent setting out what action the Council will take.
- 13.3 A FPN provides the alleged offender with the opportunity to discharge liability for prosecution by paying the penalty but there is no obligation to pay an FPN. In the event of non-payment, the case will be referred to the Council's Legal Team for the matter to be referred to the Magistrates Court for prosecution.

14 Appeals

- 14.1 There is no statutory right of appeal against a FPN, but the Council will give consideration to representations put forward by an alleged offender. Appeals must be made in writing. A FPN may be cancelled following the review of the information; where this is so the recipient of the FPN will be notified in writing. Should the FPN remain payable, payment will be due within 14 days of the letter notifying the decision to the recipient.

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Equality and Ruralty Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the 'protected characteristics' may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Mandy Fathers

Date of assessment: 21.12.2023

Telephone: 01285 623571

Email: mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Fixed Penalty Notice Policy

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

To implement a new policy in respect of the administration of Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crime offences

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 provides that local authorities can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to a person believed to have committed specified environmental offences

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Oxfordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Local Authority policies
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

N/A

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

N/A

If NO please outline any planned activities

N/A

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
-----------------	----------

NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	✓
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of different age groups, but it is not specific to age	
Age – Old People			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all ages	
Disability			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people with disabilities but is not specific to disability	
Sex – Male			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Sex – Female			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all races, but it is not specific to race	
Religion or Belief			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all religions, but it is not specific to religion	
Sexual Orientation			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all types of sexual orientation, but it is not specific to sexual orientation	

Gender Reassignment			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people who are pregnant and/or on maternity, but it is not specific to this group	
Geographical impacts on one area			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of the West Oxfordshire district	
Other Groups			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all other groups that are not mentioned	
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of the West Oxfordshire district	

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)



Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
Implement Policy	Philip Measures	Jack Graham	Following council call-in procedures

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?


n/a

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where a negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Mandy Fathers	Date:	21.12.23
Line Manager:		Date:	21.12.23
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:		Date:	21.12.23

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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 – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>BUSINESS RATES RELIEF: 2024/2025. RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE SCHEME</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance. Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Assistant Director, Resident Services. Email: jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Mandy Fathers – Business Manager, Environmental, Welfare and Revenues. Email: mandy.fathers@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To consider a scheme of rate relief for retail premises as outlined by Government in the Autumn Statement 2023.</p>
<p>Annex</p>	<p>Annex A – Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Discount Criteria.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure scheme as set out in Annex A for 2024/2025; 2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Resident Services for the award of such reliefs.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services. Assistant Director, Director of Finance (Publica)</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The government has recognised that ongoing difficulties as well as longer-term challenges continue to face the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors.
- 1.2** The government is therefore continuing its relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England to support local high streets as they evolve and adapt to changing consumer demands for 2024/2025.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The Chancellor announced in his Autumn Budget that eligible hereditaments will continue to receive 75% business rate relief up to a cash cap of £110,000 per business.
- 2.2** Local authorities are expected to use their discretionary relief powers (under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended) to grant these discounts in line with the relevant eligibility criteria as detailed within Annex A (attached).
- 2.3** The Council will be compensated for the cost of granting these discounts through a section 31 grant from government.
- 2.4** Guidance has been provided in respect of which businesses should benefit from this relief and those that should not as detailed within the attached Annex. The Council's Discretionary Rate Relief policy will also be amended with a separate annex detailing the qualifying criteria.
- 2.5** These changes will take effect from 1 April 2024.
- 2.6** The team responsible for the administration of Business Rates will identify those businesses eligible for this relief and apply it to their 2024/2025 liability. Those eligible businesses will see the reduction on their annual business rate demand notice.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1** None

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Central government will fully reimburse local authorities for the local share of relief awarded to those qualifying businesses entitled to this relief using a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 providing the council adopt the recommended approach when granting relief.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The government is not changing the legislation around the relief available to businesses and expects councils to grant the relief under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1988, as amended.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.** There are no risks associated with this report as the Council will be following central government guidance.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 None

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- Cabinet 13 March 2023. Agenda item 109

10.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.westoxon.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic@westoxon.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

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Annex A

Business Rates Expanded Retail Discount Criteria

This discount will apply to occupied retail, leisure and hospitality properties in the year 2024/25. There will be no rateable value limit on the discount

Properties that will benefit from the discount will be occupied hereditaments that are wholly or mainly being used:

- a) As shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues;
- b) For assembly and leisure; or
- c) As hotels, guest and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation.

The Government has issued guidance relating to which types of establishments should be considered in (a) as follows:

- i. **Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:**
 - Shops (such as florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off licence, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc.)
 - Charity shops
 - Opticians
 - Post offices
 - Furnishing shops / display rooms (such as carpet shops, double glazing, garage doors)
 - Car/caravan showrooms
 - Second-hand car lots
 - Markets
 - Petrol stations
 - Garden centres
 - Art galleries (where art is for sale/hire)
- ii. **Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:**
 - Hair and beauty services (such as hairdressers, nail bars, beauty salons, tanning shops etc.)

- Shoes repairs/key cutting
 - Travel agents
 - Ticket officers e.g. for theatre
 - Dry cleaners
 - Launderettes
 - PC/TV/domestic appliance repair
 - Funeral directors
 - Photo processing
 - Tool hire
 - Car hire
 - Employment agencies
 - Estate agents and letting agents
 - Betting shops
- iii. **Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public:**
- Restaurants
 - Takeaways
 - Sandwich shops
 - Coffee shops
 - Pubs
 - Bars
- iv. **Hereditaments that are being used as cinemas**
- v. **Hereditaments that are being used as live music venues:**
- Live music venues are hereditaments wholly or mainly used for the performance of live music for the purpose of entertaining an audience. Hereditaments cannot be considered a live music venue for the purpose of business rates relief where a venue is wholly or mainly used as a nightclub or a theatre, for the purposes of the Town and County Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).
 - Hereditaments can be a live music venues if used for other activities, but only if those activities (i) are merely ancillary or incidental to the performance of live music (e.g. the sale/supply of alcohol to audience members) or (ii) do not affect the fact that the primary activity for the premises is the performance of live music (e.g. because those

other activities are insufficiently regular or frequent, such as a polling station or a fortnightly community event).

The Government has issued guidance relating to which types of establishments should be considered in (b) as follows:

i. Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including for the viewing of such activities)

- Sports grounds and clubs
- Museums and art galleries
- Nightclubs
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Stately homes and historic houses
- Theatres
- Tourist attractions
- Gyms
- Wellness centres, spa, massage parlours
- Casinos, gambling clubs and bingo halls

ii. Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public

- Public halls
- Clubhouses, clubs and institutions

The Government has issued guidance relating to which types of establishments should be considered in (c) as follows:

i. Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business:

- Hotels, Guest and Boarding Houses
- Holiday homes
- Caravan parks and sites

The list below sets out the types of uses that the government does not consider to be an eligible use for the purpose of relief:

i. Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:


- Financial services (e.g. banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, short term loan providers)
- Medical services (e.g. vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
- Professional services (e.g. solicitors, accountants, insurance agents/financial advisers)
- Post office sorting offices
- MOT test centres

ii. Hereditaments that are reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public

- In line with legal restrictions in section 47(8A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, billing authorities may not grant the discount to themselves or a precepting authority.

State Aid

The business rates expanded retail, leisure and hospitality discount 2024/2025 is not a state aid.

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>CARBON ACTION PLAN</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Andrew Prosser – Executive Member for Climate Change. Email: andrew.prosser@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Charlie Jackson – Assistant Director, Planning and Sustainability. Email: charlie.jackson@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Hannah Kenyon – Climate Change Manager. Email: hannah.kenyon@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To present the West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan, which is proposed to be adopted and resourced by the Council from April 2024.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan; Annex B – KPI Tracker.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Approve the West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan to deliver on the Council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.
<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>YES</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>

Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Andrew Prosser – Executive Member for Climate Change. • Andrew Turner, Business Manager – Assets and Council Priorities.
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I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** In June 2019, West Oxfordshire District Council passed a motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency and made a pledge to become a carbon neutral Council by 2030. The decision was taken at a meeting of Full Council on 26 June 2019.
- I.2** To become carbon neutral, the Council's carbon dioxide emissions must balance the amount of carbon dioxide emissions removed from the atmosphere.
- I.3** The Carbon Action Plan was published in 2020 and includes actions to reduce carbon emissions from the council activities, buildings, and services.
- I.4** From 2019/20 to 2022/23, emissions reduced by 4%. This has primarily been due to reductions in gas and electricity because of energy efficiency measures in Council buildings and leisure sites. On the current trajectory of emissions reduction, the Council will not meet its carbon neutral target by 2030 with approximately 2,289 tonnes of CO₂e needing to be offset and/or inset in 2030.
- I.5** The Plan has been updated to set out the Council's pathway for achieving its carbon neutral target. It also accounts for additional emissions and removes completed actions.
- I.6** The Plan has been written for reference by multiple teams across the Council.
- I.7** The Council's emissions represent 0.49% of the district's total emissions. In addition to minimising internal carbon emissions, the Council is committed to facilitating districtwide carbon reduction through the delivery of the West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy 2021-25.
- I.8** The Climate Change Officer has been made permanent to provide long-term support in delivering the Plan.

I. MAIN POINTS

- I.1** The Carbon Action Plan sets out the Council's pathway for achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, highlighting where there is greatest opportunity to influence change and reduce climate impact. The priority is to minimise carbon emissions then inset and/or offset any residual emissions by verified means.
- I.2** It is a high ambition pathway which is reliant on external factors, for example the availability of funding, national policy, and progress in technological innovations in key areas, as well as embedding carbon reduction across the Council.
- I.3** The Plan includes ten priority actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from council activities, buildings, and services. These actions relate to prevention, buildings, water, waste, transport, procurement, and offsetting/insetting residual emissions.
- I.4** There is strong alignment with the energy hierarchy which minimises energy demand first, followed by improving energy efficiency and renewable energy. Emissions that cannot be removed entirely within the 2030 Pathway will be offset and/or inset, but only once all other steps to minimise carbon emissions have been taken.

- 1.5 The actions will be worked up into projects by various teams and be brought forward for approval in line with the roadmap to 2030. This will involve research and development and an assessment of viability to facilitate well-informed decision making.
- 1.6 The Plan will be monitored and reported on as part of the Council's commitment to reporting its annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, in line with government guidance and the GHG Protocol. A KPI tracker will be used (Annex B).
- 1.7 As well as carbon reduction, actions will also deliver co-benefits, for example avoiding offset costs, providing costs savings and investment returns, increasing thermal comfort, reducing water stress, and upskilling staff.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council does not adopt the Plan. This risks not achieving the Council's carbon neutral target by 2030 as there will be no action plan. The Council would be required to offset more carbon emissions to reach its carbon neutral target through paying for additional carbon credits.
- 2.2 The Plan could be scaled down from its current level of ambition to smaller projects and a shorter timeframe. This also risks not achieving the Council's target.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and made a pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.2 The Plan prioritises actions to achieve the Council's carbon neutral target.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The resourcing required for each project will be worked up as part of the initial viability assessment and feed into annual budget discussions. External funding will be secured where possible.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Some actions do not have funding allocated to them for delivery. There is a risk that not all the actions will be completed by 2030, as resources are yet to be secured.
- 6.2 There is a reputational risk to the Council if it does not achieve its carbon neutral target by 2030.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 Adopting and implementing the Plan for the Council will support carbon reduction and improve the climate for all.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATION

8.1 The Plan will help to address the climate and ecological emergencies.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

(END)

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Carbon Action Plan 2024 – 2030

Reaching West Oxfordshire District Council's carbon neutral target by 2030

Contents table

Introduction.....	2
Purpose.....	2
What will the Plan set out?	2
How will the Council prioritise action?.....	3
How will the Council monitor the plan?	4
Current Council emissions	5
What does the Council measure?	5
How does the Council measure emissions?.....	7
Baseline data	7
Emissions reduction	9
2030 target.....	10
Scenario modelling	10
Offsetting and insetting	13
Action Plan.....	15
Decarbonisation roadmap	16
Avoid future emissions.....	17
Buildings.....	18
Water	21
Waste.....	22
Transport	23
Procurement.....	25
Residual.....	26

Introduction

Purpose

West Oxfordshire District Council (the Council) declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, making its pledge to become a carbon neutral Council by 2030. The decision was taken at a meeting of Full Council on 26 June 2019.

A pledge to be carbon neutral means that the Council needs to balance the carbon dioxide emissions produced as a result of its everyday activities with the amount of carbon dioxide emissions that is removed from the atmosphere. Therefore, the first objective is to minimise the amount of carbon dioxide emissions being released because of Council activities bringing these as close to zero as possible. Any remaining 'residual' emissions will then need to be inset and/or offset through verified means.

The Council's emissions represent 0.49% of the district's total emissions. While the Carbon Action Plan focuses on reducing emissions from council activities, buildings and services, the Council is also committed to facilitating the reduction of wider district emissions through the delivery of its [Climate Change Strategy](#) 2021-25. Action on both fronts is important and supports national decarbonisation targets through learning, demonstrating best practice, and building capacity and skills.

The Council published a Carbon Action Plan in 2020. Since then, it has become good practice to consider additional sources of emissions beyond those previously accounted for, including emissions where the lack of data means that these cannot be reported formally through the Council's carbon reporting process. This document therefore provides an updated version of the Climate Action Plan, covering actions to be undertaken between 2024 and 2030 to reach the carbon neutral target. Additional actions for procurement and waste have been included in line with best practice, while actions from the previous plan which are complete have been removed.

