

Tuesday, 28 November 2023  
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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held in Committee Room 1 & 2, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 6 December 2023 at 5.30 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors: Andrew Beaney (Chair), Rizvana Poole (Vice-Chair), Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, David Cooper, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Phil Godfrey, Andy Goodwin, Natalie King, Nick Leverton, Andrew Lyon, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Mathew Parkinson, Sandra Simpson, Ruth Smith, Harry St John, Alistair Wray, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, and Alex Wilson

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

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

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**  
To receive any apologies for absence and to note any temporary appointments.
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 14)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held 8 November 2023.
4. **Chair's announcements**  
To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
5. **Participation of the Public**  
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure, anyone who lives in the district or who pays council tax or business rates to the Council is eligible to read a statement or express an opinion at this meeting. You can register to speak by sending your written submission of no more than 750 words to [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk), by no later than 10.00am on the working day before the meeting.
6. **Outdoor Market Review (Pages 15 - 80)**  
Purpose:  
To consider the outcome of a review of the outdoor markets of West Oxfordshire as completed by the consultant. This report will be presented to the Executive on 13 December 2023.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Committee scrutinises the report and agrees any recommendations to the Executive.  
  
Invited:  
Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development  
Will Barton, Business Development Officer
7. **Fly Tipping Enforcement Update (Pages 81 - 90)**  
Purpose:  
To provide an update on fly-tipping activities during the first two quarters of the financial year 2023/2024. This item was previously on the work plan of the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the report and agrees any recommendations to the Executive.

Invited:

Cllr Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment;  
Jon Dearing, Assistant Director for Resident Services;  
Mandy Fathers, Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues;  
Jack Graham, Environment Support Officer.

8. **Quarter Two Performance Monitoring Reports 2023/24 (Pages 91 - 146)**

Purpose:

To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Two. This report will be presented to the Executive on 13 December 2023.

Recommendation:

That the Committee scrutinises the 2023/24 Q2 service performance report and agrees any recommendations to the Executive.

Invited:

Jon Dearing, Assistant Director for Resident Services;  
Phil Martin, Assistant Director of Business Services;  
Bill Oddy, Assistant Director for Commercial Development;  
Stuart Rawlinson, Business Manager for Resources, Data and Growth.

9. **Executive response to a recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Financial Performance Report 2023/24 Quarter 2 (Pages 147 - 148)**

Purpose:

For the Committee to receive the Executive response to a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Financial Performance Report 2023/24 Q2.

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes the Executive response.

10. **Committee Work Programme (Pages 149 - 154)**

Purpose:

The Committee on 8 November 2023 agreed that a "long list" of suggested work plan items would be ranked by officers using the TOPIC Scoring Criteria (Annex B) and presented to the Committee on 6 December.

Recommendation:

That the Committee notes its initial work plan and agrees which items from the "long list" are added to the work plan.

11. **Executive Work Programme (Pages 155 - 162)**

Purpose:

To give the Committee the opportunity to comment on the Executive Work Programme.

Recommendation:

That the Committee agrees which items on the Executive Work Programme should be subject to pre-decision scrutiny and the priority order of those items.

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
Held in the Committee Rooms 1 & 2 at 5.30pm  
on **Wednesday, 8 November 2023**

### PRESENT

Councillors: Thomas Ashby, Hugo Ashton, Julian Cooper, Rachel Crouch, Jane Doughty, Andy Goodwin, Natalie King, Nick Leverton, Andrew Lyon, Charlie Maynard, Michele Mead, David Melvin, Mathew Parkinson, Sandra Simpson, Ruth Smith, Harry St John, Alistair Wray, Liam Walker, Mark Walker, Alex Wilson and Dan Levy

Officers: Madhu Richards (Chief Finance Director), Jon Dearing (Assistant Director for Resident Services), Phil Martin (Assistant Director for Business Support), Bill Oddy (Assistant Director for Commercial Development), Andrew Brown (Business Manager Democratic Services), Georgina Dyer (Chief Accountant), (Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), and Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer).

Other Councillors in attendance: Alaric Smith, the Executive Member for Finance.

### **1** Election of Chair

Andrew Brown, the Democratic Services Business Manager opened the meeting, welcoming Members and Officers to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Business Manager referred Members to the first item on the Agenda, Election of Chair, and asked the Committee for nominations to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

Councillor Alex Wilson proposed that Councillor Andrew Beaney be appointed to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24. This was seconded by Councillor Julian Cooper, was put to a vote, and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Appoint Councillor Andrew Beaney to the position of Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

### **2** Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor Andrew Beaney thanked the Committee for the appointment of Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair asked for a nomination for the position of Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Julian Cooper proposed that Councillor Rizvana Poole be appointed to the position of Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24. This was seconded by Councillor Alex Wilson, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Appoint Councillor Rizvana Poole to the position of Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2023/24.

17:37 Councillor Rizvana Poole arrived at the meeting at this point, thanked the Committee for the appointment of Vice-Chair to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 3 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Phil Godfrey and David Cooper.

Councillor Dan Levy substituted for Councillor Phil Godfrey.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Levy to the Committee.

### 4 Declarations of Interest

Bill Oddy, the Assistant Director for Commercial Development declared an interest on Agenda item 9, recommendation 3, and suggested he left the room at that point in the meeting.

Andrew Brown, the Business Manager for Democratic Services clarified that it would not be necessary to leave the room as the Committee would only be considering holding a meeting to scrutinise the Publica Review; the Publica Review would not be subject to any decision at this meeting.

### 5 Minutes of Previous Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Chair asked members for a proposer and seconder to approve the minutes of the previous Scrutiny Committees, and asked for those only present at each of the meetings to propose and second the approval of said minutes.

Councillor Natalie King proposed to approve the minutes of the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 July 2023, this was seconded by Councillor Mark Walker, was put to a vote and was carried.

The minutes were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Approve the minutes of the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 July 2023.

Councillor Michele Mead proposed to approve the minutes of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2023, this was seconded by Councillor Jane Doughty, was put to a vote and was carried.

The minutes were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Approve the minutes of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2023.

Councillor Nick Leverton proposed to approve the minutes of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2023, this was seconded by Councillor Alex Wilson, was put to a vote and was carried.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

08/November2023

The minutes were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Approve the minutes of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2023.

### 6 Participation of the Public

There was no participation of the public.

### 7 Treasury Management Mid-Term Report

Councillor Alaric Smith, the Executive Member for Finance introduced the Treasury Management Mid-Term Report, which provided the Members with an update on the Treasury Management Activity, the performance of internal and external funds and prudential indicators for the first half of the financial year.

The Executive Member for Finance handed over to Georgina Dyer, the Chief Accountant, who introduced the detailed report that the Council is required to report on and asked the Committee if they had any questions.

Councillors had many points of clarification on the report:

- The loans CFR line on the table at 8.2 on page 32 showed the extent of the Council's internal borrowing; there was currently no external borrowing.
- S106 funds would be used to finance internal borrowing to fund the capital programme (S106 funding is ring fenced – so only specific projects), along with any other funds the Council had,
- The net income increases shown on page 35 reflected the impact of Marriotts although the investment property portfolio was quite dynamic.
- The small treasury team was shared across the Publica partnership and had recently been bolstered.
- The capital value of the Council's externally managed pooled funds (page 29) should improve as interest rates decline. Arlingclose provided regular advice to the Council. When the statutory override ends, the Council would have to account for unrealised gains and losses.

The Chief Accountant explained to the Committee that they used a CIPFA standard report template, hence why the report had been laid out in the way it had.

Councillor Alex Wilson was concerned that unless you were a finance expert how could the committee effectively scrutinise the report, as to present only points of clarity had been discussed.

Andrew Brown the Business Manager for Democratic Services confirmed that the Constitution stipulated that the report must come to Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance. The Chief Accountant added that it was also a legislative requirement to produce quarterly reports to Members.

In response to a question from Councillor Liam Walker, the Chief Finance Accountant confirmed that Arlingclose do benchmark and that West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) were doing well against similar Council sizes, and no major red flags at the moment.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

08/November2023

Councillor Alex Wilson through the Chair proposed that the Committee refer to the Constitution Working Group the constitutional position on where treasury performance reports are considered, with a recommendation that this is a responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee and not the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Thomas Ashby, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. The Committee referred to the Constitution Working Group the constitutional position on where treasury performance reports are presented, with a recommendation that this is a responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee and not the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## 8 Q2 Finance Report - Nov 23

Councillor Alaric Smith, the Executive Member for Finance, introduced the Quarter Two Finance Report, which included a forecast outturn position for the first time.

The Director of Finance introduced herself and explained that she had only been in post for just over three weeks. The forecast allowed the Council to review progress against the budget that was set earlier in the year, and that as a forecast it probably will change. The main areas of overspend were in:

- Waste;
- Leisure;
- Investment Properties.

These three areas will be a focus of work during the 2024/25 budget setting process.

The Director of Finance then asked if the Committee had any questions on the report.

Councillors asked about the following points within the report:

Point 1.1 recycling cost impact.

Bill Oddy the Assistant Director for Commercial Development confirmed it was a national problem where the cost of processing the recycling had increased, and the public was recycling more. The Council's contracts and neighbouring districts' contracts were up for renewal, so the option of jointly procuring contracts would be explored.

WODC had increased waste charges this year by £5, but this had not affected the number of licences, they remained broadly the same. After a benchmarking exercise the Council's fees were found to be lower than average, and the second lowest across Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

Point 1.7 GLL payment and future payments.

Recent meetings with GLL had taken place and a number of positive avenues were being explored

Point 1.9 Appeal external legal fees.

Jon Dearing, the Assistant Director for Resident Services, confirmed that appeal legal fees were significant, and that it was dependant on the planning appeals outcomes. Councillor Alaric Smith informed the Committee that at a recent informal Executive meeting Phil Shaw,



## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

08/November2023

the Business Manager for Development & Sustainability had attended, and informed the Executive that they were considering a Development Control briefing, that would explain the impact of appeal fees to the members of the planning committees.

The Director of Finance added that there is a Legal Services review going ahead too, as due to resource issues in Legal Services, external Legal Services that were procured also had added to the costs.

Point 1.11 Pensions budget, could this be afforded.