What will the Plan set out?

The Carbon Action Plan sets out the Council's pathway for achieving its target of carbon neutral by 2030. It will:

- Define a set of guiding principles for planning future projects implemented by the Council.
- Set out the process for monitoring, reviewing progress and updating actions so that the Plan remains live and responsive to external influences, technological changes and innovation within the low-carbon and renewable energy sector.
- Present the Council's 2019 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions baseline.
- Present modelling work done to illustrate the rate of change in emissions and the roadmap/pathway required to align with the 2030 target.
- Detail the actions to be undertaken by 2030.

The Carbon Action Plan is not intended as an overly technical document. It is written for reference by multiple stakeholders within the Council and across functions. Detailed technical and specialist projects will fall from this Plan as standalone pieces of work which will be developed and implemented, where necessary, in support of the Council's plans for being carbon neutral.

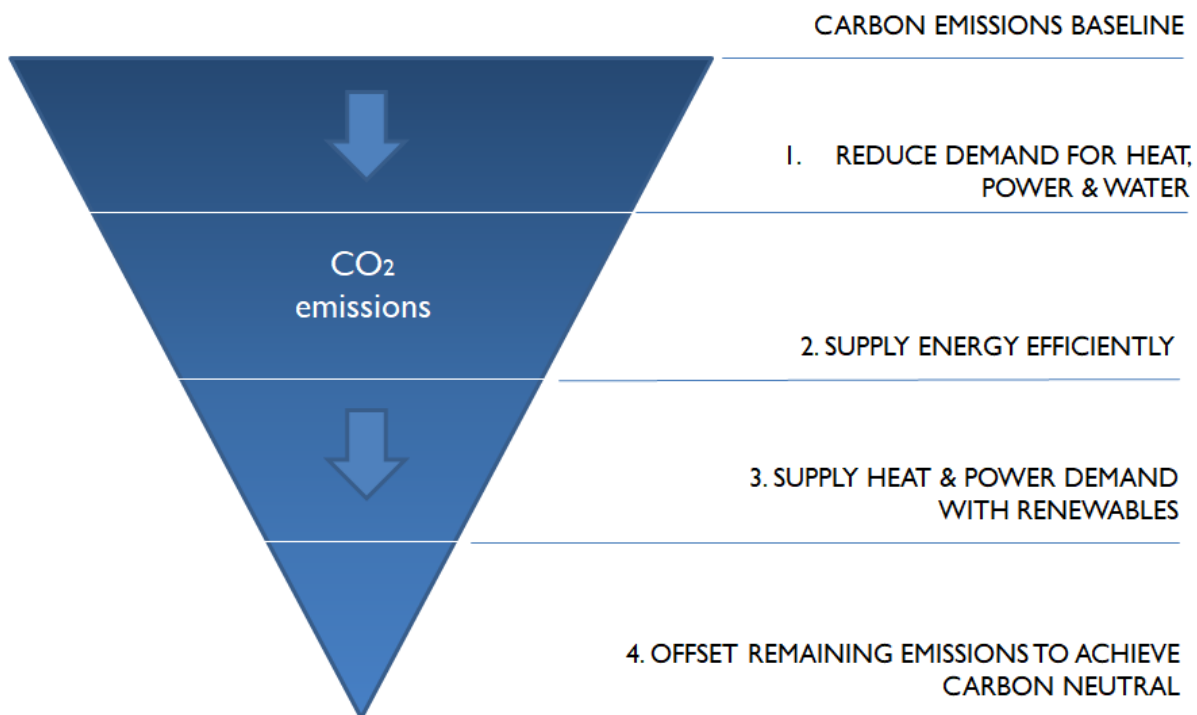
How will the Council prioritise action?

The Council sets out ten priority actions under these headings:

- Prevention
- Buildings
- Water
- Waste
- Transport
- Procurement
- Offsetting/insetting

Guiding principles have been developed in line with the energy hierarchy, illustrated in Figure 1 below, and will be applied as a consistent point of reference in planning of projects and activities being taken forward to deliver this plan.

Figure 1: The energy hierarchy



The timing of projects will be prioritised to align with a roadmap that has been developed as a trajectory for the Council achieving its carbon neutral target, shown on page 16. This roadmap highlights where there is greatest opportunity to influence change and reduce climate impact.

It is recognised that projects will, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the scope, require an element of research and development, which may also be referred to as a viability assessment stage. This is to facilitate well-informed decision making.

Delivering carbon neutrality is an iterative process so projects will need to evolve as the landscape for clean energy and technology evolves. This allows for the lessons learned and experiences taken from one project to feed into and benefit the next. With additional Government stimulus and investment, we can expect to see technology evolving and green energy technology becoming

more accessible. As demand increases for innovative solutions, new technologies are expected to come forward. Where there are opportunities for the Council to pilot innovative approaches, these will be pursued. Developing projects at various stages of a pathway to carbon neutral allows the Council to maximise the benefits of these technological advancements as they occur, and activities have been prioritised in line with expected changes in legislation, funding opportunities and/or technological developments.

How will the Council monitor the plan?

The Carbon Action Plan will be monitored and reported on as part of the Council's current commitment to reporting its annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, in line with government guidance and the GHG Protocol. Monitoring and reporting is also carried out with the objective of meeting the Council's commitment to deliver action in response to its declaration of a climate and ecological emergency.

The impact of actions taken as part of this Plan will be monitored through a time-series analysis to enable year on year comparisons being made and monitoring of changes in Council's climate change impact over time. A live action tracker which monitors performance against KPIs will be developed as a way of ensuring the Plan remains responsive to external influences, funding opportunities and technological innovations.

The Annual Monitoring Report will also be used to report on progress being made towards this Plan's objectives and Council's target of carbon neutral.

What resources will be required?

The resource and finance required, both revenue and capital, will be considered for each project developed. A decision would need to be taken on each as to whether research and viability, followed by delivery, can be implemented through either existing internal resource or through external specialist support, or a combination of the two. Individual Council decisions on the allocation of funding will need to be taken for the implementation of targets contained within this Plan. That will be understood in more detail at the scoping stage of each project.

Delivery of all the actions in the Plan requires a high level of investment. Some projects may provide a financial return on investment and others will not. Carbon reduction measures such as decarbonising the waste fleet, or the leisure centres may be much more expensive for the Council than pursuing traditional, carbon-intensive alternatives.

The Council has finite resources available to achieve its net zero target and, therefore, cannot resource and deliver all the actions in the Plan without significant long-term investment and securing substantial external funding.

The Council will seek to identify and bid for appropriate funding as it becomes available. External grants can fund staff resources, consultancy fees, and capital works required to deliver projects, but this will be determined by the grant funding criteria. External grants often require the submission of an application within a short timeframe and expect delivery of the project and allocated funds within a set period. This may influence the delivery timeline for actions within the Plan.

Individual Council decisions on the allocation of funding will also need to be taken, though that will be understood in more detail at the scoping stage of each project.

Current Council emissions

What does the Council measure?

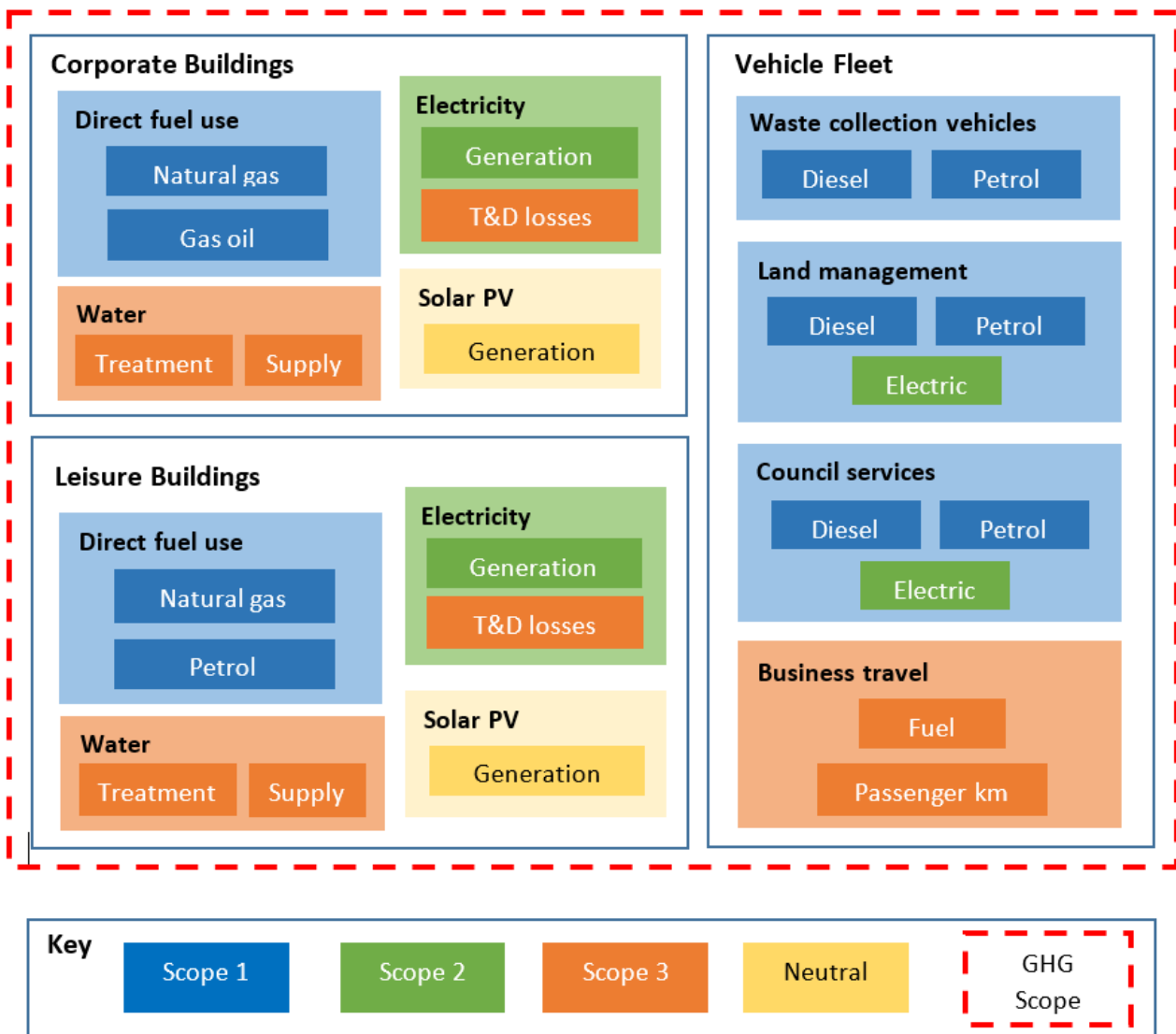
In line with the GHG Protocol, WODC is taking a financial control approach to reporting which means that the Council will account for all emissions over which it has financial control. This excludes emissions from operations in which it has an interest but no control. Therefore, the following emissions are being accounted for:

Scope	Type	Source
1	Fuel for heating (gas, gas oil)	Council offices, properties, and sites
		Leisure buildings
	Liquid fuel for vehicles (petrol, diesel)	Council-owned or operated vehicles
2	Electricity	Council offices, properties, and sites
		Leisure buildings
		Council-owned or operated electric vehicles
3	Business travel (petrol, diesel, public transport)	Staff and Councillor travel for business purposes
	Water	Council offices, properties, and sites
		Leisure buildings
	WTT & Transmission and distribution	Council offices, properties, and sites
		Leisure buildings
N/A	Electricity generation	Council offices, properties, and sites
		Leisure buildings

Out of scope for reporting but included in the plan	Supply chain emissions	Procurement
	Waste	Council offices, properties, and sites
	Fuel for heating, electricity, and water	Leased assets

Figure 2 illustrates the emissions currently reported on by the Council and the boundaries they fall under.

Figure 2: West Oxfordshire District Council emissions



Guidance from the *Greenhouse Gas Protocol for a Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard* has been used to ensure the Council has developed a fair and accurate account of its GHG emissions by including datasets that are:

- 1) Relevant
- 2) Complete
- 3) Consistent
- 4) Transparent
- 5) Accurate

How does the Council measure emissions?

The Council accounts for its GHG emissions as CO₂e. This term stands for carbon dioxide equivalents and is a measure of how much global warming is given by a particular GHG as a function of the amount or concentration of carbon dioxide gas. CO₂e is the common unit used within this Plan to express the contribution of the Council's GHG emissions on global warming and subsequent impact on climate change.

Data from various sources across the Council are used. These source data are quantified using different units of measure. For example, some data obtained are expressed as litres of liquid fuel, either petrol or diesel; some as kWh of gas or electricity; some as distance travelled by car; some as fares incurred on journeys taken by train, bus, or plane. In each case, these data are converted into a single measure of CO₂e. To express the Council's total GHG emissions in terms of CO₂e, conversion factors defined and published by the Government have been used. These conversion factors are reviewed by Government each year to maintain up-to-date and accurate reporting.

As new data, methodologies, and reporting processes become available, the Council may include additional sources of emissions for which the Council is responsible. In widening the scope of emissions being accounted for, performance over time may appear worse than in reality, but this will be clearly communicated in any report updates and, where possible, new data sources will be backdated to minimise this negative impact.

Baseline data

The Council has completed its GHG emissions account for the financial year 2019/2020 which is referred to within this Plan as the Council's baseline.