The Chief Accountant confirmed that the report was written in advance of the Publica Review. Therefore once the output of the Publica Review was known, these figures would be reviewed. The report to the end of quarter two reflected the secondary (i.e. historic liability) contributions that were made in regards to the Local Pensions Government Scheme. However, the budget was set before the actual levels of secondary contributions were known. A re-evaluation would occur in January. Any outputs from the Publica Review would be built into the 2024/25 budget but the timescales were tight as the Publica Review and Budget setting would all occur at a similar time.

Point 1.14 Council Tax and Business Rates income versus arrears.

The Assistant Director for Resident Services explained that a discretionary Council Tax Support Scheme was in place to assist residents who were struggling financially. The Revenues Team were also meeting with a charity next week that works with residents with checking if they were entitled to any benefits that they may not be claiming.

Councillor Levy added that the Council Tax Support Scheme was more generous than in previous years.

Councillors queried Annex B and why there was so little capital expenditure against the budgeted amount..

The Chief Accountant explained that the capital programme showed where provision had been made for schemes but that actual expenditure would be subject to an approved business case. There was nothing in the pipeline for the Investment Recovery Strategy, for which there was £5,000,000 available, due to the impact of high interest rates. Some capital projects had timing issues, some had begun but were not completed as yet. Sometimes there was slippage at year end, which is not unusual.

Councillors noted concern that expected expenditure had not occurred.

The Chief Accountant confirmed that the situation was not ideal, however situations change throughout the year and timings sometimes change. Each capital project would need to be individually approved via Executive during the year, and therefore expenditure budgeted may not be spent as expected if timings slip. Some items that were ordered last year had not been delivered as yet, therefore sometimes it was beyond the control of the Council.

The Executive Member for Finance used the Chipping Norton roof replacement as an example, this had now changed to a repair. A capital budget may not always be spent, depending how circumstances changed during the year, some projects may not end up going ahead.

08/November2023

The Chair noted that the project for the Chipping Norton Leisure Centre roof would be underspent now that the roof was being repaired rather than replaced. However, it was not just the roof that was the issue, the ceiling was in disrepair. Councillor Rizvana Poole added that the flooring, the gym and the health implications for the staff needed looking at.

The Chair Councillor Andrew Beaney proposed to recommend to the Executive that the Council draws up proposals for a full refurbishment of Chipping Norton Leisure Centre utilising the underspent capital allocation for roof replacement to address the issues caused by water damage over a number of years. This was seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Rizvana Poole, put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to recommend to the Executive:

- I. That the Council draws up proposals for a full refurbishment of Chipping Norton Leisure Centre, utilising the underspent capital allocation for roof replacement, to improve the centre and address the issues caused by water damage over a number of years. This project should include, for example, replacing flooring and carpeting, repainting walls and replacing gym equipment.

Councillors enquired about the contract management line in the table on Page 46.

The Chief Accountant explained that this related to GLL income, the full contract income for the year was budgeted, an income contingency was added as at the point of setting the budget the Council was uncertain as to how much contractual income would be achievable in the year.

Councillors were concerned that if GLL read the reports they would see the contingency and use this information. The Chief Accountant confirmed that budget documents were public documents. The contingency represented prudent financial management.

Councillors queried whether GLL would be asked to fully meet their contractual commitments.

The Chief Accountant confirmed that they were already in negotiations with GLL and as soon as they had something to report they would bring that back to the Committee.

Councillor Thomas Ashby enquired about monies to be transferred to Witney Town Council. The Chief Accountant explained that no request for payment had been received as yet.

The Assistant Director for Commercial Development confirmed that monthly meetings took place with Witney Town Council and that he would take an action to officers to ask for this to be progressed.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Chief Accountant for their contribution to the Committee.

Councillor Mathew Parkinson left the meeting during this item at 18:54.

9

## **Committee Work Programme**

Andrew Brown the Democratic Services Business Manager introduced the Initial Committee Work Programme.

The Business Manager explained the role of the Committee was to scrutinise the decisions and actions of the Executive and other issues that affect the district that Members wish to prioritise for scrutiny.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

08/November2023

The initial work programme included items that were either legacy from past scrutiny work plans, a legislative requirement such as the focus on crime and disorder, and selected Executive decisions. This Committee would meet each month the week before a meeting of the Executive.

Councillor Cooper asked why the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be looking at Executive reports and, should the Committee be focusing on policy development.

The Business Manager agreed that an important function of the Committee was to contribute to early-stage policy development.

The Committee was asked to consider the following recommendations:

### Recommendation 1:

Agree that when considering the Executive Forward Plan the Committee will agree a priority order of reports for pre-decision scrutiny at the next meeting.

Councillor Michelle Mead proposed that when considering the Executive Forward Plan the Committee will agree a priority order of reports for pre-decision scrutiny at the next meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Alex Wilson, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

I. Agree that when considering the Executive Forward Plan the Committee will agree a priority order of reports for pre-decision scrutiny at the next meeting.

### Recommendation 2:

Agree to use the 10 January 2024 meeting as a “Spotlight” session to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2024/25.

The Business Manager clarified that the term “Spotlight” referred to a standalone meeting to scrutinise larger items that needed more time than a normal agenda item.

Councillors discussed the recommended date of 10 January and if it would be possible to use the 6 December scheduled Overview and Scrutiny Committee date.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the full budget settlement figures would not be known by the time of the December meeting

Councillor Julian Cooper proposed to agree to use the 10 January 2024 meeting as a “Spotlight” session to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2024/25. This was seconded by Councillor Ruth Smith, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

I. Agree to use the 10 January 2024 meeting as a “Spotlight” session to scrutinise the Draft Budget 2024/25.

Recommendation 3:

Agree to schedule an additional “spotlight” meeting on a date to be agreed by the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to scrutinise the Publica Review.

The Business Manager explained to the Committee that the Publica Review item warranted a “spotlight” meeting. There was no proposed date as yet and the recommendation was to seek delegation to agree a meeting date.

The Chair stated that as the Publica Review involved other Councils too, he was concerned that this meeting needed to be set soon, so that decisions were not made by the other Councils long before the Committee had sight of the Review themselves.

Councillors discussed items due to come to the February Committee meeting and asked if that meeting could be used.

The Business Manager confirmed that items due in February had already been pushed back and that the Executive controlled the timing of those items.

Councillors were also concerned about the heavy workload for the Committee especially with using two “Spotlight” Committees in succession.

The Business Manager agreed, and explained that another approach in future would be to use task and finish groups, rather than schedule additional meetings (which these items warranted).

Councillor Alex Wilson proposed to agree to schedule an additional “spotlight” meeting on a date to be agreed by the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to scrutinise the Publica Review. This was seconded by Councillor Liam Walker, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree to schedule an additional “spotlight” meeting on a date to be agreed by the Director of Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to scrutinise the Publica Review

Recommendation 4:

Request that all members of Council send any suggestions for items to be included on the work plan to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Democratic Services Business Manager by Friday 24 November.

The Business Manager explained that this was for seeking other suggestions to be added to the Work Programme, which could also include suggestions for task and finish groups or for member briefing sessions.

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

08/November2023

The Chair asked for a proposer.

Councillor Liam Walker proposed that all members of Council send any suggestions for items to be included on the work plan to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Democratic Services Business Manager by Friday 24 November. This was seconded by Councillor Mark Walker, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Request that all members of Council send any suggestions for items to be included on the work plan to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Democratic Services Business Manager by Friday 24 November.

### Recommendation 5:

Agree that the “long list” of suggested work plan items will be ranked by officers using the TOPIC Scoring Criteria (Annex B) and presented to the Committee on 6 December, in order to inform the Committee’s adoption of a work plan.

The Business Manager confirmed that assuming they receive a healthy list of suggestions from recommendation 4, the TOPIC scoring criteria, found on Page 63 of the agenda, would be applied.

The Chair requested that he wished to agree the priority order with the Vice-Chair, and a nominated Member from each political group from the Committee.

Councillor Thomas Ashby proposed agree that the “long list” of suggested work plan items will be ranked by officers using the TOPIC Scoring Criteria (Annex B) and presented to the Committee on 6 December, in order to inform the Committee’s adoption of a work plan. That priority order would be agreed by the Chair, Vice-Chair, and a nominated Member from each political group from the Committee.

This was seconded by Councillor Michele Mead, was put to a vote and was carried.

The Committee **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree that the “long list” of suggested work plan items will be ranked by officers using the TOPIC Scoring Criteria (Annex B) and presented to the Committee on 6 December, in order to inform the Committee’s adoption of a work plan. That priority order would be agreed by the Chair, Vice-Chair, and a nominated Member from each political group from the Committee.

**10 Executive Work Programme**

Andrew Brown, the Business Manager for Democratic Services, explained to the Committee that since the agenda had been published the Executive Work Programme had been updated. Hard copies of the updated Executive Work Programme were available on councillors' desks at the meeting.

The Business Manager suggested that this was the opportunity to view the officers' suggested items for the agenda in December from the Executive Plan.

The Chair asked the Committee for any comments.

Councillor Ruth Smith suggested an update from Thames Water would be welcome, the Chair was able to confirm that a briefing had been organised for the 5 December, which would include an update, and to which all Councillors would be invited to.

The Chair asked the Committee for suggestions and comments on the Executive Work Plan.

Councillor Natalie King suggested a CCTV update, the Business Manager confirmed that CCTV had been scheduled for the new year. Councillor King followed up with a question re the locations of the camera for Carterton. The Business Manager agreed an action to take the question to the Officer concerned and get back to the Councillor with an answer.

Councillor Levy enquired how the Committee would deal with Executive items that were classed as exempt.

The Business Manager clarified that they would be dealt with in the normal way, in closed session.

Councillor Ashby asked whether the items going to the Executive in December would all come to the Committee.


The Chair confirmed that not all items would come to the Committee, only a select few. The Business Manager added that this is where the TOPIC criteria can help the Committee to prioritise.

Councillor Ruth Smith asked if the Employment Policies could come in December. The Business Manager confirmed if the reports were ready, it could be considered.

The Chair concluded the meeting and thanked the officers and members for their input.