During 2019/2020, emissions totalled **3,130,991 kg CO₂e**.

By scope

Table 1: Total emissions by scope

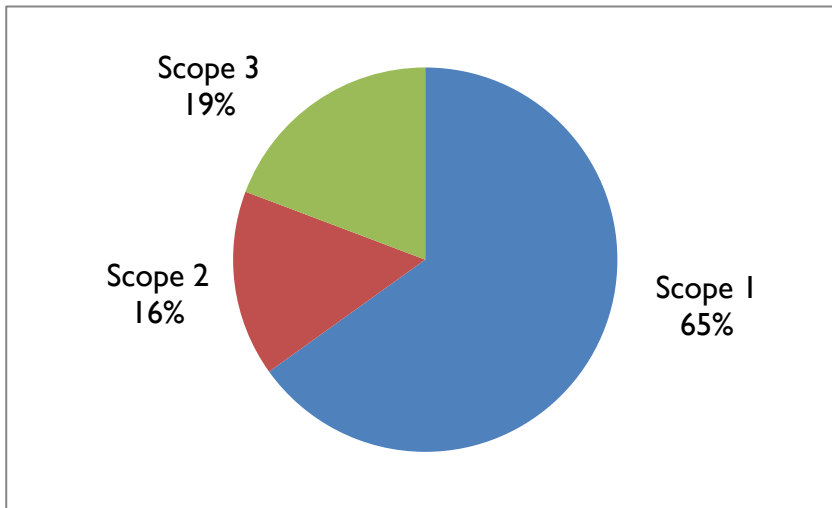
I April 2019 to 31 March 2020	Kg CO ₂ e
Scope 1	2,038,201
Scope 2	490,201
Scope 3	602,589
Total	3,130,991

Scope 1 emissions, associated with gas and liquid fuel, account for 65% of Council emissions.

Scope 2 emissions associated with the purchase of electricity from the National Grid account for 16% of Council emissions.

Scope 3 emissions associated with the transport of gas, electricity, and liquid fuel (referred to as T&D, transport, and distribution, and WTT, well-to-tank), water consumption, and transport miles for staff and Councillor business travel account for the remaining 19% of Council emissions.

Figure 3: Total emissions for 2019/20 by scope



By type/location

Table 2: Total emissions by location

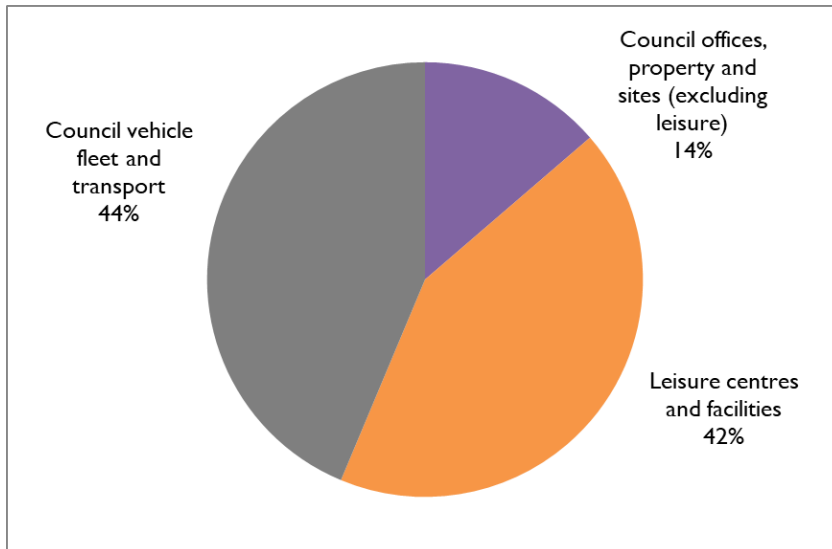
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	Kg CO2e
Council offices, property, and sites (excluding leisure)	427,968
Leisure centres and facilities	1,334,962
Council vehicle fleet and transport	1,368,061
Total	3,130,991

Council offices, property and sites represent 14% of total emissions across scopes 1, 2 and 3.

Leisure centres and facilities account for 42% of Council emissions, across all scopes.

Council vehicle fleet, machinery, and transport, including Council-owned waste trucks currently operated by Ubico, account for 44% of Council emissions.

Figure 4: Total emissions for 2019/20 by location



Emissions reduction

Since 2019/20, emissions have reduced by 4% to 2022/23. This has primarily been because of reductions in gas and electricity as a result of energy efficiency measures in Council buildings and leisure sites.

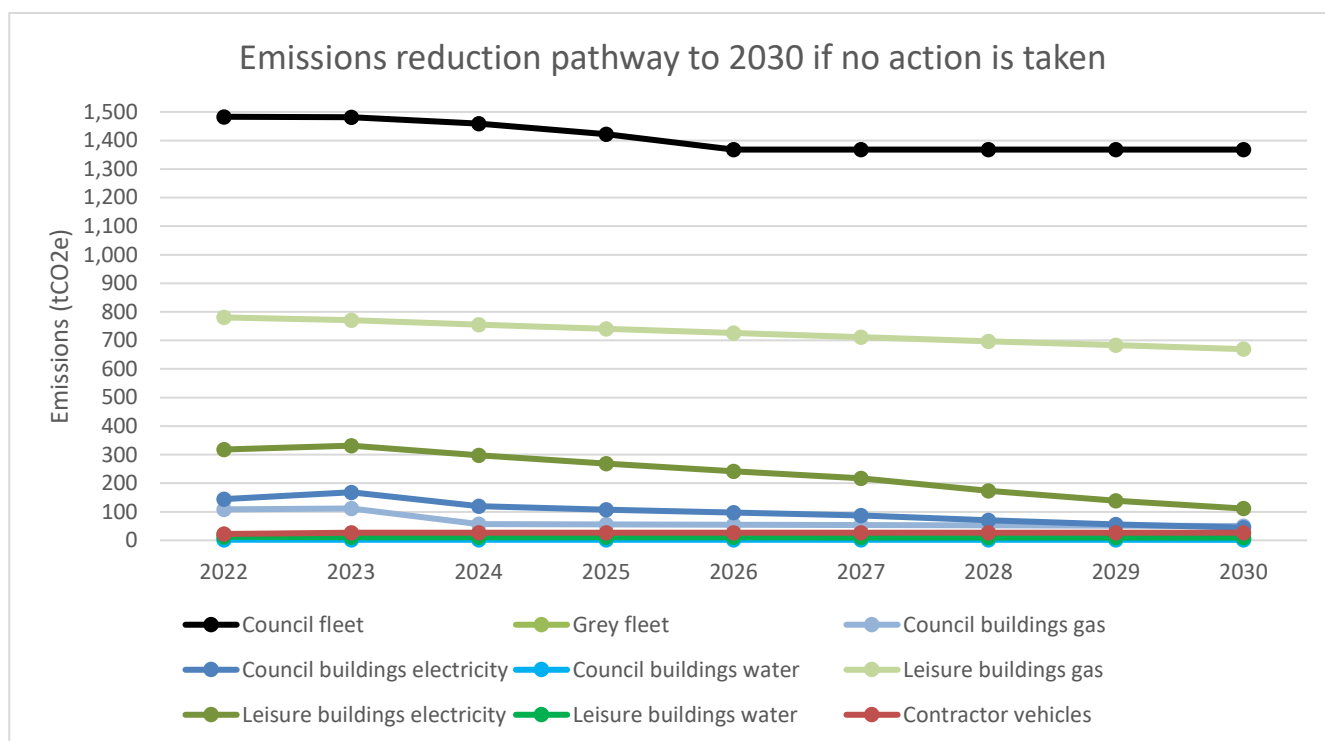
2030 target

Scenario modelling

On the current trajectory of emissions reduction, the Council will not meet its carbon neutral target by 2030, as shown in Figure 5. The reductions under business as usual (BAU) are primarily a result of the projected decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, with some energy efficiency gains and electrification of smaller vehicles in the Council fleet.

To hit the carbon neutral target by 2030, the Council must follow the emission reduction pathway illustrated in Figure 6. The success of this pathway is influenced to some extent by external factors like the availability of funding, national policy, and progress in technological innovations in key areas. The assumptions for the BAU scenario are listed beneath Figure 5 and the actions required to align with the carbon neutral target are listed under Figure 6.

Figure 5: Business as usual (BAU)

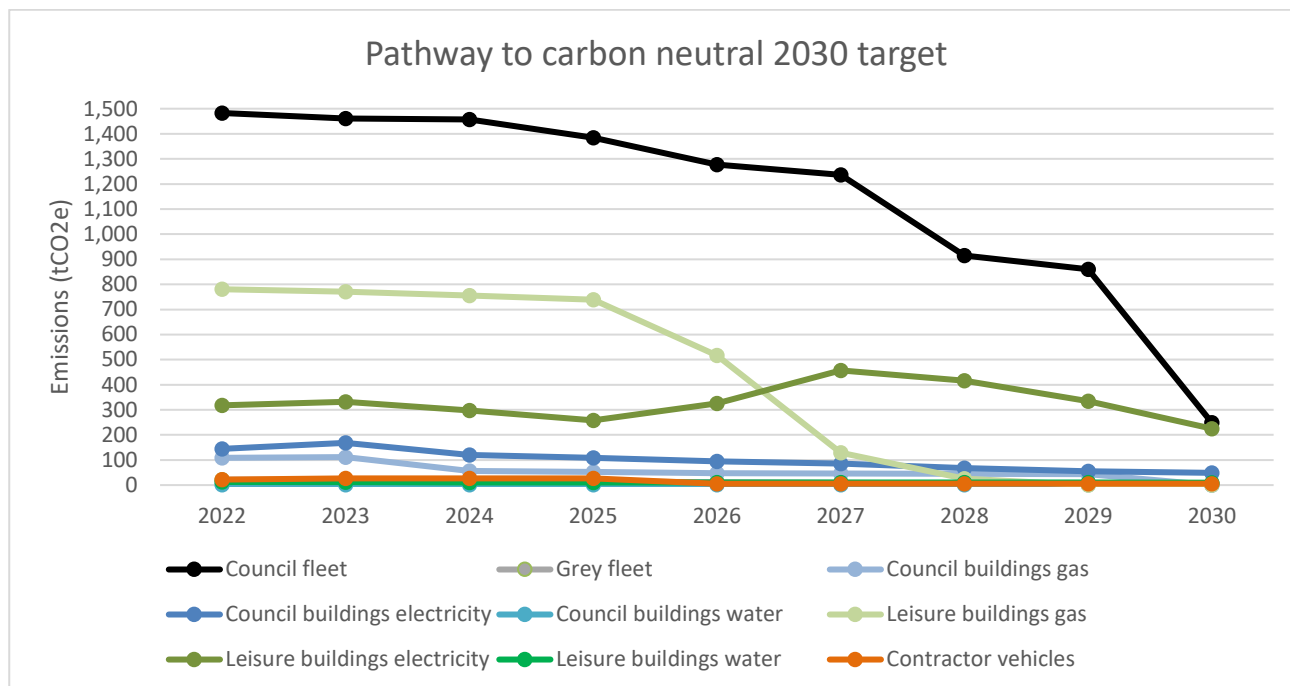


Assumptions:

- Small and medium vehicles will transition to electric, with two refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) shifting to electric before 2030.
- Minor annual reductions of 2% in gas emissions due to energy efficiency across all sites.
- Solar installed on council offices, providing a proportion of the electricity demand.
- The projected decarbonisation of the national electricity grid is applied to this scenario (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) figures).
- No changes to water use.
- No changes to staff travel patterns but proportion of EVs assumed to increase in line with national estimates to 2030.
- Population growth and increased use of services is not accounted for.

Under BAU, approximately 2,109 tonnes of CO₂e would need to be offset and/or inset in 2030, excluding electricity emissions as it is assumed that all electricity would be from certified renewable sources.

Figure 6: Emission reduction pathway for carbon neutral by 2030 target



The carbon neutral pathway would leave approximately 544 tonnes of CO₂e to be offset and/or inset by 2030. This is from unavoidable emissions associated with electricity and water use. The Council should source its electricity from certified renewable sources, meaning that the emissions from electricity would be considered zero from a market-based perspective. This would only leave approximately 10.8 tonnes of CO₂e from water use to be offset and/or inset by 2030 to reach the carbon neutral target.

This pathway assumes a number of key activities occur which are listed in Table 3. However, this plan recognises that the Council will be constrained by a number of external and internal factors which may limit the potential for action in some areas. Where this is the case, italics are used.

Table 3: Activities required to align with the carbon neutral by 2030 pathway

Emission source	Activity
Waste fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial of two electric RCVs undertaken in 2026. • Medium HGVs transition to electric in 2026. • All waste vehicles transition to low-carbon alternatives by 2030, <i>as or before they reach end-of-life</i>.
Other council fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweepers, trucks, vans, and tractors and mowers are all low carbon by 2027. • All petrol and diesel cars or vans are electric by 2030.
Council buildings – gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boilers at the Council offices at Welch Way and the Old Court House are replaced with electric heating systems in 2025 and 2027, respectively.