The Meeting closed at 7.15pm

CHAIR

 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 6 DECEMBER 2023</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>REVIEW OF WEEKLY MARKETS</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Councillor Duncan Enright Executive Member for Economic Development Email: <a href="mailto:duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk">duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Andy Barge, Assistant Director - Communities Email: <a href="mailto:andy.barge@publicagroup.uk">andy.barge@publicagroup.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Emma Phillips, Market Towns Officer Email: <a href="mailto:emma.phillips@westoxon.gov.uk">emma.phillips@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the outcome of a review of the outdoor markets of West Oxfordshire as completed by the consultant.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – report: Retail &amp; Charter Markets at Carterton, Chipping Norton &amp; Witney, June 2023</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development, to undertake an Expression of Interest exercise to select a commercial market operator to run the weekly retail markets in Witney and Chipping Norton.</li> <li>2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development, to the appointment of a commercial market operator for an initial period of two years.</li> </ol>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	External consultation was undertaken by the consultant during the review of markets, evidence of this is presented in their report.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Charter Markets in Witney and Chipping Norton have been managed by West Oxfordshire District Council's Environmental Regulatory Service since 2016. The Council has delivered a basic administrative service which includes the collection of fees, processing of new applications, and the provision and maintenance of the gazebos. Carterton Town Council manages its own weekly market.
- 1.2 All three markets have less than 15 stalls each and have scope to both increase stallholder numbers and overall vibrancy.
- 1.3 Well run retail markets offer a multitude of benefits to towns and their communities, ranging from economic growth and support for local businesses, relatively low cost products for customers and sustainability. With low barriers to entry, markets are excellent incubators supporting new business. Retail markets contribute to the overall vibrancy and appeal of a town, potentially creating an enjoyable and memorable experience for both residents and visitors alike.
- 1.4 The vision set out in the West Oxfordshire District Council plan 2023-2027 is for the district to be a thriving and prosperous place. One of the top priorities is to help the local economy to grow, providing more jobs for local people. Improving the viability of the outdoor markets will play an important role in supporting town centres, attracting footfall and contributing to these objectives.
- 1.5 In February 2023, the Council appointed Wild Property Consultants to undertake a review of the weekly markets and to set out options for their future management. Carterton market was included in the review following discussion with Carterton Town Council for their information.
- 1.6 The key points from his report are summarised below and the full report is attached as Annex A.

## 2. REVIEW OF THE MARKETS

- 2.1 The review was derived from desktop analysis, site visits, interviews and observations. Visits were also made to neighbouring market towns to create a comparison. The



observations concluded that all three subject markets had a comparatively low mix of traders compared with neighbouring market towns.

2.2 The analysis is summarised in the table below:

Town	Population	No of Stalls	Occupancy (%)	Trader mix	Frequency	Footfall (per market)
Carterton	17,000	10	50%	0.25	Weekly	108
Chipping Norton	7,000	12	60%	0.40	Weekly	272
Witney	30,000	14	70%	0.45	Twice weekly	470
Banbury	50,000	22	73%	0.40	Twice weekly	615
Bicester	38,000	29	91%	0.69	Weekly	780
Cirencester	20,000	25 - 50	80%	0.80	Twice weekly	800
Deddington	2,000	44	96%	0.70	Monthly	1,044
Moreton	5,000	49	95%	0.57	Weekly	2,050

Key:

- **No. of stalls** present (on days visited, with an average taken if necessary).
- **Occupancy** (the Capacity divided by the No. of stalls present, expressed as a percentage).
- **Trader Mix** (the No. of unique stalls in relation to the Capacity, as a factor of 1).
- **Footfall** generated (market customer counts over an hour, multiplied for the duration of the market).

2.3 The consultant reflections on this data are:

- The markets at Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney are by far the smallest in terms of stalls and occupancy.
- The footfall at Witney market is reasonable, compared to its comparatively small market size, suggesting this is a strength to build upon.
- Carterton not fulfilling its potential, given the overall size of the town's population and has by far the lowest score for Trader Mix.

2.4 Interviews were conducted at each of the three markets and the views expressed are summarised below:

2.5 **Carterton**

- Limited size and limited stall variety with poor footfall.
- There is no regular Carterton based trader at the market, the closest is Wantage based.
- No in-town market signage.
- Opportunity to bring in more customers looking for a bargain who are shopping at the nearby supermarkets and parking adjacent to the market.
- Special events draw in 4,000 people – demonstrating the town's support for gatherings and events.

2.6 **Chipping Norton**

- The market site location is a disadvantage.

- The orientation of stalls and curation is poor.
- The main road is a barrier and traffic emissions for traders is a concern.
- Existing building works is an understandable short-term disruption but has acted as a catalyst for traders to leave and reduce size of market.
- Nothing to encourage shoppers to linger (dwell time is low).
- No electrical supplies for stall holders.
- There is no CN based trader at the market.
- No messaging on approach or in town to announce the market day.
- Limited promotion of the market through adverts or social media.
- Market stall holders self-manage, in terms of curation and organisation.
- Christmas in Chippy market event is an example of how well a special event market can be delivered.
- Ease of pedestrian navigation around the town is poor.
- The market doesn't reflect well on the town.
- Local businesses want to see a successful market but recognise changes required.

## **2.7 Witney**

- No messaging on approach or in town to announce the market day.
- Limited promotion of the market through adverts or social media.
- Reduced footfall at this end of town due to shop closures.
- Limited local business taking part in the market.
- Market stall holders self-manage, in terms of curation and organisation.
- Stalls holders have to self-erect the stalls, which are cumbersome, heavy and require a van for transportation.
- Stall holder financial takings are positive, demonstrating potential for market expansion.
- High Street closure and lack of clarity about it, creating town wide uncertainty and impacting customer satisfaction.
- No obvious connection between the charter market and other market events, such as the Town Council's running of the Corn Exchange (and their indoor craft markets) and the proposals at Marriotts Walk.
- Thames Valley Farmers Market restricted in their efforts to promote Witney Farmers Market with much reduced signage permitted compared to other towns in which they operate

## **3. CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1** The Wild report sets out a series of over-arching recommendations for the way the markets could be managed within the context of active town partnerships and fitting in to a coordinated series of town centre events.
- 3.2** These recommendations correspond with the key recommendations of the Markets Towns report commissioned through the UKSPF scheme. Officers are already undertaking work to form partnerships in each of the towns. These partnerships will consider some of the wider issues including public realm, signage and opportunities for new businesses. They will

also play a key role in the coordination and promotion of events that will draw people into the town centres including the weekly markets.

- 3.3** The report recommends reviewing the location of Chipping Norton market with a potential move to the High Street or 'Top Side'. This would be a significant step which would need to be undertaken in partnership with the Town Council and other town centre stakeholders as well as a full public consultation before a decision could be made. That is beyond the scope of this report but can be raised with the Town Partnership for consideration.
- 3.4** The two key recommendations specific to the running of the markets are forming a 'Markets Team' and appointing a commercial market operator to run the operational side of the markets. These recommendations are based on the successful model for running the market in Cirencester which the Wild report cites as an example of very good practice.
- 3.5** Officers have visited Cirencester market to look at the operation further and the observations are as follows:
- Cirencester Town Council is responsible for the market rather than the district council.
  - The Town Council's Markets Team organises and coordinates a full calendar of different markets and events in the town centre which draws people into the town. This includes indoor markets (in the Corn Hall), antiques and collectables, craft markets, seasonal markets, farmers market, vintage and artisan markets.
  - These markets are run by other organisations – the Town Council team coordinates them, produces a monthly calendar and promotes them.
  - The regular Charter Market sits within the calendar but its operation is contracted out to a commercial operator - Cotswolds Markets
  - The Charter Market is well run, the stalls are bespoke double fronted stalls laid out in rows, there is a wide selection of goods and produce on sale and, when officers visited, the market was busy with high footfall.

#### **4. OPTIONS FOR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER**

- 4.1** It is clear that maintaining the status quo will not rejuvenate West Oxfordshire's markets and allow them to draw in greater numbers of visitors to the towns. There are three fundamental options to consider:

##### **Option 1**

- 4.2** The first option is to retain operational control of the Witney and Chipping Norton markets in house and manage them better. At present the council has neither the staff capacity nor the skills or experience to deliver the step change in markets delivery that the Council is seeking.

##### **Option 2**

- 4.3** The second option is to contract out the running of the retail markets to a commercial market operator. The operator would be responsible for all operational aspects of the markets including the provision and erection of stalls, curation of the market with access to

a large pool of stall-holders and the removal and disposal of waste. The operator would collect and retain the fees from the stallholders.

- 4.4 WODC would still have some strategic control of the markets through its contract and relationship with the operator. The Wild report stresses that a successful market requires a proper working relationship between the managing local authority and the operator – a relationship that is purely contractual will not allow the markets to reach their full potential. If this option is accepted, then time allocated to working with the operator needs to be formally written into an appropriate officer's role.
- 4.5 While the council would lose the stall fee income (currently circa £56,000 pa), we would charge the operator a fee which would recoup a proportion of that loss. This is covered in more detail below.

### **Option 3**

- 4.6 The third option is to transfer the responsibility of running the markets to the relevant town council should they wish to take their market on. The town council would then be responsible for either running the market in house or contracting out to a commercial operator in the same way Cirencester Town Council does.
- 4.7 Initial indications are that both Witney and Chipping Norton town councils would be interested in discussing this option although the outcome of those discussions is unknown.
- 4.8 Were WODC to pursue this option and transfer the responsibility to either or both of the town councils, WODC would also be transferring strategic control and influence over future decisions to the towns themselves. The income from the markets (either stall or operator fees) would go to the relevant town council rather than to WODC.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The marginal cost of running the markets undertaking is set out below. The marginal cost is quoted rather than full cost in the budget book (which includes overheads etc) as this is the relevant measure for making a decision on whether to continue with the service provision or seek alternatives.

### **Current**

Business Rates	£7,000
Cleansing	<u>£34,000</u>
Total Cost	£41,000
Income	£56,000
Net Income	<u>£15,000</u>

- 5.2 The financial implications of the alternative options open to the Council covered in Section 4 are set out below:-

**Option 1: Retain Markets (Additional Cost to the Council)**

Current Net Income is £15,000 but investment is required to improve marketing, administration and cleansing arrangements which will likely move this into a net zero position at best.