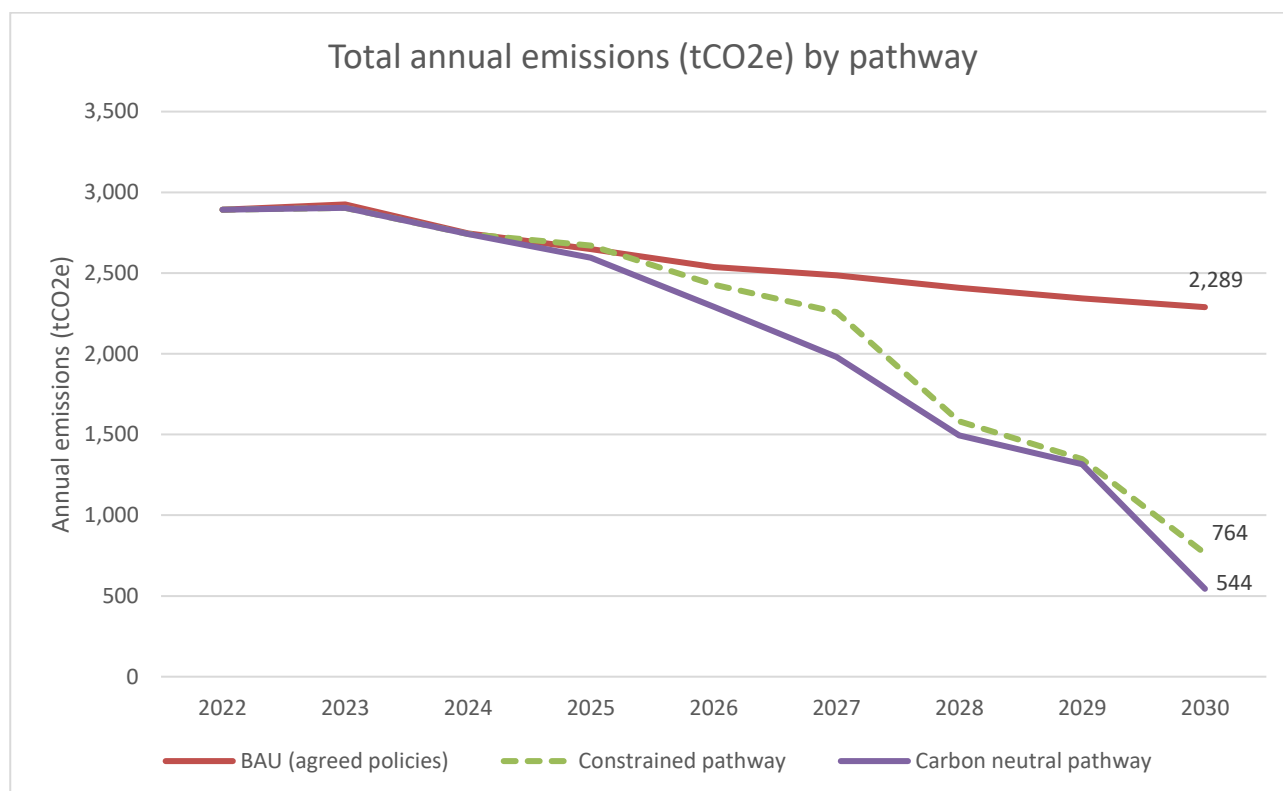
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Woodgreen Offices are decarbonised in 2030 with significant external support.</i>
Council buildings – electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sites improve the fabric and energy efficiency of the building. • Solar panels are installed at Woodgreen in 2024, providing 36% of the building's electricity requirements. • Solar panels are installed at the Council offices on Welch Way, providing 55% of the building's electricity requirements. • Solar panels are installed at the remaining council sites by 2027, providing an estimated 30% of the building's requirements. • LEDs and motion sensors are installed in all public conveniences to minimise electricity use. • All remaining electricity use is supplied from certified renewable energy in 2030.
Council buildings – water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A water fixture replacement programme is implemented to review the flow rate of existing fixtures to minimise water use.
Leisure buildings – gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windrush Leisure Centre is decarbonised by 2026. • Carterton Leisure Centre and Chipping Norton Leisure Centre are decarbonised by 2027, <i>with the support of public sector funding.</i> • Smaller leisure sites are decarbonised by 2028.
Leisure buildings – electricity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar panels are installed at Witney ATP and Carterton Pavilion in 2025 to meet approximately 50% of the building's electricity demand. • Solar panels are installed at the leisure centres as part of the wider decarbonisation schemes, providing between 20% and 55% of the site's electricity demand.
Leisure buildings – water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A water fixture replacement programme is implemented to review the flow rate of existing fixtures to minimise water use.
Business travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in electric pool cars to reduce petrol or diesel use on council business, following a review of pool car demand among staff. • Electric vehicle charging points are installed at or near Council offices by 2025. • <i>Consider introducing staff benefits or incentives to increase the use of public transport.</i> • <i>Flying on Council business is prohibited.</i>
Contractor travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New contracts require the use of electric vehicles by 2026.

Figure 7 illustrates the gap between BAU and the carbon neutral aligned pathway. Acknowledging that the Council is subject to a number of external factors, a 'constrained' pathway is also shown here which recognises areas where minimising emissions may not be feasible depending on:

1. Whether the Council has reasonable authority and capacity to request and enforce an action.
2. Practical or technological constraints.

3. The availability of funding and budget constraints to ensure the long-term security of the Council's operations.

Figure 7: Comparison of emission reduction pathways to 2030



Offsetting and insetting

To achieve the carbon neutral target, the emissions that cannot be removed entirely within the 2030 Pathway would need to be offset and/or inset through a mechanism endorsed within this Plan, but only once all other steps to minimise carbon emissions have been taken. Carbon offsetting could be achieved by paying for a carbon credit, i.e. paying for an equivalent amount of emissions to be reduced or removed elsewhere. The Council will focus on carbon offsetting and/or insetting that derives local benefit as a priority over investing in carbon offset schemes further afield. This could include pursuing insetting approaches – implementing projects that reduce emissions and provide local benefit within a district boundary – alongside recognised offset schemes like the Woodland Carbon Code.

Table 4: Carbon Offsetting and Insetting Schemes

Name	Where the offsets are made	Notes
Recognised schemes		
Woodland Carbon Code	West Oxfordshire and UK	Developed through support of the UK Government, the Environmental Reporting Guidance allows these domestic units to be used like international offsets. Supporting local projects for tree and woodland

		management will be a priority for the Council. Accredited by the UK Environmental Agency.
Peatland Code	UK	Generates carbon offsets from emissions removed from the atmosphere through peat restoration in the UK. There is no peatland in West Oxfordshire, so these credits would be for activities happening elsewhere in the UK. Accredited by the UK Environmental Agency.
Retrofit credit	UK	HACT and PNZ Carbon have produced a retrofit credit that is certified by the Verified Carbon Standard. Credits are issued when projects successfully deliver retrofit and decarbonisation of social housing stock.
World Land Trust carbon offsetting scheme	International	World Land Trust's Carbon Balanced project enables individuals and organisations to offset their residual emissions through the protection and restoration of carbon-rich wildlife habitats in the tropics.
Potential future schemes		
Council energy-efficiency retrofit fund	West Oxfordshire	Equivalent CO2e savings derived from investment into a deep retrofit programme for existing housing stock in the district.
Area Based Insetting schemes	West Oxfordshire	As above, equivalent CO2e savings derived from investment in other schemes, such as low-emission transport, can be used to offset emissions.
Soil, saltmarsh, and land-use carbon credits	West Oxfordshire and UK	Soils hold differing levels of carbon depending on their management. Credits could be derived from schemes that quantify carbon stored in soils, rewarding those whose practices increase sequestration. This is a developing area in the UK.
Seagrass carbon credits	UK	Seagrass can sequester carbon and, while there are international carbon credits for seagrass, there is not yet an established UK seagrass code.

Action Plan

The Council's Carbon Action Plan consists of 10 priority actions which cover emissions produced from a range of sources - Council buildings, properties, and sites; leisure buildings; and Council vehicles and travel.

These actions are to:

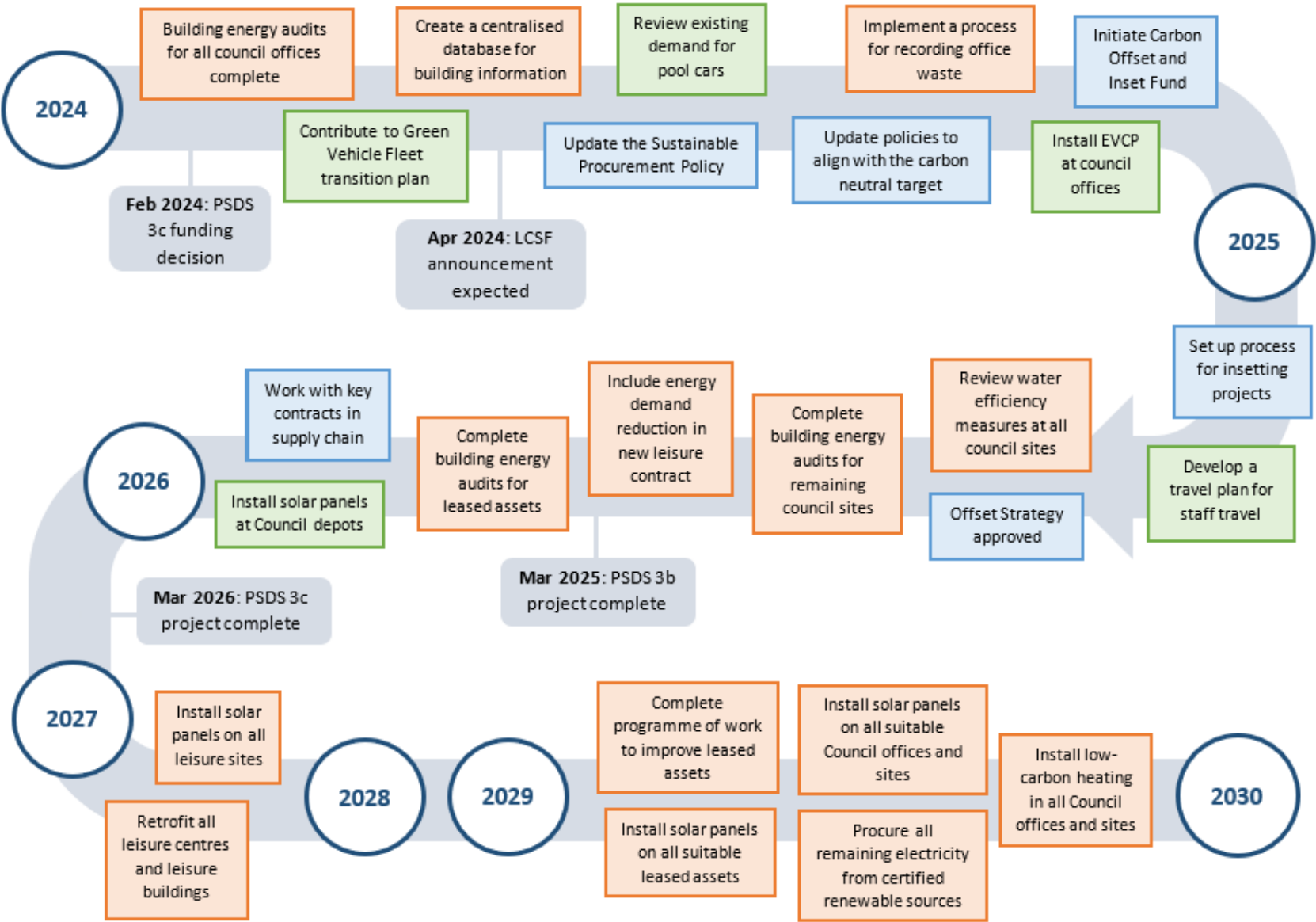
- Avoid future emissions
- Whole building retrofit of Council sites
- Whole building retrofit of leisure sites
- Whole building retrofit of leased assets
- Minimise water demand at Council sites
- Minimise consumption and waste in Council buildings
- Minimise emissions from grey fleet (business travel)
- Minimise emissions from Council fleet
- Minimise emissions from procurement
- Offset and/or inset residual emissions.

These are divided by type of emissions under the following headings: buildings, water, waste, transport, procurement, and residual. Each of these activities has been identified to deliver a reduction in emissions in line with the scenario modelling and carbon budgets for the emissions the Council is responsible for. There are some activities which may also benefit district-wide emissions. Successful delivery of the Plan relies on emissions reduction being embedded across Council operations and working with others, including other local authorities, to share ideas and best practice. Key delivery partners for the action plan are summarised in Figure 7.




Figure 7: Key delivery partners

Property Responsible for building improvements, energy use, maintenance	Estates Responsible for buildings, lease agreements, acquisitions
Finance Responsible for setting up financial mechanisms, reviewing business cases	Planning Responsible for supporting renewable energy, offset, and retrofit schemes
Procurement Responsible for procurement and supply chain emissions	Legal Responsible for ensuring projects and changes align with legal requirements
Leisure Responsible for liaison with leisure providers on building energy use	Waste Responsible for waste service design, including fleet strategy
Communications Responsible for external communication on the Council's climate activities	Ubico Delivery partner responsible for land management, street cleaning and waste



Decarbonisation roadmap



Avoid future emissions

I. Avoid future emissions
<p>While the Carbon Action Plan aims to reduce existing carbon emissions to zero by 2030, it is also important to avoid producing additional future emissions that will only increase the scale of this challenge. Policies and processes inform Council activities so ensuring that these are aligned with net zero and support the Council's carbon neutral target is a critical activity. These might relate to standard processes for replacing building heating systems in Council-owned and tenanted buildings, or ensuring any refurbishments include energy efficiency improvements, or reviewing vehicle policies. This action also embeds climate considerations within all teams.</p>
Key delivery teams
Climate; Estates; Executive Management; Property; Waste
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align policies and processes with net zero • Ensure all new assets are low-carbon • Embed use of the climate impact assessment tool • Carbon Literacy Training • Collaborating on Local Area Energy Planning
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects using the impact assessment tool • Building standard of new properties built or acquired
Co-benefits
<p> Avoids sunken costs from future retrofit requirements by ensuring all new acquisitions and sites are net zero, low-carbon and/or energy efficient.</p> <p> Avoiding future offset costs by reducing the quantity of future emissions.</p> <p> Upskilling staff to become climate experts in their service area.</p>
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Collaboration</u>: Requires successful collaboration between teams to review and update policies and processes. • <u>Availability and affordability of low carbon assets</u>: Low carbon assets are likely to be new build and come with a premium price tag which would limit the assets the Council could consider acquiring. As a major income stream for the Council, protecting the investment portfolio is important as it supports other actions in the Plan.

Buildings

2. Whole-building retrofit of Council sites (except leisure and leased assets)
<p>Emissions from Council buildings make up 14% of the Council's baseline carbon emissions. These primarily come from the use of gas for heating and electricity. To decarbonise our buildings, it is critical to follow the energy hierarchy which first reduces energy demand and improves the energy efficiency of the building fabric, then replaces heating systems with low-carbon alternatives, and finally sources any electricity used from renewable sources.</p> <p>Key activities involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing existing practices, building equipment and energy management practices • Commissioning full building energy assessments to review the building's fabric, heating system, water efficiency, and solar PV potential and make recommendations to improve the building's energy efficiency and decarbonise heating and hot water. The assessments should also consider mechanical ventilation, shading, and cooling. • Individual business cases will need to be worked up because of the recommendations.
Key delivery teams
Climate; Estates; Property
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and reduce energy demand in Council offices, properties, and sites. • Install half-hourly metering to improve energy monitoring. • Complete energy assessments for all Council offices, properties, and sites. • Compile a database of building information for all Council sites. • Improve the building fabric in all Council offices, properties, and sites. • Install low-carbon heating in all Council offices, properties, and sites. • Install solar panels, where viable, on all offices, properties, and sites. • Consider the cost of retrofit as part of wider cost assessments when acquiring new assets.
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of buildings with completed energy audits and decarbonisation plans. • Percent reduction in gas and electricity use following building improvements. • Number of buildings with a low-carbon heating system.
Co-benefits
<p> Cost savings for the Council from lower gas and electricity use.</p> <p> Improved comfort inside the buildings because of draught-proofing, insulation and/or shading measures.</p>
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Financing</u>: constrained Council budgets limits the amount available for investment in improving our buildings. Government funding is currently limited and competitive. Government borrowing is expensive. Private investment should be investigated.

- Officer resource and capability: significant officer time required to plan, implement, and monitor the activities, with limited officers having the knowledge and skills to support project delivery under this theme.
- Wellbeing: If action to improve building energy performance and decarbonise heating and hot water is delayed, summer heatwaves and winter cold spells will have increasingly negative impacts on tenants and buildings occupants.
- Future costs: Piecemeal and ad-hoc action may lead to increased costs further down the line if they are not part of a planned, phased approach. Similarly, installing gas boilers and other fossil fuel infrastructure between now and 2030 may lead to sunken costs as the Council's carbon neutral target would require these systems to be removed by 2030, before their end-of-life.
- Uncertainty: The impact of new technologies on maintenance, replacement and operating costs is uncertain.
- Market volatility: Energy costs are exceedingly difficult to predict in the medium to long term, but these have a significant impact on the business case and payback periods. The cost of retrofit measures in the future is also unknown.
- Infrastructure: Early engagement with the district network operator (DNO) to understand costs and timeframes will be critical to delivery.

3. Whole building retrofit of leisure sites

Emissions from leisure sites made up 42% of the Council's baseline emissions in 2019/2020. To decarbonise our buildings, a hierarchy of actions should be followed to first reduce energy demand and improve energy efficiency of the building's fabric, then replace heating systems with low-carbon alternatives, and finally source any electricity from renewable sources.

Key activities involve:


- Reviewing existing practices, building equipment and energy management practices in partnership with WODC's leisure provider.
- Commissioning full building energy assessments to review the building's fabric, heating system, water efficiency, and solar PV potential and make recommendations to improve the building's energy efficiency and decarbonise heating and hot water. The assessments should also consider mechanical ventilation, shading, and cooling.
- Developing individual business cases as a result of the recommendations to secure funding for building retrofit, collaborating with WODC's leisure provider.

Key delivery teams




Climate; Estates; Legal; Leisure

Activities

- Determine existing demand reduction plans with WODC's leisure provider.
- Assess all leisure buildings for energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures.
- Improve the building fabric of all leisure buildings.
- Install low-carbon heating in all leisure buildings.
- Install solar panels, where viable, on all leisure buildings.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider decarbonisation opportunities and investment as part of the procurement process for new leisure contracts.
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of buildings that have undergone retrofit works. Number of buildings with detailed designs for low-carbon heating Number of buildings with energy and solar assessments Percent reduction in gas and electricity use following building improvements
Co-benefits
 Cost savings for the Council and leisure provider because of energy efficiency improvements.
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Financing</u>: Government funding to support retrofit projects is limited and highly competitive. Private investment should be investigated. <u>Long-term viability of the site</u>: Council commitment to retaining sites is required to justify the business case for investment. <u>Officer resource and capability</u>: significant officer time required to plan, implement, and monitor the activities, with limited officers having the knowledge and skills to support project delivery under this theme. <u>Market volatility</u>: Energy costs are exceedingly difficult to predict in the medium-to long-term but these have a significant impact on the business case and payback periods. The cost of retrofit measures in the future is also unknown. <u>Infrastructure</u>: Early engagement with the DNO for actions requiring electrification will be needed to understand costs and timeframes implications. <u>Cost risk</u>: Timelines for bidding, tendering, and delivering schemes make accurate financial forecasting difficult, increasing cost risk for the Council. <u>Leisure contract</u>: The viability of decarbonisation schemes is reliant on negotiating a contract change with the leisure provider to ensure the cost savings are shared.

4. Whole building retrofit of leased assets
<p>Emissions from leased assets are not currently included in the Council's carbon account and the future implications of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) is uncertain. However, as property owners it is good practice to improve the energy efficiency of these buildings and decarbonise them. Activities in this area are dependent on lease arrangements and may be limited to advisory and supportive activities in some areas. Most tenants have full repairing and insuring leases and are responsible for the building's structure, fabric, and heating, lighting, and ventilation systems. In these cases, the Council cannot make changes without the tenant's consent. Retrofit opportunities should be capitalised when leases are up for renewal or when tenants change.</p> <p>As above, a hierarchy of actions should be followed to first reduce energy demand and improve energy efficiency of the building's fabric, then replace heating systems with low-carbon alternatives, and finally source any electricity from renewable sources.</p>
Key delivery teams
Climate; Communications; Estates



Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources and support to reduce energy demand in leased assets. • Assess all buildings for energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures as part of the Asset Management Strategy. • Improve building fabric and install low-carbon heating in leased assets. • Install solar panels on leased assets, where suitable.
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of buildings rated EPC B or above • Percent of buildings with a heat pump or low-carbon heating system installed • Percent of buildings with solar PV on the roof
Co-benefits
<p> Cost savings for tenants from improved energy efficiency</p> <p> Improved wellbeing for tenants from draught-proofing and thermal comfort</p> <p> Easier to let properties with a higher energy efficiency rating</p>
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Funding</u>: Some activities will require Council funding, other activities may be able to leverage private finance. If the Council invests in building improvements it may not be able to recoup its investment, particularly if the tenants pay the bills and benefit from utility cost reductions. Solar PV does provide an opportunity to sell electricity to tenants. • <u>Legal</u>: Opportunities for action are dependent on lease agreements and the level of ownership and control over different elements of the asset. • <u>Property owner – tenant relations</u>: Getting buy-in from tenants for certain activities will be critical to their successful delivery. Some changes would be disruptive to tenants, possibly requiring rent-free periods. • <u>Infrastructure</u>: Early engagement with the DNO for actions requiring electrification will be needed to understand costs and timeframes implications.

Water

5. Reduce water demand at all Council sites
<p>Emissions from the supply and treatment of water make up 1.6% of the Council's total carbon footprint. Most of this usage comes from leisure centres. Despite the overall proportion of water emissions being small, there are a number of other important environmental implications from water use which make this an important focus of action, such as water stress and water shortages, aquifer depletion, and water quality.</p>
Key delivery teams
<p>Climate; Leisure; Property</p>
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess water-efficiency measures for Council leisure and leased buildings. • Install water-efficiency measures and greywater recycling systems in Council offices, where appropriate.


<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install water efficiency measures and grey water recycling systems in leisure buildings, where appropriate. • Explore rainwater harvesting tanks for football pitches. • Consider water monitoring performance indicators as part of annual review of leisure contract.
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of buildings assessed for water efficiency • Number of water-efficient improvements made
Co-benefits
 Cost savings from reduced water use.  Reducing water stress in the area.
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Financing</u>: Internal investment will be required as there are not currently any government grants to reduce water consumption. • <u>Compliance and safety</u>: Holding tanks in certain environments require regular compliance checks to decrease the risk of legionnaires disease.

Waste


6. Reduce consumption and waste in Council offices
Emissions from waste are not currently included in the Council's carbon reporting. However, consumption and waste generate emissions upstream and downstream that the Council is responsible for, so reducing consumption and waste is an important action.
Key delivery teams
Climate; Procurement; Property
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an internal waste audit • Reduce paper consumption from both Council staff and Members • Ensure clear and accessible recycling bins are provided in Council offices • Consult with procurement (under activity 9) to monitor and reduce unnecessary Council consumption • Establish a method for measuring the Council's office waste and include emissions in future carbon reporting
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emissions from waste
Co-benefits
 Waste disposal has negative environmental and health impacts so reducing the amount of waste the Council produces is an important action.  Monitoring and reducing unnecessary Council consumption will also produce cost savings.

Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Technology</u>: There may be future opportunities to invest in systems and technologies that support a shift towards being paperless. • <u>Raising awareness</u>: Education on recycling and waste reduction will be required to ensure behaviour changes are made and retained across the service areas. • <u>Internal processes</u>: A commitment to changing internal processes and procedures to align with being a paperless Council.

Transport

7. Reduce emissions from grey fleet (business travel)
Emissions from transport can be split into those derived from Council services, such as waste collection, parking, land management, and those resulting from staff business travel. Business travel only accounts for 1.9% of total emissions. There are additional emissions from staff commuting which are also important to note even though these are not currently captured in the Council's carbon reporting, and these will be primarily addressed through a staff travel plan.
Key delivery teams
Climate; Property
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the viability of installing electric vehicle charging points at Council offices and leisure centres. • Install EVCP in line with Oxfordshire EV strategy and standards. • Review existing demand for vehicle fleet - pool cars - and plan for their replacement with EVs once charging points are installed. • Minimise emissions from staff travel.
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ECVPs installed at Council sites.
Co-benefits
 Health benefits from shifting business travel vehicles to electric vehicles which reduces air pollution and associated negative health impacts.
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Financing</u>: funding will be required to install EVCPs and to commission a Publica-wide staff travel review • <u>Grid constraints</u>: Infrastructure constraints and electricity network connection costs need to be understood as it may affect the deliverability of EVCPs.

8. Reduce emissions from Council fleet
<p>Emissions from the Council fleet covers liquid fuel used for waste vehicles, land management vehicles, parking and other Council services, and vehicles operating on the Council's behalf for services such as maintenance of public conveniences.</p> <p>While electric vehicle technology has advanced for cars and vans, low emission alternatives to refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) and other large vehicles are not yet widespread. Therefore, certain activities under this action involve long-term plans which rely on the expectation that technology will continue to improve and that costs will fall.</p>
Key delivery teams
Waste; Ubico; Parking; Procurement; Property; Climate
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a resource-efficiency review of Council's waste service, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contract. • Review building, depot and bulking station need in West Oxfordshire. • Work in partnership with Ubico to produce a Green Vehicle Fleet Transition Plan. • Electrification of machinery made a stipulation of future waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contract delivery. • Low-emission vehicles made a stipulation of future public convenience contracts. • Install solar panels at Council depots to provide electricity for zero-emissions vehicles, where suitable. • Produce an anti-idling policy for staff and contractors on Council business.
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Council-owned vehicles that are low-emission. • Percentage of contractor vehicles delivering Council services that are low emission.
Co-benefits
<p>⊕ Health benefits from shifting to low-emission vehicles which reduces air pollution and associated negative health impacts.</p>
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Timing</u>: Monitoring upcoming contract renewal dates to ensure new contracts include low-emission vehicle requirements. • <u>Technological availability</u>: Availability of low-emission alternatives to certain vehicles is low, so requiring contracts to provide these in the short-medium term might be difficult. • <u>Financing</u>: The business case for low-emission vehicles, particularly waste vehicles, is dependent on a range of factors. External funding will be required to decarbonise the Council's fleet ahead of 2030, some of which may involve bidding for limited and highly competitive funding and/or trials. Preparing these ahead of time will be key to being successful in any bids. • <u>Policies</u>: Ensuring vehicle replacement policies take a low-emission first approach. • <u>Grid constraints</u>: Infrastructure constraints and electricity network connection costs need to be understood as it may affect the deliverability of EVCPs. • <u>Contract costs</u>: Requiring low emission vehicles may increase contract costs.