**Option 2: Contract Out to Commercial Operator (Net Saving to Council £8,000 - £15,000)**

The costs of cleansing and potentially business rates will be picked up by the new operator who will also retain all income receipts. It is anticipated based on soft market testing that an operator will pay up to £30,000 for the markets concession therefore the net income will be £30,000 giving a net saving of £15,000 (or net income of £23,000 if business rates liability stays with the Council giving a net saving of £8,000).

**Option 3: Agree Transfer to Town Councils (Net Cost to Council £15,000)**

The costs will reduce to zero but all income will be lost therefore there will be a net loss to the Council of £15,000.

- 5.3 Option 2 represents the best option in terms of Value for Money and offers both the potential for revenue savings and an improved markets offer subject to the outcome of the procurement process.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Option 2 looks to offer the best balance in delivering on the strategic objectives required by the Council whilst not impacting on the finances of the Council. If this option were chosen officers would run an expression of interest exercise to select the operator in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development.
- 6.2 While there are advantages to exploring Option 3 with Witney and Chipping Norton town councils, the loss of income to WODC renders this option financially unviable.
- 6.3 It is important however that the town councils are involved. It is recommended they be invited to take part in the process to select the operator and be invited to regular review meetings too so their views and ideas can be discussed and acted upon. In other words, the town councils be invited to be part of the 'Markets Team' for each town.

## 7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 Option 1 to retain the operation of the markets in house would require additional investment in staff resource as it has neither the skills nor experience to deliver the step change in markets delivery that the Council is seeking.

7.2 Option 3 to transfer the control of the markets to Witney and Chipping Norton town councils is discounted because the loss of income from the markets financially disadvantages WODC.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Other than the need to enter into a contract with a commercial operator, the report does not give rise to legal implications.

8.2 It is understood that the requirements of The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 for street trading consents do not apply because the markets have been established by charter.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

9.1 The main premise of the report is that well run and busy markets have the potential to draw people into the towns and help to support the businesses already there. The risk of retaining the markets in house is that they continue to decline and ultimately fail. This goes against the Council's stated aim of doing what it can to support our town centres.

9.2 There is a reputational risk associated with contracting the markets out if the existing stallholders are unhappy with the situation. We will try to mitigate this risk by talking to the stallholders and working with the operator to safeguard their position.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

10.1 The options in the report have no particular impact on equality.

## **11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any negative climate or ecological implications resulting from the options in this report.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None

(END)

Report for West Oxfordshire District Council

Retail & Charter Markets

at

Carterton

Chipping Norton &

Witney

June 2023

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## Contents

<b>Part 1: Background and Context</b>	<b>Page 3 - 17</b>
<b>Part 2: Appraisal and Performance Analysis</b>	<b>Page 18 - 22</b>
<b>Part 3: Recommendations</b>	<b>Page 23 - 34</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Page 34</b>
<b>Photographs</b>	<b>Page 35 - 45</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Page 46 -55</b>



## Part 1 – Background & Context

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Wild Property Consultancy has been commissioned to provide this report, with recommendations for the improvement of three markets in West Oxfordshire District. This commission is from the Market Towns Officer.

1.1.2 We have been requested to consider these three markets.

- Twice weekly Charter Market at Witney;
- Weekly Charter Market at Chipping Norton;
- Weekly retail market at Carterton

1.1.3 In reaching our conclusions and providing our recommendations we have followed this methodology:

- A desktop review of the research papers on markets nationally, covering the markets associations, the Institute of Place Managers and other recognised bodies. These provide the UK context for this assessment and references are included where appropriate.
- Site visits on at least two occasions to each of the three markets, the subject of this report.
- Site visits to other markets in the region, to act as a comparison.
- Stakeholder engagement, to assess opinion from traders and opinion from within each town, in order to create a future vision for the markets.

1.1.4 The report has been split into the following three sections:

Part 1: Background and Context

Part 2: Appraisal and Performance Analysis

Part 3: Recommendations

Appendices: Providing more in-depth responses to the questions put to stakeholders and including the SWOT Analysis.

## 1.2 Wild Property Consultancy

- 1.2.1 Neil Wild, a Chartered Surveyor (since 1993) and Member of the Institute of Place Management (2016), brings considerable experience of the commercial property market together with in depth knowledge of Landlord and Tenant law and property values across the county.
- 1.2.2 Neil is the owner of Wild Property Consultancy which has hundreds of property-owning contacts and regularly brokers leases, brings landlords and tenants together and is a big supporter of local businesses, facilitating engagement with local stakeholders. This has been gained through his property consultancy work as well as rejuvenation and high street consultancy for the Oxfordshire District Councils which brought many empty and underutilised properties back into use.
- 1.2.3 In the Vale DC, Neil worked with Wantage Town Team (2013 to 2018) to manage the occupation of vacant units, including two successful pop up 'Flashops' and support for the Mix Community Space. This contributed towards the town winning the Great British High Street Awards in 2014.
- 1.2.4 In Cherwell DC, his work included Banbury Town Coordination (2014-18), which drew together private and public sector stakeholders including three tiers of local government, independent retailers, landlords and property agents, to leverage private sector finance and set up three meanwhile spaces, reducing the number of empty shops in the town from 53 to 38 (2014 to 2018).
- 1.2.5 As part of the Bicester Town Centre Expansion, Neil represented the town's key landlords (Sainsbury's and Cherwell DC) to help coordinate the town centre development 2009-18, including managing key town centre property, liaising with over 40 different businesses, and creating the Bicester Traders Forum for independent retailers.
- 1.2.6 In South Oxfordshire DC, Neil worked on the Wallingford Empty Shops Project 2015-16, securing agreement with the landlords, enabling two meanwhile units for six organisations.
- 1.2.7 Wild Property Consultancy is one of the Delivery Partners for Meanwhile in Oxfordshire (2021-2024), a project utilising £1.70 million of Government funding, appointed by the Oxfordshire District Councils and OxLEP.

- 1.2.8 As Chair of the Banbury and District Chamber of Commerce (2018 – current), which works with 150 members, Oxfordshire’s business leaders, local government and OxLEP, Neil has extensive networks across the county that can be drawn upon.
- 1.2.9 Nationally, Neil is a member of the Government commissioned High Streets Task Force (2020 to 2024) to provide specialist guidance and advice to Local Authorities, BIDs and other stakeholders.

## 1.3 Context

### 1.3.1 Town centres

Markets function within the economic and social fabric of a wider setting. This ‘place’ sets the dynamic, putting the market within an economic and social context. As is widely reported, high streets, town and urban centres are changing, mainly as a result of the way we shop being different – a change that goes back many years but exaggerated through the pandemic. There is much background research and reports on such changes. As a result of our professional practice, we are well positioned to understand these changes and their impact on a particular place. There are a variety of approaches and solutions on offer to bring together a strategy or series of approaches to facilitate change and help the place adapt to meet the needs of its community.

Whilst each place is unique, there are certain conclusions that are being reached nationally across the place management industry which are helpful to set out, as they are relevant to this study and put the recommendations of this report in a wider context. These conclusions draw on the research from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Future of Retail, Future of High Street Discussion.<sup>1</sup>

- Towns need to transition to become unique places, driven by the needs of the local community.
- Independent Businesses need significant support and resources. These businesses are doing great work in their community and became the subject of newfound appreciation during lockdown where they supported local communities and their social fabric.

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<sup>1</sup> [All Party Parliamentary Group on the Future of Retail, Future of High Street Discussion July 2021](#)

- Councils and other stakeholders require a shift in focus, in the way we view High Streets and town centres. The key is to move beyond shopping and to view the landscape as being about green spaces, socialisation, experiences, hospitality, food, and health and well-being. This shift is necessary because of the increased tendency for people to shop online. Then, if the non-shopping aspects are right and well-integrated, then retail will thrive because people will come to the destination.
- The biggest mistake of the 20th century was designing High Streets exclusively around the car. We need to get cars out and make town centres more walkable and attractive. If we can do this, we can create places that are really in the heart of communities where people want to meet, drink, socialise, and do business.
- Markets and events fit within this changing context. Markets go back hundreds of years and their existence is to be encouraged and enhanced but their re-integration requires proactive support so they serve the needs of the community and at same time, complement other place based curation and activity.

### 1.3.2 Markets

Markets are at the heart of local communities and are a part of local history. Town markets are a crucial part of town vibrancy.

The Institute of Place Management (IPM) at Manchester Metropolitan University conducted a comprehensive review of the published evidence regarding town markets which demonstrated, unequivocally, that markets contribute to the economic, social and political health of towns and cities.<sup>2</sup> This review was at the request of the National Association of British Market Authorities and, as part of the High Street UK2020 project.

As a result, there are plenty of national resources to draw on for Councils to assist in the setting of strategy for all their policy affecting the town centre and rural economy.

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<sup>2</sup> [Markets Matter, Reviewing the Evidence and Detecting the Market Effect. Institute of Place Management 2015](#)

Two national organisations represent the markets industry. The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA), which focuses on market operators—local authorities, private operators, community interest companies and charities—and the National Market Traders Federation (NMTF), which supports market traders across the UK. Both organisations currently meet the Government through the Retail Forum and the all-party parliamentary markets group.

Markets are part of the history and tradition of many towns and cities in the UK. The most recent survey of the markets industry indicates that some 1,150 traditional retail markets are now trading, and they are the outlet for an amazing more than 32,000 small and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>3</sup> They exist through charters from the Crown, custom and practice and statutory legislation. In addition, numerous specialist markets, continental and Christmas markets generate essential footfall for town and city centres and support local economies, tourism, hospitality, and employment.

The NABMA 2022 survey<sup>4</sup> was the first meaningful assessment of the state of the markets industry since the pandemic. The main headlines and questions arising from the survey of 241 markets were, first, that stall occupancy has fallen from a national average of 77% (2017-18) to 72% (2021-22). Traditional outdoor retail markets and outdoor experiencing the greatest decline. Less than half of these, trading at a surplus.

Markets feature heavily as part of town and city centre regeneration for a number of local authorities. As well as the economy, markets also have a strong connection with other strategic policies of a Council. It is important therefore to determine how to direct funding to deliver successful and modern markets with the market industry needing to attract new and younger traders.

From our own Oxfordshire experience, we know that markets provide a fantastic opportunity for individuals and small businesses to begin and further their journey as town centre businesses. Many councils have reported to us whilst undertaking our research that markets have thrived during and since the pandemic as customers have appreciated the outside space and are keen to support locally based traders. The journey for a trader might lead in a variety of directions, depending on the person and their objectives – what is

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<sup>3</sup> Hansard Markets and Market Traders (Review of Support) Debated 17/1/23, Simon Baynes MP [Markets and Market Traders \(Review of Support\) - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

<sup>4</sup> [NABMA-Survey-2022.pdf](#)

important is that each market provides the right opportunities and experience for each endeavour.

Drawing on the IPM report, markets are significant in the following ways.

➤ **Markets Matter Economically.**

- The markets industry is a significant employer nationally and at a local level.
- With low barriers to entry, markets are excellent business incubators and they support business formation. This not only supports local economic development and diversity of retail offer but also encourages individual empowerment - a stepping stone into enterprise for those furthest from the labour market.
- Markets positively impact on town centres. Markets can generate footfall increases of around 25% for town centres<sup>5</sup>.
- Markets increase retail sales, with significant numbers of market visitors spending money in other shops.
- Income from markets supports wider local authority services.
- Markets support inter and intra-generational economic mobility. Many market traders are family businesses and employ extended family members on either a part or full-time basis and the emergence of youth markets and the 'teenage market' is generating income for young people.
- Markets provide employment and self-employment opportunities that are open to all. Markets provide entry-level employment that can assist relatively unskilled or under-capitalised individuals and have proved attractive to immigrant communities.
- Markets create multi-use and multi-scale economic environments, promoting commerce and competition. Through markets, small and micro businesses have direct access not just to individual consumers but to larger businesses to whom they can become suppliers. This provides diversity of offer and encourages co-location and competition.

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<sup>5</sup> Markets Matter, p 22

- Markets contribute to making other businesses viable. There can be significant earnings for farmers who attend markets with increased profit margins whilst these and other markets offer income opportunities for local businesses that contribute to their sustainability.
- Markets increase town centre resilience. Resilient towns respond and adapt to change. Representing more flexible and adaptable retail space, markets can respond quickly.
- Markets attract tourists, offering an enhanced tourist experience as they allow visitors to take part in the everyday life of the place they are visiting.

#### ➤ Markets Matter Socially

- Markets are places of social interaction. Used by all sections of society, markets are where people of different incomes, ages, genders and cultures can meet together and interact.
- Markets facilitate community cohesion and social inclusion. Because of the ease of becoming a trader, markets have traditionally been attractive to new arrivals. They encourage newcomers to become part of the community and are spaces of diversity.
- Markets are crucial to the distinct identity of a town or area. They embody a community and set it apart from those without such an asset. They are a key part of the experiential identity of the place.
- Markets animate vacant or underused space. Whether on a street, a market place or vacant premises, markets create vitality and animation, drawing customers and onlookers. Their layout can encourage exploration and discovery.
- Markets benefit disadvantaged communities. The presence of local markets offering affordable and fresh produce can increase choice for people in deprived areas and improve their quality of life and help address social problems. The benefits and functions of markets are particularly significant in relation to the growing cost of living crisis.

- Markets contribute to community development. The small business nature of markets, their entrepreneurial character and integration with the community promotes community development and connectedness.

➤ **Markets Matter Politically**

- Markets promote sustainability. Environmental and ecological benefits arise from selling locally-sourced products and through serving local communities who mainly walk or use public transport.
- Markets offer food security. The network of wholesale and livestock markets and the number of businesses involved in retail markets provides food resilience and a vital link between urban and rural economies.
- Markets promote community health. The availability of fresh and affordable food, opportunities for social interaction and participation in leisure activities enhance physical and mental well-being.
- Markets are places of innovation, experiment, and education. The low operating costs, smallness of scale, availability of stalls and the fluidity of markets encourage traders to take risks and try ideas and products that may not be viable elsewhere and provide the opportunity to educate shoppers in how to use and learn more about the product.
- Markets engage people in society. The fact that markets are organised and regulated ensures participation by people from all backgrounds. This agglomeration and active engagement in shared activity has mutual benefits, both commercial and social and secures an active response from shoppers.
- Markets are flexible. They can respond rapidly to change with new innovations such as Teenage Markets, night markets, and extended trading hours.
- Markets shaped the world we live in and are part of our cultural heritage. The concept of a 'market town' is ancient and familiar and continues to have a profound effect on town and city centre performance - determining our very geography and culture.



## ➤ **Item for Reflection No 1 – what is the wider town strategy?**

Markets are an extremely valuable asset to a specific place. They have potential for tremendous benefits across the social, economic and political spectrum. They need to form part of the wider strategy and vision for that place – something we will consider when we set out our recommendations and next steps.

### 1.4 Types of Markets

#### 1.4.1 Traditional Retail Markets (TRMs)

TRMs take place both indoors and outdoors with a broad offering including food, household goods, clothing and the like. This diverse and affordable offering distinguishing them from more focused markets such as farmers markets and other speciality markets.

TRM's are particularly important to lower income, marginalised and vulnerable people, providing access to good quality, healthy and affordable fresh food, opportunities for social and cultural interaction and relatively low-cost and accessible trading.<sup>6</sup>

Their stall numbers have been declining and the other trend is that the age profile of the market trader is getting older.

The reasons for this decline are multiple - upshot of poor management, changing tastes and natural retail trends in which independent businesses generally struggle.<sup>7</sup>

It is fair to suggest that local authorities have often failed to make the right connections with wider policy agendas and have tended to limit themselves to a regulatory role; granting licenses and making sure that markets meet health and safety regulations. Their management has not been in the hands of those with curation and marketing skills.

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<sup>6</sup> Adrian Bua, Myfanwy Taylor and Sara González, Measuring the Value of Traditional Retail Markets

<sup>7</sup> [Gonzalez, S and Waley, P \(2013\) Traditional Retail Markets: The New Gentrification Frontier? Antipode: a radical journal of geography, 45 \(4\). 965 - 983.](#)

### ➤ **Item for Reflection No 2 – where does the responsibility sit?**

The future of the market cannot be left to chance or solely to the work of a specific local authority markets officer or to the business plan of the market operator. Within the Council there needs to be a responsible markets team where support and different skill sets can be drawn.

#### **1.4.2 Farmers Markets**

Farmers Markets are a regular event in a town or city when local farmers or their representatives come to sell their produce directly to consumers. The theory being that cutting out middlemen, farmers receive a higher profit and shoppers receive the freshest and most flavourful food, with minimal food miles, and local economies prosper. The particular market defines the term “local” according to the agriculture of its region and communicates that definition to the public. Farmers markets also implement guidelines and operating rules that ensure the farmers market consists principally of farms selling directly to the public, products that the farms have produced. Often these markets take place monthly, although some are more regular.

#### **1.4.3 Food & Speciality Markets**

In many towns there is an exciting range and variety of additional street and outdoor markets taking place throughout the year, often within a wider programme of town events. These markets may be one offs, Christmas, quarterly or more regular events. Often these markets are themed and aim for a large number of stalls, with the event to draw a large crowd. Chipping Norton holds a large Christmas market with over 75 outside stalls, entertainment as well as indoor events and activity. Carterton’s Christmas lights switch on within the market place attracts 4,000 persons.

The latest of the three NABMA Surveys highlighted an increasing number of traders going to market events rather than standing at traditional Markets and traders working only on a part time basis.

### ➤ **Item for Reflection No 3 - Can we mix the markets?**

For instance, where a town market is low in trader numbers and mix, could one combine a retail market with a farmer's market, to boost stall numbers and appeal?

In the majority of cases nationwide, retail market and farmers markets fall on different days. In successful towns, they are part of the town's calendar and branded in a similar way but usually held on separate occasions.

In Henley on Thames, once a month the farmers markets falls on same day as the charter market. The two markets are situated adjacent with customers mixing freely from one to another.

Farmers market cooperative, Thames Valley have a strong preference for a Friday or Saturday for a farmers market.

We refer further to this in our recommendations. There is scope for mixing, provided it is within the overall brand for the town.

## 1.5 **Methods of operation**

There are different approaches to the mode of operation which include the following;

- Unitary or District Council
- Town or Parish Council
- Private Market Operator
- Trader Operated (private company, cooperative)
- Other (social enterprise, Trust)

The NABMA survey included identified that by far the majority of the markets are local authority run.

## 1.6 The Oxfordshire & Cotswolds Market Experience

1.6.1 Below we set out the main Oxfordshire and Cotswold towns with their market offer and method of management, beginning with the three towns the subject of this report and then others follow alphabetically.

### Carterton

Weekly retail market (Thursday) which originally began in 1973 and is now situated on the Market Square. Previous locations have been built upon as part of town expansion. The market is operated by the Town Council.

### Chipping Norton

Weekly retail market (Wednesday) operated by the District Council situated on the lower side of the High Street (Market Place). The monthly farmers market has temporarily ceased due to the building works in the former Nat West. In addition, there is a large Christmas market run by a group of local businesses with a financial grant support from the Town Council. The town has a long history of a weekly market and since local government reorganisation in 1974, the market has been under WODC responsibility. A WODC review in 2019 noted the challenges brought about by Nat West and HSBC closures and by out of town development including the budget food store Aldi and by the attraction of the M&S and connected shops with parking on London Road.

### Witney

Twice weekly charter market (Thursday and Saturday) operated by the District Council and a monthly farmers market (Fridays) operated by Thames Valley Farmers Markets.

### Abingdon

Weekly outdoor charter market (Town Council) plus monthly farmers market (Thames Valley Farmers Market Cooperative).

### Banbury

Twice weekly retail charter market with 12-15 stalls and a monthly farmers market (District Council operated). These take place alongside Town Council and BID run speciality markets.

### Bicester

Weekly retail charter market (a trader run cooperative) with 25 – 30 stalls, including community and youth stalls with discounted rates.

### Cirencester

Twice weekly retail charter market (Town council facilitated with Cotswold Market operating), with other private operators running speciality markets throughout the year – all coordinated by the Town Council.

### Charlbury

A weekly food market run by the Town Council and a large quarterly farmers market by Thames Valley Farmers Market Cooperative.