9. Reduce emissions from procurement
Emissions from purchased goods and services are not currently included within the Council's carbon reporting boundary. However, where other local authorities report these emissions, these are known to be significantly higher than all other emissions combined. Therefore, it is good practice to address supply chain emissions. Doing so also contributes to wider improvements to district emissions as it encourages businesses to consider and reduce their environmental impacts.
Key delivery teams
Climate; Procurement
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy (short-term). • Establish a method for identifying and engaging with the Council's biggest contracts (medium-term). • Follow best practice to calculate, monitor and reduce supply chain emissions (long-term).
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Sustainable Procurement Policy is adopted. • Number of tenders with sustainability criteria included. • Number of key contracts that the Council is working with.
Co-benefits
 Cost savings from monitoring and reducing Council spend.
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Supply chain capability</u>: There is a risk that the supply chain may not be able to meet new sustainability requirements, creating a bias in those suppliers bidding for and securing Council contracts. • <u>AI software</u>: Investment in AI software to calculate supply chain emissions would facilitate key activities under this action. • <u>Contract costs</u>: Prioritising environmental benefits and making certain requirements for contracts may increase contract costs.

Residual

10. Offset and/or inset residual emissions
<p>To reach the Council's carbon neutral target by 2030, any residual emissions will need to be inset and/or offset through verified means. Approaches which provide local benefit will be prioritised over national or international offsetting schemes. Developing an Offset and Inset Strategy that is approved by the Council before 2025 is critical to being able to implement approaches which allow the Council to claim offset or inset credits by 2030. For example, tree planting initiatives verified by the Woodland Carbon Code only start producing carbon credits after 5 years. These sites will need to be identified and registered in 2025 to claim carbon credits in 2030, if the Council chooses to prioritise investment in new sites. Nature based carbon sequestration will be considered alongside tree planting for carbon verification. As part of the new Local Plan, a Carbon Offset and Inset Fund should be established to provide ring-fenced funding from s106 developer contributions for carbon-reduction projects across the district.</p>
Key delivery teams
Climate; Finance; Planning; Policy
Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Offset and Inset Strategy • Set up a Carbon Offset and Inset Fund • Achieve verification of nature-based solutions for carbon credits • Implement insetting projects • Implement offset projects
Key performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payments into the Offset and Inset Fund • Tonnes of CO₂e removed as a result of Offset and Inset Fund projects • Offset credits secured by the Council to offset residual emissions in 2030
Co-benefits
<p>Insetting projects have greater co-benefits than generalised offsetting schemes due to their localised nature. Depending on the project, benefits can be cleaner air, improved indoor air quality, improved comfort, improved health and wellbeing, lower building energy costs, and support for the local economy.</p> <p>An Offset and Inset Fund to offset emissions from future developments has the potential to deliver significant funding from developer contributions.</p>
Risks and dependencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Timing</u>: Inclusion of a Carbon Offset and Inset Fund in the new local plan, specifying ringfenced S106 funds from developer contributions, is critical to being able to deliver projects. • <u>Officer time</u>: Successful collaboration with relevant teams to set up mechanisms to coordinate, implement and monitor offsetting projects. • <u>Commissioning</u>: Specialist consultants may need to be brought in to support the development of insetting work, particularly to identify viable projects and calculate carbon savings. • <u>Funding for resource</u>: Resource will need to be allocated to support delivery of the ring-fenced funding, either a full-time or part-time officer.

Annex:

Activity	Purpose	Timescale	Key delivery team	Status	KPI
1. Avoid future emissions					
Aligning policies and processes with Net Zero	Policies and processes inform Council activities so ensuring these are aligned with net zero and support the Council's carbon neutral target is a critical activity.	2024 – 2025	Climate team Property Estates Executive management	New - not yet started	Number of new and/or updated policies and processes aligning with net zero.
All new assets to be low carbon	To develop a policy ensuring that all new assets built or acquired by the Council should meet a minimum energy performance threshold, which includes a low-carbon heating system.	2025	Estates	New – not yet started	Whether there is a policy on assets being low carbon.
Embed use of the climate impact assessment tool	To embed environmental and social considerations within all Council teams.	2024	All	In progress	Number of projects using the impact assessment tool.
2. Whole building retrofit for Council sites (except leisure and leased assets)					
Reduce energy demand in Council offices, properties, and sites	Reducing energy demand is the first step in the energy hierarchy and will cut Council costs.	Ongoing	Property Climate team	In progress	Carbon emissions from energy.
Install half-hourly metering to improve energy monitoring	Provide reliable data on energy use that will support future low-carbon heating and solar PV projects and monitoring.	2025	Property	New – not yet started	Number of buildings with HH metering installed.
Complete energy assessments for all Council offices, properties, and sites	To provide the Council with a costed improvement plan for all Council properties. Proposals can be worked up and integrated into existing plans and strategies.	2025	Climate team Property Estates	In progress	Number of buildings with completed energy assessments.

Compile a database of building information for all Council sites	To ensure all building information is accessible and up to date to support future funding opportunities.	2024	Estates Property Data team Climate team	New – not yet started	Existence of the database.
Improve the building fabric in all Council offices, properties, and sites	To improve the energy efficiency of the building, reduce running costs, and improve thermal comfort.	By 2027	Property Estates Climate team	In progress	Number of fabric measures in place for each council site.
Install low-carbon heating in all Council offices, properties, and sites	To decarbonise heating and reduce emissions from gas in Council buildings.	By 2030	Property Estates Climate team	In progress	Number of buildings with low-carbon heating.
Install solar panels, where viable, on all offices, properties, and sites	To source electricity for the building from direct renewable sources, reducing running costs.	By 2026	Property Estates Climate team	In progress	Number of buildings with solar panels.
3. Whole building retrofit for leisure buildings					
Determine existing demand reduction plans with WODC's leisure provider	To reduce the building's energy demand and operational costs. To identify opportunities for the Council to support the leisure provider.	2024	Climate team	Existing – in progress	
Assess all leisure buildings	To provide the Council with the information necessary to prepare and apply for funding opportunities, and to allow the Council to plan for future investment.	By 2025	Climate team Leisure	In progress	Number of buildings with energy assessments and decarbonisation plans.
Improve the building fabric of all leisure buildings	To improve the energy efficiency of the building, reduce running costs, and improve thermal comfort.	By 2030	Climate team Leisure	In progress	Condition of the building fabric for all sites.

Install low-carbon heating in all leisure buildings	To decarbonise heating and reduce emissions from gas in Council buildings.	By 2030	Climate team Leisure	In progress	Number of buildings with low-carbon heating systems.
Install solar panels, where viable, on all leisure buildings	To source electricity for the building from direct renewable sources, reducing running costs.	By 2030	Climate team Leisure	In progress	Number of buildings with solar panels.
4. Whole building retrofit for leased assets					
Provide resources and support to reduce energy demand in leased assets	Reducing energy demand in leased assets reduces district emissions.	Ongoing to 2030	Climate team	New – not yet started	Number of initiatives offered to tenants.
Assess leased buildings as part of the Asset Management Strategy	To provide the Council with the information required to make future investment decisions and prepare for upcoming legislation changes.	By 2027	Estates Climate team	New – in progress	
Improve building fabric and install low-carbon heating in leased assets	To improve the energy efficiency of the building, improving thermal comfort and reducing running costs for tenants, and decarbonising heating.	By 2030	Estates Climate team	New – not yet started	Number of buildings rated EPC B or above by 2030.
Install solar panels on leased assets, where suitable	To provide electricity from direct renewable sources, reducing district emissions.	By 2028	Estates Climate team	New – in progress	Number of buildings with solar panels.
5. Reduce water demand at all Council sites					
Assess water-efficiency measures for Council, leisure, and leased buildings	To ensure all fixtures and systems are using water as efficiently as possible, allowing the Council, leisure provider, and tenants to plan for improvements as needed.	Ongoing to 2028	Climate team	Existing – in progress	Number of buildings with water efficient fixtures.

Install water-efficiency measures and greywater recycling systems in Council offices, where appropriate	To reduce water waste and save money, installing measures where required as opportunities arise.	By 2028	Property	Existing – not yet started	
Install water efficiency measures and grey water recycling systems in leisure buildings, where appropriate	To reduce water waste and save money, installing measures where required as opportunities arise.	By 2028	Climate team Leisure	Existing – not yet started	
Explore rainwater harvesting tanks for football pitches	To reduce water use by using rainwater where possible.	By 2030	Leisure Climate team	Existing – not yet started	
Consider water monitoring performance indicators as part of annual review of leisure contract	To ensure water use is monitored with targets to incentivise investment into improvement measures.	By 2025	Leisure	New – not yet started	The inclusion of water KPIs in the new leisure contract.
6. Reduce consumption and waste in Council offices					
Establish a method for measuring the Council's office waste and include emissions in future carbon reporting	To ensure we are accounting for all emissions and are monitoring waste from Council operations.	2024	Climate team	Existing – in progress	Annual emissions from waste.
Ensure clear and accessible recycling bins are provided in Council offices	Following best practice to maximise the amount of waste on site that can be recycled.	2024	Climate team Property	Existing – not yet started	Number of clear and accessible recycling bins in the offices.

Reduce paper consumption	To reduce the environmental footprint of Council activities.	2025	Climate team Democratic services	Existing – not yet started	Number of new paperless processes.
Consult with procurement (under activity 9) to monitor and reduce unnecessary Council consumption	To reduce the environmental footprint of Council activities and operations. Monitoring this will allow teams to plan next steps to reduce their consumption.	2025	Climate team Procurement	New – not yet started	See activity 9.
7. Reduce emissions from grey fleet (business travel)					
Assess the viability of installing electric vehicle charging points at Council offices and leisure centres	To support the use of electric vehicles for staff travel, reducing emissions and air pollution.	2024	Climate team Property Estates	Existing - ongoing	List of viable ECVPs.
Install EVCP in line with Oxfordshire EV strategy and standards	To support the use of electric vehicles for staff travel, reducing emissions and air pollution.	By 2025	Climate team Property Estates	Existing – not yet started	Number of ECVPs installed in Council car parks.
Review existing demand for vehicle fleet - pool cars - and plan for their replacement with EVs once charging points are installed	To support the use of electric vehicles for staff travel, reducing emissions and air pollution.	By 2025	Climate team Parking HR ERS	Existing – not yet started	Produce a pool car demand report.
Minimising emissions from staff travel	To reduce emissions from staff travel.	By 2026	Climate team	New – not yet started	Produce a staff travel survey.
8. Reduce emissions from Council fleet					
Complete a resource-efficiency review of Council's waste service, street cleansing and	To highlight key areas requiring support to reduce emissions from Council fleet.	By 2025	Climate team Ubico Contracts	Existing – not yet started	

grounds maintenance contract					
Review building, depot and bulking station need in West Oxfordshire	To ensure that decisions made around waste buildings are aligned with emissions reduction and support a future transition to low-carbon vehicles.	By 2025	Climate team Ubico Contracts	Existing - ongoing	
Work in partnership with Ubico to produce and present a Green Vehicle Fleet Transition Plan for decarbonisation of the vehicle fleet	To ensure the transition to low-carbon vehicles is planned and approved by Council and that actions are taken to support the decarbonisation of the Council's fleet.	2024	Climate team Ubico	Existing – in progress	Percentage of council-owned vehicles that are low-emission.
Electrification of machinery made a stipulation of future waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contract delivery	To reduce emissions from Council fleet and reduce air pollution.	2025	Climate team Procurement Contracts	Existing – not yet started	
Low-emission vehicles made a stipulation of future public convenience contracts	To ensure all vehicles delivering Council services are low emission by 2030.	By 2030 (or next contract renewal)	Climate team	Existing – not yet started	Public convenience contract requires electric vehicles.
Produce an anti-idling policy for staff and contractors on Council business	To reduce emissions and particulates from Council services.	By 2026	Climate team HR	New – not yet started	Adoption of an anti-idling policy.
Install solar panels at Council depots to provide electricity for	As the Council shifts to a greater proportion of electric vehicles, these should be powered by	By 2030	Waste Climate Estates	Existing – not yet started	Depots assessed for solar viability.

zero-emissions vehicles, where suitable	renewable electricity on site to reduce emissions to zero.				Whether solar panels are installed.
9. Reduce emissions from procurement					
Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy	To ensure all Council procurement requires high environmental standards from contracts.	By 2025	Climate Procurement	New – not yet started	Adoption of a Sustainable Procurement Policy.
Establish a method for identifying and engaging with the Council's biggest contracts	Reducing supply chain emissions is considered best practice, with many Councils including these within their carbon reporting.	2025-2026	Climate Procurement	New – not yet started	Number of contracts committing to sustainability targets.
Follow best practice to calculate, monitor and reduce supply chain emissions	Once a method has been established for reporting on supply chain emissions, this should be extended to the whole supply chain.	2025 - 2030	Climate Procurement	New – not yet started	Emissions from supply chain.
10. Offset/inset residual emissions					
Develop an Offset and Inset Strategy	Plan and prepare for offsetting schemes, both as revenue opportunities for the Council and to meet Council and district climate targets.	2024 - 2025	Climate	Existing – in progress	Adoption of the Offset and Inset Strategy.
Set up a Carbon Offset and Inset Fund	Establish a source of ring-fenced funding for emission-reduction projects, delivering upwards of £275 per tonne of CO ₂ e to the Council from developer contributions.	By 2025	Finance Planning Climate	New – not yet started	Payments into the Offset and Inset Fund. Number of projects financed by the fund.
Implement inseting projects	To implement projects that deliver emission reductions in the district alongside other co-benefits like health improvements and cost savings.	By 2030	Climate	New – not yet started	Tonnes of CO ₂ e removed as a result of projects.