### Deddington

Monthly farmers market (volunteer run, Community Interest Company). 40 outside stalls plus indoor craft market on same day with 25 stalls. Deddington Farmers' Market was given Farmer's Market of the Year 2020 & 2021 by the Oxfordshire Prestige Awards and named The Third Best UK Farmers' Market by National Geographic Magazine Dec 2017.

### Eynsham

Weekly country market via a cooperative social enterprise.

### Henley on Thames

Weekly charter market and twice monthly farmers market, and a monthly craft market, operated by the Town Council as well as additional speciality market events by trader groups. Once a month the farmers market falls on the same day as the charter market.

### Kidlington

Twice weekly retail charter market (trader run) with up to 12 stalls.

### Moreton in Marsh

Weekly outdoor retail market, privately run by Cotswold Markets, approx. 30 stalls.

### Stow on the Wold

Farmers Market. Monthly (twice monthly during summer) via Fresh n Local.

### Stroud

Twice weekly retail market plus the weekly farmers market. Farmers market is operated via private operator Fresh n Local. The farmer's market is multi award-winning and is well known as one of the biggest, busiest and most popular farmers' markets in the UK.

### Stratford upon Avon

A range of markets including traditional street market every Friday, a Saturday "urban mix market" and a Sunday "upmarket". Markets operated privately by LSD Promotions in conjunction with the Town Council

### Thame

A range of markets run by the Town Council. Weekly charter market, monthly local produce market and other specialist markets throughout the year.

### Wallingford

Weekly outdoor retail charter market, Town Council operated plus occasional additional street and speciality markets during the year. Approx 12 stalls.

### Wantage

Twice weekly outdoor retail market, Town Council operated with 8 – 10 stalls.

### Warwick

Weekly outdoor retail market operated privately by CJ Events with the District Council.

### Woodstock

Twice monthly farmers market, operated by Thames Valley Farmers Market Cooperative. Approx. 12-15 stalls.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 4 – Good Partnership Working**

This list does not do justice to the successful partnerships between Council and private operator in many of these towns. In Cirencester, the Town Council have significantly expanded their overall market offer since 2015. The regular markets are delivered by the private operator, Cotswold Markets, but the Town Council has a team of three staff working alongside this private company to also commission additional specialist markets. The Town Council staff also enhance the promotion and marketing of the markets, they liaise with the traders, creating an excellent rapport and relationship and they ensure the markets are curated in line with the Town Council place management strategy – not the whim of the market operator. The market square is a stage upon which to present a series of activities on an almost daily basis – the Town Council holds the responsibility for this and works with private operators to deliver it.

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN	TIME
Charter Markets	Market Place	Mondays & Fridays	Until 3pm
Indoor Markets	Corn Hall	Sunday to Thursday	10am - 5pm
Antiques & Collectibles	Corn Hall	Fridays	8am - 3pm
Craft Market	Corn Hall	Saturdays	10am - 4:30pm
Arts & Crafts Market	Market Place	Saturday 1st	9am - 5pm
Farmers' Market	Market Place	Saturday 8th	9am - 2:30pm
Bands in the Park	Abbey Grounds	Sunday 9th	2:30pm - 4:30pm
France at Home Market	Market Place	Saturday 15th	9am - 5pm
France at Home Market	Market Place	Sunday 16th	10am - 4pm
Bands in the Park	Abbey Grounds	Sunday 16th	2:30pm - 4:30pm
Farmers' Market	Market Place	Saturday 22nd	9am - 2:30pm
Twilight Market	Market Place	Saturday 22nd	6pm - 10pm
Vintage & Artisan Fair	Corn Hall	Sunday 23rd	10am - 4pm
Bands in the Park	Abbey Grounds	Sunday 23rd	2:30pm - 4:30pm
General Market	Market Place	Saturday 29th	9am - 5pm
Indoor Market	Corn Hall	Saturday 29th	10am - 4:30pm

Information correct at time of going to print  
Listings are subject to change

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July Markets (Image: Cirencester Town Council)

**Markets in July - Cirencester**

## Part 2: Appraisal & Performance Analysis

### 2.1 Methodology

Our appraisal and analysis are derived from desk top analysis, site visits, interviews and observations. As well as visits to the three markets the subject of this study, we have made specific visits to other markets in the region for the purpose of this study including; Banbury, Bicester, Cirencester, Deddington, Moreton in Marsh and Woodstock as well as the farmers market at Witney and the Country Market at Eynsham.

Our analysis covers the economic, social and political considerations arising from the Markets Matter Report, referred to in Section 1. Our specific measurement has included:

- Capacity of market (max possible No. of stall pitches).
- No. of stalls present (on days visited, with an average taken if necessary)<sup>8</sup>.
- Occupancy (the Capacity divided by the No. of stalls present, expressed as a percentage).
- Trader Mix (the No. of unique stalls<sup>9</sup> in relation to the Capacity, as a factor of 1).
- Footfall generated (market customer counts over an hour, multiplied for the duration of the market).
- Distance travelled by trader (in miles from home or storage unit, as appropriate).
- Turnover per stall (where the trader has provided such information in response to our survey question).

The results are set out in the following ways;

- Table of results alongside comparisons with six other local markets.
- Trader interview responses, in tabular form.
- Key comments from specific stakeholder interviews.

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<sup>8</sup> Where a specific stall (such as fruit/veg) has more than one pitch, the total no of pitches taken is used for this purpose, for instance a fruit/veg usually takes x4 stalls and we have used 4 in this instance.

<sup>9</sup> In this instance fruit/veg would be counted as x1 stall



The analysis is similar in approach as other financial indices for town centres which predominately cover footfall, empty shops and town centre trader mix. The above metrics complement the NABMA toolkit designed for market operators to measure the economic performance of specific traditional retail markets.

## 2.2 Analysis Matrix

	Town Population	No of Stalls	Occupancy (%)	Trader mix	Frequency	Footfall (per market)
Carterton	17,000	10	50%	0.25	weekly	108
Chippy	7,000	12	60%	0.40	weekly	272
Witney	30,000	14	70%	0.45	Twice weekly	470
Banbury	50,000	22	73%	0.40	Twice weekly	615
Bicester	38,000	29	91%	0.69	weekly	780
Cirencester *	20,000	25 - 50	80%	0.80	Twice weekly	800
Deddington	2,000	44	96%	0.70	monthly	1,044
Moreton	5,000	49	95%	0.57	weekly	2,050

### ➤ Item for Reflection No 5 – Market Data

The markets at Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney are by far the smallest in terms of stalls and occupancy.

The footfall at Witney market is reasonable, compared to its comparatively small market size, suggesting this is a strength to build upon.

Carterton not fulfilling its potential, given the overall size of the town's population and has by far the lowest score for Trader Mix.

\* Cirencester market is between 25 stalls (Monday) and 50 stalls (Fridays)

## 2.3 Financial Data

- 2.3.1 This section covers the financial data from WODC relating to the markets at Chipping Norton and Witney.
- 2.3.2 Annual income is the rent from stall holders and covers the year to January 2023.
- 2.3.3 Costs incurred includes – refuse removal and disposal, business rates and a share of the market manager.<sup>10</sup>

Income & Expenditure Table for Chipping Norton and Witney:

	Annual Income	Refuse collection	Business Rates	Gross Profit	Staff allocation	Net Income p.a.
Witney	£ 40,100.00	£30,000.00	£ 4,990	£ 5,000	£ 5,705	(£ 700)
CN	£ 16,500.00	£13,000.00	£ 1,572	£ 2,000	£ 2,853	(£ 850)
						(£ 1,600)

### ➤ Item for Reflection No 6 – Financial Data

At over £50,000 the annual income is good, with room for expansion in the size and frequency of markets on offer throughout the year, this income can be enhanced significantly. This provides interest for private operator involvement with a fee to be paid to the Council provided refuse arrangements can be rationalised. In Bicester, the market traders each take their rubbish away with them.

## 2.4 Interviews with Market Traders & Other Stakeholders

We have conducted interviews with each stall holder for all three markets and their comments have been added alongside the specific questions asked. For ease these are included within the Appendix.

We have also conducted interviews with customers and town shoppers, shopping centre managers, town businesses, council officers and members, private market operators, market and representatives from other towns. These are also included within the Appendix.

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<sup>10</sup> These costs reflect information from WODC Officers

We urge you to read each of these in full as they provide a useful insight. A summary for each town is included below:

#### 2.4.1 Carterton

- Limited size and limited stall variety with poor footfall.
- There is no regular Carterton based trader at the market, the closest is Wantage based.
- No in-town market signage.
- Opportunity to bring to bring in more customers looking for a bargain who are shopping at the nearby supermarkets and parking adjacent to the market.
- Special events draw in 4,000 people – demonstrating the town support for gatherings and events.

#### 2.4.2 Chipping Norton

- Doesn't reflect well on the town.
- The market site location is a disadvantage.
- The orientation of stalls and curation is poor.
- The main road is a barrier and traffic emissions for traders is a concern.
- Existing building works is an understandable short-term disruption but has acted as a catalyst for traders to leave and reduce size of market.
- Nothing to encourage shoppers to linger (dwell time is low).
- No electrical supplies for stall holders.
- There is no CN based trader at the market.
- No messaging on approach or in town to announce the market day.
- Limited promotion of the market through adverts or social media.
- Market stall holders self-manage, in terms of curation and organisation.
- Christmas in Chippy market event is example of how well a special event market can be delivered.
- Ease of pedestrian navigation around the town is poor.
- Local businesses want to see a successful market but recognise changes required.

### 2.4.3 Witney

- No messaging on approach or in town to announce the market day.
- Limited promotion of the market through adverts or social media.
- Reduced footfall at this end of town due to shop closures.
- Limited local business taking part in the market.
- Market stall holders self-manage, in terms of curation and organisation.
- Stalls holders have to self-erect the stalls, which are cumbersome, heavy and require a van for transportation.
- Stall holder financial takings are positive demonstrating potential for market expansion.
- High Street closure and lack of clarity about it, creating town wide uncertainty and impacting customer satisfaction.
- No obvious connection between charter market and other market events, such as the Town Council's running of the Corn Exchange (and their indoor craft markets) and the proposals at Marriotts Walk.
- Thames Valley Farmers Market restricted in their efforts to promote Witney Farmers Market with much reduced signage permitted compared to other towns in which they operate

## Part 3: Recommendations

We are inserting into the Recommendations, the six Items for Reflection paragraphs contained in Sections 1 and 2 of the Report. This is for ease of reference and because these items lead into the Recommendations.

### ➤ **Item for Reflection No 1 – what is the wider town strategy?**

Markets are an extremely valuable asset to a specific place. They have potential for tremendous benefits across the social, economic and political spectrum. They need to form part of the wider strategy and vision for that place – something we will consider when we set out our recommendations and next steps.

### ➤ **Item for Reflection No 2 – where does the responsibility sit?**

The future of the market cannot be left to chance or solely to the work of a specific local authority markets officer or to the business plan of the market operator. Within the Council there needs to be a responsible markets team where support and different skill sets can be drawn.

### ➤ **Item for Reflection No 3 - Can we mix the market types?**

For instance, where a town market is low in trader numbers and mix, could one combine a retail market with a farmer's market, to boost stall numbers and appeal?

In the majority of cases nationwide, retail market and farmers markets fall on different days. In successful towns, they are part of the town's calendar and branded in a similar way but usually held on separate occasions.

In Henley on Thames, once a month the farmers markets falls on same day as the charter market. The two markets are situated adjacent with customers mixing freely from one to another.

Farmers market cooperative, Thames Valley have a strong preference for a Friday or Saturday for a farmers market.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 4 – Good Partnership Working**

This list does not do justice to the successful partnerships between Council and private operator in many of these towns. In Cirencester, the Town Council have significantly expanded their overall market offer since 2015. The regular markets are delivered by the private operator, Cotswold Markets, but the Town Council has a team of three staff working alongside this private company to also commission additional specialist markets. The Town Council staff also enhance the promotion and marketing of the markets, they liaise with the traders, creating an excellent rapport and relationship and they ensure the markets are curated in line with the Town Council place management strategy – not the whim of the market operator. The market square is a stage upon which to present a series of activities on an almost daily basis – the Town Council holds the responsibility for this and works with private operators to deliver it.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 5 – Market Data**

The markets at Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney are by far the smallest in terms of stalls and occupancy.

The footfall at Witney market is reasonable, compared to its comparatively small market size, suggesting this is a strength to build upon.

Carterton not fulfilling its potential, given the overall size of the town's population and has by far the lowest score for Trader Mix.

➤ **Item for Reflection No 6 – Financial Data**

At over £50,000 the annual income is positive, with room for expansion in the size and frequency of markets on offer throughout the year, this income can be enhanced significantly. This provides interest for private operator involvement with a fee to be paid to the Council provided refuse arrangements can be rationalised. In Bicester, the market traders each take their rubbish away with them.

### 3.1 Methodology

This section draws together our research with a set of recommendations and next steps. Our aim is to produce recommendations that are easily deliverable in the short term and practical to implement, as well as complementing a wider town vitality strategy over the longer term. We know the pressing financial constraints on all local authorities and have avoided unrealistic proposals. However, we do urge the District Council to implement change and foster better collaboration with other stakeholders – a staffing resource rather than an expensive fixed cost. There is no easy fix or simple set of solutions. Studies have been done before and if the solution was simple, they would have been fixed. Nevertheless, our research shows that there are successful markets across several of our neighboring towns, and we need to draw on their experiences. Many are keen to support and share their practices.

### 3.2 Engage Key Partners - Partnership Approach

Successful towns build strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders each with a keen interest in delivering a vibrant and dynamic town centre. Efforts by individual stakeholders on their own leads to an incoherent set of policies. This is a key piece of advice often shared by the High Streets Task Force to local authorities commissioning advice from their panel of experts.

In Witney there is already evidence of separately planned initiatives – each positive on their own – but arguably lacking an overarching strategy. For instance, the Town Council’s use of the lovely Corn Exchange is proving very successful but is there opportunity for shared promotion of the town charter market and the Town Council’s craft markets?

Also in Witney, the booking of Cotswold Markets for a Christmas fair on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December is an exciting step for Marriotts Walk. It will be the first time the Walk has put on a market - will this appear as a separately promoted and branded event at one end of town, in competition to the weekly retail market? This is not to suggest that two-day event nor the other themed markets under discussion should not occur, but how will they all complement one another? There needs to be a clear programme of market events covering all town activity.

There is an active Town Council in all three towns each already proving to be a strong activator of positive intown initiatives. Typically, a District Council will need to instigate partnerships which might need assistance from Members to initiate and staffing support to take forward.

**In Chipping Norton**, the partnership might start with **District and Town Council** and **business representation** forming an action plan and working on an agreed strategy for town markets. This might be a good springboard into future informal joint working or at least to formulate a joint understanding and vision.

**In Witney**, there are more obvious additional stakeholders to include at the outset, where a town partnership should include:

**District Council**

**Town Council**

**C of Commerce**

**Marriotts Walk**

The town partnership should, as a starting point, create a single market events programme which can be shared with the public, using a single brand logo and town branded signage – underlining the joint working and joined up approach. Others may join the Partnership as the initiatives develop, such as Woolgate Centre (who do not have any current market plans or aspirations but who ought to form part of the discussions).

In Carterton, the Town Council is leading the town centre market initiative. The Officers need support and resources. We would recommend here a partnership with local **businesses and community** representation with strategic support from the **District Council**.



### 3.3 Engage with the Micro Businesses

We have been impressed with the support provided by the team at Cirencester Town Council to the town's market traders and town retailers. The council staff know each by name, they use social media with videos to promote the products and offers and they have a clear Balance of Trades Policy, providing clarity for possible competing businesses. This all takes place in parallel with the private operator, Cotswold Markets, organising the bookings and practicalities of the market. The Town Council ensure their own policies and vision for the market place are followed and activated. There is no hiding behind the private operator's style of management – instead the Town Council takes the lead.

### 3.4 Engage the Community

Each town has a catchment eager to engage and enjoy the benefits of their town centre. Many people are becoming tired of online retailing and want a fresh and real world shopping experience. There are many socially conscious individuals, looking for ways to reduce their carbon footprint and support an eco and environmentally positive way of life. Themed markets such as vegan fares, eco fares, re-use and zero waste are becoming more the norm. Youth markets, twilight and night markets are popular.

The weekly retail markets serve a loyal customer base. The cost of living crisis means that these markets are an important place for customers' weekly shop. This doesn't mean the markets only serve a specific demographic but it is a fact that retail markets provide access to affordable and healthy food often at lower prices than in stores.

Regular engagement with the community, understanding these trends and responding appropriately can be undertaken through the partnership approach recommended.

**Community and customer inclusion within such a Partnership is encouraged.**

Our research confirms there is a strong community and sense of town pride in each of the three places. Connecting with the community will lead to fresh ideas and innovation. The Council need to play a key role as instigator and then facilitator, allowing others to take the lead. Christmas in Chippy is an example of a very well organised and significant town event

already in the annual calendar. This proves such a themed market can be repeated perhaps on a smaller but more regular scale.

The pedestrian friendly High Street in Witney is causing a great debate in the town. Engage with the community and use the space for themed markets and street fairs.

Carterton has a fantastic community. The town might learn from other places. Levenshulme Market in Greater Manchester was only five years old when it won the Best Small Outdoor Market Award in 2020<sup>11</sup>. It has a huge impact on its area making environmental improvements to its trading site by improving verges, introducing planters, cycle racks and wall art. The directors engage with local organisations and schools about career plans and becoming independent traders. This is a market that has changed the dynamics of an area, and its environment, by creating a vibrant community hub. It represents a real team effort. All profits from the market go back to helping the market operate in a socially, environmentally and financially sustaining way.

### 3.5 Animate & Green the Space

The community come into their towns for a variety of reasons, including to enjoy the pleasant environments. The public realm and in particular the market squares should provide space for seating with trees to provide shade and tables and chairs to enjoy a drink. These market squares are also a stage upon which a series of events can be held, including the regular markets but also other animation. In Cirencester on non-market days, there is often a large NHS bus in the square to provide a drop in health facility and information point. On other days there is a coffee vendor or series of planned street entertainers and musicians. Some towns plan a specific programme of entertainment, alongside the market and also as a separate large event within the market square. In Wantage a series of musicians would set up and play next to the market each Saturday market day, the town called these Wantage presents.... this being an important first step.

Retail markets are a great way to support a town in its transition towards a zero carbon economy through locally grown produce and facilitating more pedestrian friendly streets.

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<sup>11</sup> [Great British Market Award Winners 2020 Announced! - NABMA](#)

Carterton has a lovely market square. It attracts a huge crowd for specific town events, celebrations and occasions of remembrance. The elements are there for attracting smaller crowds on a more regular basis.

On one side of the square in Carterton is an attractive green space. This is hidden from view on market days. Consider the curation and layout of the market, so the square's permanent and attractive features are enhanced and can be appreciated.

Chipping Norton is challenged by the main road and the lack of greenery. Town centre building works are a positive step for specific properties but have shrunk the size of the market and split it in two. Further building works may impede it further. A catalyst for positive change is needed here. An expansion in the specific town locations for market stalls will help create an excitement and encourage new traders to join the regular weekly markets.

In Witney the Corn Exchange is situated adjacent to the market square and offers excellent scope to act as a base for outdoor entertainment. The fish and chip shop next to the market square loses half of its outdoor seating and window frontage on market days. Consider ways of including the business into the market and enhancing its seating. Witney has a peaceful pleasant environment enhanced by closure of traffic through the High Street. Yet the road behind which provides a vehicular access to Langdale Street is scruffy with bin bags and vans parked.

### 3.6 Set up a Markets Team

This structure is for the Council to determine and we anticipate funding and staffing allocations will present challenges. Our research suggests that a team approach works best. One person to be the strategic lead Officer covering markets across the District then in addition a specific Officer for each of the three markets. We would suggest approaching the Town Council in each instance as it is possible that these specific Officers could be Town Council employees. Their role to be the liaison with traders, encourage new business, marketing and social media. They would have the support of Council teams for road closures, signage to be erected as required, and to have a marketing budget. A cross council approach will hopefully assist with a collaborative role enabling a shared set of skills. A reduced or

adapted version of the above, if financial constraints dictate, would be more appropriate than the current arrangement.