Implement offset projects	To implement projects that support the Council's carbon neutral target and/or provides a revenue stream for the Council	By 2030	Climate	New – not yet started	Tonnes of CO2e removed as a result of projects.
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West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Action Plan Tracker

	Ongoing
	Not scheduled to start yet
	Complete
	At risk

1. Avoid future emissions

Ref.	Activity	Short/ medium/ long target completion	Start date	Due date	KPI	Current status	Date of latest update	Latest KPI return	Commentary	Delivery partners
	a) Avoid future emissions									
1.a.1	Aligning policies and processes with Net Zero	Short		2025	Number of new and/or updated policies and processes aligning with net zero.	Not scheduled to start yet				Property Estates Management
1.a.2	All new assets to be low carbon	Medium		2025	Existence of a policy on assets being low carbon.	Not scheduled to start yet				Estates
1.a.3	Embed use of the climate impact assessment tool	Short	Jan-22	2024	Number of projects using the impact assessment tool.	Ongoing				All

2. Buildings

	Activity	Short/ medium/ long target completion	Start date	Due date	KPI	Current status	Date of update	Latest KPI return	Commentary	Delivery partners
a) Whole-building retrofit of Council sites (except leisure and leased assets)										
2.a.1	Reduce energy demand in Council offices, properties, and sites	Long	Jan-19	2030	Reduction in building energy use.	Ongoing				Property
2.a.2	Install half-hourly metering to improve energy monitoring	Short		2025	Number of buildings with HH metering installed.	Not scheduled to start yet				Property
2.a.3	Complete energy assessments for all Council offices, properties, and sites	Short	Jan-20	2025	Number of buildings with completed energy assessments.	Ongoing				Property Estates
2.a.4	Improve the building fabric in all Council offices, properties, and sites	Medium	Jan-20	2027	Number of new fabric measures in place for each council site.	Ongoing				Property Estates
2.a.5	Install low-carbon heating in all Council offices, properties, and sites	Long		2030	Number of buildings with low-carbon heating.	Not scheduled to start yet				Property Estates
2.a.6	Install solar panels, where viable, on all offices, properties, and sites	Medium	Jan-23	2026	Number of buildings with solar panels.	Ongoing				Property Estates
b) Whole-building retrofit of leisure buildings										
2.b.1	Complete energy assessments for all leisure buildings	Short	Jan-21	2025	Number of buildings with energy assessments and decarbonisation plans.	Ongoing				Leisure
2.b.2	Improve the building fabric of all leisure buildings	Medium	Jan-21	2030	Condition of the building fabric for all sites.	Ongoing			Leisure providers are implementing measures	Leisure GLL
2.b.3	Install low-carbon heating in all leisure buildings	Long	Oct-21	2030	Number of buildings with low-carbon heating systems.	Ongoing			PSDS schemes	Leisure
2.b.4	Install solar panels, where viable, on all leisure buildings	Long	Oct-21	2030	Number of buildings with solar panels.	Ongoing			PSDS schemes	Leisure
c) Whole-building retrofit of leased assets										
2.c.1	Provide resources and support to reduce energy demand in leased assets	Short		2025	Number of buildings with energy assessments and decarbonisation plans.	Not scheduled to start yet				Estates Comms
2.c.2	Assess leased buildings as part of the Asset Management Strategy	Medium		2027	Condition of the building fabric for all sites.	Not scheduled to start yet				Estates
2.c.3	Improve building fabric and install low-carbon heating in leased assets	Long		2030	Number of buildings with low-carbon heating systems.	Not scheduled to start yet				Estates
2.c.4	Install solar panels on leased assets, where suitable	Long	Jan-23	2030	Number of buildings with solar panels.	Ongoing				Estates
d) Reduce water demand at all Council sites										
2.d.1	Assess water-efficiency measures for Council, leisure, and leased buildings	Medium	Jan-21	2028	Standard of water fixtures at all sites.	Ongoing				Leisure Estates
2.d.2	Install water-efficiency measures and greywater recycling systems in Council offices, where appropriate	Long		2028	Standard of water fixtures in council buildings.	Not scheduled to start yet				Property
2.d.3	Install water efficiency measures and grey water recycling systems in leisure buildings, where appropriate	Long	Feb-24	2028	Standard of water fixtures in leisure buildings.	Ongoing			Swimming Pool Support Fund	Leisure
2.d.4	Explore rainwater harvesting tanks for football pitches	Long		2030	Viability assessments done for rainwater harvesting tanks.	Not scheduled to start yet				Leisure
2.d.5	Consider water monitoring performance indicators as part of annual review of leisure contract	Short		2025	The inclusion of water KPIs in the new leisure contract.	Not scheduled to start yet				Leisure
e) Reduce consumption and waste in Council offices										
2.e.1	Establish a method for measuring the Council's office waste and include emissions in future carbon reporting	Short	Aug-23	2024	Annual emissions from waste.	Ongoing				Property
2.e.2	Ensure clear and accessible recycling bins are provided in Council offices	Short		2024	Number of clear and accessible recycling bins in the offices.	Not scheduled to start yet				Property
2.e.3	Reduce paper consumption from both Council staff and Members	Short		2025	Reduction in paper use.	Not scheduled to start yet				Democratic services
2.e.4	Consult with procurement (under activity 4a) to monitor and reduce unnecessary Council consumption	Long		2030	See KPIs for area 4.	Not scheduled to start yet				Procurement

3. Transport

	Activity	Short/ medium/ long target completion	Start date	Due date	KPI	Current status	Date of update	Latest KPI return	Commentary	Delivery partners
a) Reduce emissions from grey fleet (business travel)										
3.a.1	Assess the viability of installing electric vehicle charging points at Council offices and leisure centres	Short	Sep-21	2024	List of viable EVCP sites produced.	Ongoing				Estates
3.a.2	Install EVCP in line with Oxfordshire EV strategy and standards	Short	Jun-21	2025	Number of EVCPs installed in Council car parks.	Ongoing				Estates
3.a.3	Review existing demand for vehicle fleet - pool cars - and plan for their replacement with EVs once charging points are installed	Short		2025	Produce a pool car demand report.	Not scheduled to start yet				Parking HR ERS
3.a.4	Minimising emissions from staff travel	Medium		2026	Produce a staff travel survey.	Not scheduled to start yet				
b) Reduce emissions from Council fleet										
3.b.1	Complete a resource-efficiency review of Council's waste service, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contract	Short		2025	Contract review completed.	Not scheduled to start yet				Waste Ubico
3.b.2	Review building, depot and bulking station need in West Oxfordshire	Short		2025	Building, depot and bulking station review completed.	Not scheduled to start yet				Waste Ubico
3.b.3	Work in partnership with Ubico to produce and present a Green Vehicle Fleet Transition Plan for decarbonisation of the vehicle fleet	Short	Feb-24	2024	Production of a Green Vehicle Fleet Transition Plan.	Ongoing				Waste Ubico
3.b.4	Electrification of machinery made a stipulation of future waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contract delivery	Medium		2025	Future contracts require electrification of machinery.	Not scheduled to start yet				Procurement Waste
3.b.5	Low-emission vehicles made a stipulation of future public convenience contracts	Long		2030	Future contracts require low-emission vehicles.	Not scheduled to start yet				Procurement
3.b.6	Produce an anti-idling policy for staff and contractors on Council business	Medium		2026	Adoption of anti-idling policy.	Not scheduled to start yet				HR
3.b.7	Install solar panels at Council depots to provide electricity for zero-emissions vehicles, where suitable	Long		2030	Solar panels on depots - Y/N.	Not scheduled to start yet				Waste Estates

4. Procurement


	Activity	Short/ medium/ long target completion	Start date	Due date	KPI	Current status	Date of update	Latest KPI return	Commentary	Delivery partners
a) Reduce emissions from procurement										
4.a.1	Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy	Short		2025	Policy developed, Y/N.	Not scheduled to start yet				Procurement
4.a.2	Establish a method for identifying and engaging with the Council's biggest contracts	Medium		2026	Number of contracts committing to sustainability targets.	Not scheduled to start yet				Procurement
4.a.3	Follow best practice to calculate, monitor and reduce supply chain emissions	Long		2030	Changes in supply chain emissions.	Not scheduled to start yet				Procurement

5. Offsetting and Insetting

	Activity	Short/ medium/ long target completion	Start date	Due date	KPI	Current status	Date of update	Latest KPI return	Commentary	Delivery partners
a) Offset residual emissions										
5.a.1	Develop an Offset and Inset Strategy	Short		2025	Approval and adoption of the Offset and Inset Strategy.	Not scheduled to start yet				County Council Planning
5.a.2	Set up a Carbon Offset and Inset Fund	Short		2025	Number of projects financed by the fund.	Not scheduled to start yet				Planning Finance
5.a.3	Implement insetting projects	Long		2030	Tonnes of CO2e removed as a result of projects.	Not scheduled to start yet				

5.a.4

Implement offset projects	Long		2030	Tonnes of CO2e removed as a result of projects.	Not scheduled to start yet				
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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 – 6 MARCH 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>SPORT ENGLAND SWIMMING POOL SUPPORT FUND (PHASE 2)</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Tim Sumner – Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects Email: tim.sumner@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>Jacqui Wright – Business Manager, Leisure and Wellbeing Email: jacqueline.wright@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To seek approval for the Council to enter into an agreement with Sport England for the acceptance of a grant from the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) Phase 2; and for the Council to draw down funding awarded to Chipping Norton Lido, acting in its capacity as lead authority for the delivery of the SPSF.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Exempt Annex A – Capital Grant Agreement (CGA)</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive Resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the acceptance of the SPSF Phase 2 grant awarded to West Oxfordshire District Council, valued at £243,328, to install rooftop solar PV (Photo Voltaic) and energy saving showers at the Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney. 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance to draw down and deploy the SPSF Phase 2 grant awarded to Chipping Norton Lido Ltd, valued at £84,366, to install solar PV and an air source heat pump.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	Partially – Exempt Annex A, Capital Grant Agreement (CGA)
Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WODC Climate team • GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited) Better • Chipping Norton Lido Ltd

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Following a competitive process West Oxfordshire District Council and the Chipping Norton Lido Ltd. have been successful in securing the award of grant funding from the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) Phase 2.
- 1.2** Acceptance of the grant award from the SPSF is reliant on meeting the Sport England terms and conditions for the grant scheme. The terms and conditions have been reviewed and, where relevant, associated risks are included in this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The government's SPSF has been allocated to local authorities in England as a support package for public leisure facilities with swimming pools and is split into two phases. 'Phase I – Revenue' was made available through a competitive bidding process to support facilities with swimming pools that were facing increased cost pressures, leaving them most vulnerable to closure or significant service reduction. The Council successfully secured approximately £350,000 in Phase I. 'Phase II – Capital' was made available through a further competitive bidding process to enable capital interventions to be made to improve the energy efficiency of public facilities with pools in the medium to long term.
- 2.2** Following the announcement of the second phase of the grant scheme in September 2023, a series of interventions were considered for each of the sites in the District. A deadline for submission of applications was also announced for 17th October 2023.
- 2.3** The interventions were considered by officers from both the leisure and climate teams, with GLL Better supporting with utility data provision and quotations for works. This coordinated approach ensured any proposals put forward were complementary to any submissions under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).
- 2.4** SPSF Phase II was also opened to all swimming pools which were not in the ownership, or management, of the District Council but that provided public swimming on a pay-as-you-play basis. District Councils were asked to act as the lead authority for these pools and to compile and submit applications on their behalf where necessary.
- 2.5** An approach was made to each of the eligible pools in the District, and as a result Chipping Norton Lido also worked up an application and returned this for inclusion in the bidding process.
- 2.6** A condition survey of the roof at the Windrush Leisure Centre will be completed as part of the surveying and design phase of the proposed solar panel installation. As condition surveys for this site would then be conducted in autumn 2024 as part of the upcoming Asset Management Strategy, this roof survey will be completed in the same format to feed into this workstream and to prevent any duplication of surveying.

3. SPSF AWARD DETAILS

- 3.1** Funding bids totalling almost £754,000 were developed and submitted for the following sites in the District;
 - Carterton Leisure Centre

- Chipping Norton Leisure Centre
- Chipping Norton Lido (bid submitted by Lido management team)
- Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney
- Woodstock Outdoor Pool

3.2 Sport England received a high level of interest in the grant fund, which totalled over 700 facility applications and a total funding ask of four times the funding available.

3.3 Having assessed all of the applications submitted against the criteria and objectives of the fund West Oxfordshire was successful in securing grant awards for the Windrush Leisure Centre and Chipping Norton Lido.

3.4 The following table shows details of the awards offered, and their respective purpose.

Site	Site Owner	Site Operator	Intervention	Funding Value
Windrush Leisure Centre	WODC	GLL Better	Solar PV	£228,624
			Water/Energy saving showers	£14,704
Chipping Norton Lido	WODC	Chipping Norton Lido Ltd	Solar PV	£16,764
			Air Source Heat Pump	£67,602

4. SPSF FUNDING OBJECTIVES

4.1 The objectives of the Phase 2 – Capital SPSF grant are listed below:

- Reduce the energy consumption level of facilities in receipt of funding, compared to baseline, and support the leisure sector to transition to a position of environmental and financial sustainability
- Minimise the closure of swimming pool provision, where funding has been provided, to a site to prevent gaps in public leisure provision emerging
- Reduce the carbon output of facilities in receipt of funding, compared to baseline, in line with the government's Net Zero by 2050 objectives
- Prioritise support in those areas of greatest socio-economic need (as evidenced by Index of Multiple Deprivation level), where all other factors are equal

4.2 For the purposes of the SPSF grant, a pool must offer public pay-as-you-swim sessions to be eligible and this offer must be significant enough to be considered part of the local public swimming provision by the local authority. Private hire of a swimming pool was not considered to be public access.

5. SPSF TERMS & CONDITIONS OF GRANT

- 5.1** The full detail of the terms & conditions of the Capital Grant Agreement (CGA) can be seen in Exempt Annex A.
- 5.2** A summary of the key points of the CGA terms & conditions is included below:
- 5.2.1** In agreeing to receive the funding offer from the SPSF the District Council will be entering into a Capital Grant Agreement with Sport England.
- 5.2.2** The Council is eligible to enter into the CGA as it is a local authority which owns public swimming pools and has arrangements with third parties who operate public swimming pools on its behalf.
- 5.2.3** As the local authority has arrangements in place with third parties who operate public swimming pools on its behalf and such swimming pools will receive funding under the CGA, Sport England, the local authority, and the third-party operator may be required to enter into a Grant Adherence Agreement (GAA) on or around the date of entering into the CGA.
- 5.2.4** The total Capital Grant is £327,694, broken down per Facility (as set out in 3.1)
- 5.2.5** The Eligible Expenditure items for which the Capital grants may be used are:
- material and labour costs to undertake the Capital interventions which were applied for (as set out in 3.1)
 - directly associated professional and technical fees for the delivery of the Capital interventions
- 5.2.6** In accepting this grant the local authority is committing to ensuring the continuing operation, or procuring the operation, of the facilities for the following terms:
- Windrush Leisure Centre - 10 years
 - Chipping Norton Lido - 3 years
- 5.2.7** The local authority must obtain Sport England's approval if it wishes to close or limit the availability of any of the facilities before the end of the relevant facility term. Sport England will consider a request for this approval acting reasonably and taking into account the local authorities plan for the provision of public access to swimming facilities in its local area.
- 5.2.8** The funding needs to be spent by 31 March 2025.

6. SUPPORTING OBLIGATIONS

- 6.1** The full detail of supporting obligations to ensure grant adherence can be seen in the terms & conditions of the CGA can be seen in Exempt Annex A.
- 6.2** A summary of the key points relating to supporting obligations is included below.
- 6.2.1** Sport England will require the local authority (or the appointed operator) to supply details of actual financial performance, actual visits and participation, and actual utilities and chemicals consumption on a quarterly basis in the format designated on Sport England's Moving Communities platform, with the preference that this information is provided in an automated manner
- 6.2.2** At least one representative from each Facility will be required to complete an online environmental management training course with the approved training delivery partner, Right Directions, within six months of the commencement of the CGA. There will be no

charge for the first representative to attend this training, however attendance of additional representatives will be subject to charges that will be borne by the local authority or its appointed operator

6.2.3 The local authority, or its appointed operator, will comply with the requirements of an environmental management review, which will be conducted by Right Directions, and may include:

- The delivery of a written environmental management report/audit
- An inspection/survey of the Facility
- Facility 'mystery environmental visits' (unannounced mystery shopper type inspections)

6.2.4 The local authority and the appointed operator will be asked to consider the findings of any review with Right Directions (referenced 6.2.3). Reasonable endeavours will then be made to implement any recommendations communicated during this review, and the findings of the review will be recorded on Sport England's Moving Communities platform.

6.2.5 The local authority is committed to providing to Sport England a strategic plan for leisure and active wellbeing at the Facilities, aligned with the then upcoming Sport England Sport Strategy, by 1st April 2025. Work has commenced on this element of work and the completed Strategy is due to be completed in June 2024, ready for adoption by the Council.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

7.1 The Council could choose to reject the grant award offer from Sport England, which would lead to a loss of the potential capital investment into the facilities and the consequential improvements that would be gained in terms of a reduction in energy consumption and a reduction in carbon production.

7.2 The Council could also look to make an enquiry into whether the grant can be accepted in two phases, namely for the Chipping Norton Lido element first then with the Windrush Leisure centre element, following further Council consideration. As this is not an offer that Sport England have suggested an enquiry of this type could result in a delay or refusal of this option. This, in turn, could lead to the funding being held until a final decision is made by the Council.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 If the grant offer to the Council is accepted, then next steps can be taken to deliver the outcomes and benefits proposed with the capital interventions.

8.2 Council Officers will continue to liaise with Chipping Norton Lido to confirm that their capital interventions are in compliance with the grant offer, and to subsequently deliver the funding, acting in their capacity as designated lead authority.

8.3 A detailed roof survey and electrical installation survey will be commissioned for the Windrush Leisure Centre to confirm the suitable next steps for the Solar PV installation.

8.4 The Solar PV installation will form a composite part of future proposals for the PSDS3C decarbonisation project.

8.5 Delivery of the capital interventions at the Council managed Windrush Leisure Centre will allow further review of the data provided to establish the extent of benefits and gains in financial, consumption, and carbon emissions terms that will be a key feature in demonstrating the facilities future contract value.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 If the award from Sport England is accepted this will represent a total investment into West Oxfordshire leisure facilities of £327,694 to enable capital projects at the Windrush Leisure Centre and Chipping Norton Lido that will enable them to operate at a lower cost.

9.2 The amount awarded to Chipping Norton Lido is a defined sum of £84,366. The Council will be acting as a conduit to provide the funds and will have no liability for any cost variations should the Lido project be achieved above/below budget.

9.3 The amount awarded to the Windrush Leisure Centre is £243,328. As the Council will be utilising this fund to complete a capital project at the site there will be limited associated costs to enable completion of the project. These could include:

- **Surveying Costs.** The next stage of the project will be to complete physical surveys to the roof and electrical system at the site to allow the proposed Solar PV concept to be drawn into a formal design for installation.
- **Enabling/Interconnectivity Costs.** Following the surveying of the site there may be additional costs involved with connecting a new Solar PV installation into the buildings existing electrical system.

9.4 If the surveying process reveals a substantial additional cost will be required from the Council to complete the works that cannot be met with existing budgets, then the grant award would need to be returned to Sport England as the project will be deemed not to be financially viable. In the event that the capital grant is therefore unwanted, there is a mechanism written into the CGA to facilitate this.

9.5 As a direct benefit of the installation of the capital interventions there will be a reduction in the cost of utilities imported to the facility. These benefits will be recorded in the initial phases of the installation and will help to ensure that services remain affordable under the leisure contract with GLL, thus preserving the provision of the services in accordance with the grant objectives.

9.6 The ongoing benefit of the capital intervention will also be that whichever management vehicle is chosen for the next term of the leisure contract (with the existing contract due to run until August 2027) the sites improved financial efficiency will be reflected in its contract value at that time.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The offer of a grant award from Sport England is accompanied by their requirements for applicants to adhere to certain terms & conditions, the key elements of which are noted in

this report. (refer to sections 5,6, and 11) which will have some legally binding implications on the Council.

- 10.2** Under the upcoming Asset Management Strategy workstream should the future of the Windrush Leisure Centre be considered then the security of tenure required for this site at 10 years for grant award, will need to be given consideration. Much of the risk to the Council, should this event occur, will be mitigated as the likely timeline for replacement or refurbishment would run through most, if not all, of this 10-year term. Sport England have also provided an option for discussions to be held in the medium term should the facility provision be reconsidered – which will be over-arched by their aim to ensure that swimming pool provision is maintained in the District.
- 10.3** As the operators of the facilities are already bound by the current contractual arrangements, or in the case of Chipping Norton Lido Ltd. have confirmed that they will be able to adhere to the requirements, to provide reporting and monitoring data there is no additional legal risk to the Council in opting to receive the grant award.

11. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1** There are a few associated risks with the acceptance of the grant award offer from Sport England, however these are minimal and can be managed so as not to detract from the significant benefits that the Capital Interventions can offer.
- 11.2** It should be noted that if during the development stage of the capital interventions a risk or risk factor that is unpalatable to the Council arises then Sport England can be notified of the concern, and if necessary, the grant fund offer can be returned.
- 11.3** A summary of these risks is included below, and further detailed information would be compiled under the project governance should the capital interventions go ahead.
- **Facility Closure.** Should the facilities not remain open during the agreed delivery term (3 years for the Chipping Norton Lido and 10 years for the Windrush Leisure Centre) consultation would need to take place with Sport England with regards to a potential clawback of the approved funding. This clawback discussion would be linked to the term that the capital interventions had been delivered for and would focus on ensuring that future provision of swimming pool access was still made available for the community.
 - **Roof structure deemed unsuitable.** If the detailed survey of the roofscape at the Windrush Leisure Centre demonstrates that the site is unsuitable in its present condition for the Solar PV install a decision would need to be made on whether to invest in measures to increase its structural integrity; or to install on a different structure such as car ports. This decision would be made on a cost: benefit appraisal basis. Any delays could also impact on the need to spend the funding by 31 March 2025.

- Planning permission obligations or restrictions. Once a detailed design has been put together for the solar PV installations at the Windrush Leisure Centre and Chipping Norton Lido it will be necessary to confirm whether planning permission is required for the facilities. Designs will be composed to mitigate any breach in planning conditions (i.e. by keeping panels close to roof surfaces and out of eyeline where practical)

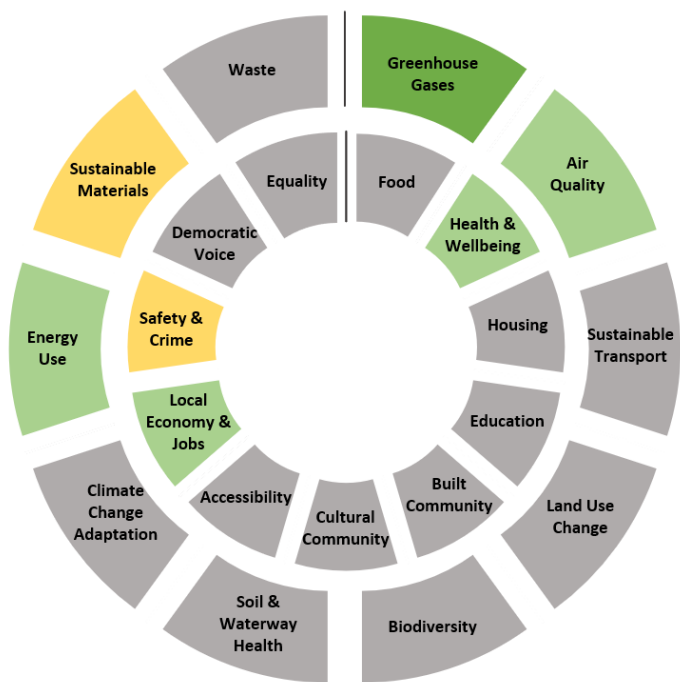
12. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 12.1** The acceptance of the grant award from Sport England will have no affect or impact on equality legislation or human rights law.

13. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1** Collectively, the interventions for Windrush Leisure Centre and Chipping Norton Lido are projected to reduce building emissions by approximately 13% and 58% respectively as a result of reduced energy and water use. The water saving measures for the showers are also important from a water security perspective, which is important given the leisure centre's location in an area of water stress.
- 13.2** As the proposed equipment will need to be manufactured and installed, there will be a carbon footprint associated with this (known as embodied carbon). However, over the lifetime of both leisure sites, the savings in operational emissions should outweigh the embodied carbon impact. This cannot be calculated without manufacturer specifications and contractor information, which will not be known until after procurement.
- 13.3** The solar panels for Windrush Leisure Centre will generate approximately 92,000 kWh of electricity to be consumed on site, or 20% of the building's electricity use. This would save 24 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year, equivalent to just under 6% of total building emissions.
- 13.4** The water-efficient showers for Windrush Leisure Centre will save 29 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year, which is a reduction of approximately 7% of total building emissions.
- 13.5** The Air Source Heat Pump for Chipping Norton Lido should cover the heat requirements for the pool for the 130 days it is open during the summer. As such, it will reduce carbon emissions by 18 tonnes of CO₂ per year.
- 13.6** The solar panels for Chipping Norton Lido will generate approximately 12,326 kWh of electricity a year, meeting 19% of the building's electricity demand. This will save 7.4 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year.
- 13.7** To mitigate other environmental impacts, contractors will be required to reduce their waste and avoid any material going to landfill, where possible.

13.8 A breakdown of the social and environmental impacts is presented in the figure below:



Key	Impact	Action
	Significant and/or long-term positive impact identified.	No changes needed.
	Slight or short-term positive impact identified.	No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	No net change or not applicable.	No changes needed but could be reviewed to improve.
	Slight or short-term negative impact identified.	Review to identify possible improvements.
	Significant and/or long-term negative impact identified.	Changes needed before proceeding. If changes are not possible, justification is required.
	Responses incomplete.	Please return to assessment and answer all questions in this section.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None
(END)

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

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