### 3.7 Join NABMA

The District should join the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) which is an umbrella organisation that helps, advises and promotes markets and events nationally. All market operators, council, private or otherwise should join for their excellent advice and help offered to members. They encourage collaboration and have the ear of Government and are constantly campaigning on behalf of the industry.

### 3.8 Private Market Operator

Meeting and discussions should take place with a private Market Operator. This should take place in parallel with the creation of a Town Partnership. We are advocating that the local authority retains the strategic management of its markets but outsources the operational management, to a formal medium- to long-term joint venture between the public and private sector. This model is useful where the local authority lacks the in-house capacity and capability to effectively manage the markets, and where external investment in stalls and infrastructure is required.

We imagine the private operator taking on the operation of the weekly market in Chipping Norton - assisting with the change of locations as well as the charter market in Witney.

They could take on the farmers market in Chipping Norton unless Thames Valley will reintroduce the market on a new pitch.

The selected operator should join the partnership. They should not be left in charge but to be given directions by the Markets Team. The operator would supply, erect and dismantle the stalls, take bookings and promote the opportunity. The operator would want to have an option to run other themed and speciality markets within each town.

As we have underlined already, outsourcing the markets and then stepping back is not going to work.

The private operator would assist Carterton by taking on themed markets in the market square.

### 3.9 Practical Steps

The following are solid steps forwards, in some cases capable of being implemented immediately.

#### Carterton

Objective	First Steps
Create a brand	<p>“Market Carterton”</p> <p>Make the market stand out, stand tall and stand proud.</p> <p>Introduce flags and bunting on market day.</p> <p>Banners and signposting.</p> <p>Aim to have events in the market on other days – not as competing markets but to encourage the use of the outside space</p>
Connect the market to the town	<p>Encourage those who live locally to be represented as stall holders. Not necessarily existing town retailers but those living locally with a vision and passion to operate a micro business. Try and encourage a new generation of stall holders to emerge.</p> <p>Build on the town’s history. Horticultural industry so as well as the fruit and veg, have stalls selling tomato chutney and other specialist produce. Encourage local producers, farmers and other local food connections to have stalls on market day. Carterton could have a combined retail and farmers market.</p> <p>Encourage more food sellers – to complement not compete with the existing cafes. If the burger van is inconsistent, find one that will commit to come each week and have two or three options. Not simply “fast food” or chip based offer, but also more wholesome food or vegan food.</p>
Carterton presents...	<p>Wantage and other towns have introduced music alongside the market. Encourage local bands, musicians to play music each week. Allow them to promote their music. Thought will need to go into</p>

	<p>the layout/curation of the square to facilitate this and for the music not to be too loud to prevent conversations amongst friends who gather to enjoy the atmosphere.</p>
Promotion	<p>Introduce in town signage. Start with simple desk top produced finger posts. Create a simple “Market Carterton” typeface (logo) and use as part of in-town finger posts and banners.</p> <p>Continue to advertise the opportunity to take on a stall, rent free.</p>
Improve market layout/curation	<p>Ensure benches can be used rather than the stalls impeding use.</p> <p>The green space is hidden behind a stall.</p> <p>Vets practice completely hidden each market day - open up the vet frontage so not hidden behind the stalls. A slight move of the card trader’s pitch and van will overcome. Relocate vans so not within the square.</p> <p>There must be a call for a pet food and pet accessory supplier to have a stall, given the position of the vets.</p>
Local Businesses	<p>There are very few shops in the town centre relative to the size of the town’s population. The market is an excellent opportunity for locally based aspiring business people to take the first steps on their journey. Advertise the opportunity, the free rents and the support on offer.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Encourage local community groups and charities to take part.</p> <p>Ask Forces Support to have a stall as a micro charity shop.</p> <p>Uniformed organisations (Scouts, Guides, Cadets).</p> <p>Carterton Educational Trust.</p> <p>Crocodiles of the World, situated at Brize Norton.</p> <p>Farm centre at Frilford and Cogges Manor Farm, nr Witney.</p> <p>Play Association play day in the square.</p> <p>Town has a wealth of sports club – how about a boxing demonstration from local club?</p>
Enhance use of the square	<p>Introduce permanent wooden stalls along side the wall of the Factory Shop -act as an easy way for a semi permanent pitch.</p>

## Chipping Norton

Objective	How
Create a brand	<p>“Chippy Markets”</p> <p>Emphasise on the plural – a range of markets in the town.</p> <p>The market is to be encouraged. Christmas in Chippy demonstrates the potential.</p>
Appearance & Curation	<p>Introduce new locations for town wide markets.</p> <p>Relocate Wednesday market to the High Street (outside Boots).</p> <p>With a second phase and expansion to Middle Row.</p> <p>Retain the existing market location for special events which require a wider open space (See below).</p>
Connect the market to the town	<p>Current traders travel a long distance and their takings are not high – this is not sustainable. Encourage those who live locally to be represented as stall holders. There are many local people and businesses who run stalls at the Christmas market for example.</p> <p>Build on the strong community links.</p>
Farmers Market	<p>Reintroduce the once a month Saturday Farmers Market with immediate effect in new location of High Street and look to combine with the former WI market.</p>
Operational	<p>Add in electric points in specific locations.</p>
Promotion	<p>Introduce in town signage. Start with simple desk top produced finger posts. Create a simple “Chippy Markets” typeface (logo) and use as part of in-town finger posts and banners.</p>
Practicalities	<p>Involve the Town Council in a wider town discussion about events and markets throughout the year.</p> <p>Take up TC offer for use of toilets for traders.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Use the Christmas in Chippy example and operate from multi sites depending on the specific market and day of the week.</p> <p>Twilight markets.</p> <p>Sunday quarterly antiques market (connecting the town back to the antique shops from the past, which have now closed).</p> <p>Annual beer festival with Hook Norton support – encourage other local breweries to take part.</p>

	<p>Short outdoor theatre productions – in conjunction with theatre, to help promote forthcoming events.</p> <p>Include these outdoor market sites as part of the literary festival.</p> <p>Book event</p> <p>Outdoor theatre performance</p> <p>CN Choral society</p> <p>CN Vintage Sports Car Club</p> <p>CN Railway Club (50<sup>th</sup> year in 2024)</p> <p>Cycle Repair Stands – repair hub?</p> <p>Re-use and eco fair</p> <p>Farm ED – farm and food education – not for profit organisation on Burford Road just outside the town – encourage their participation.</p> <p>Chipping Norton news stall / Build Chippy Better stall</p>
Town Council	Partner with the Town Council



## Witney

Objective	How
Create a brand	<p>“Market Witney”</p> <p>Connect the potentially different markets across the town under a single brand, with a single vision and programme of events.</p>
Appearance & Curation	Utilise the attractive market square as a positive asset for the market. Utilise the benefits of the outside seating at Corn Exchange and the coffee shop and the fish and chip shop.
Witney presents...	<p>Wantage and other towns have introduced music alongside the market. Encourage local bands, musicians to play music each week. Allow them to promote their music. Encourage dwell time.</p> <p>This could develop into a Saturday twilight music event with food stalls.</p>
Practicalities	<p>Involve the Town Council in a wider town discussion about events and markets throughout the year.</p> <p>Agree with TC, the use of Corn Exchange toilets by traders.</p>
Promotion	Introduce in town signage. Start with simple desk top produced finger posts. Create a simple “Chippy Markets” typeface (logo) and use has part of intown finger posts and banners.
Operational	Engage in a discussion with private operator to take on the running of the twice weekly market but set clear criteria and aims/objectives for this to ensure there is a town wide focus and plan.
Local business	Encourage local business and locally based individuals to take part in the markets. Witney shops have expensive rents. Demand for the small units is high. The market offers excellent introductory opportunity for micro businesses to start their journey. Advertise the opportunity, introduce special offers for new traders.
Local butchers	There is evidence of antagonism towards fresh meat vendors at the town markets. This needs to be addressed. A farmers market cannot operate properly without a fresh meat vendor. A clear Balance of Trade Policy will help.
Use of High Street	Formulate a plan for use of High Street for special event markets such as food and craft fairs.

Suggestions	Create a strong brand that can be used for all markets in the town. Proactively encourage local traders to take part. Discounts will be needed on re-launch to encourage participation.
Town Council	Partner with the Town Council

### 3.10 Market Rights

When change is planned for markets it is important to consider the implications of any market rights issues.

Markets rights enable a market operator whether public or private sector, to potentially control the setting up of other markets within a defined area. Many market operators, in both the public and private sectors, take these responsibilities seriously and have adopted policies to control the setting up of markets. It is important that, as part of the consideration of an alternative model, a market operator considers the extent to which an existing markets rights policy can be accommodated.<sup>12</sup>

## 4. Conclusion

Markets breathe life into a town centre and provide positive energy. They epitomise the hustle and bustle of daily life. They are commerce in action. A customer looking for a one off bargain, or vital to one’s weekly shopping on a budget or somewhere unique for lunch, the market environment is an enticing and wonderful experience. The high street is a very competitive environment and for any retailer, including markets, to survive they have to ensure they are providing what the customer wants. In addition to regularly reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of its operation, it is also important for market traders, the operators and local authorities to look for innovation and good practice from others around them. There are many towns in the region who would be delighted to offer support and advice to share the lessons they have learnt and experiences of promoting and growing markets. There are some excellent examples that we have given in this report. We encourage the Officers and Members at WODC to take up these offers of support and visit as many places as possible.

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<sup>12</sup> From Retail Markets Management Models

## Photographs



**Carterton Market (30/3/23)**



**Carterton Market (6/4/23)**



**Carterton Market – vets practice frontage blocked**



**Carterton Market Square – Delightful green space, hidden**



**Carterton Market Square, War Memorial**



**Chipping Norton Market Day (26/4/23)**



**Chipping Norton Market Day (29/3/23)**



**Chipping Norton Market Day (26/4/23)**



**Chipping Norton Market Day (5/4/23) – the builders hoarding in background**



**Chipping Norton Market Refuse (29/3/23)**



**Additional pitch location – High Street Crown & Cushion**





**Additional pitch location - High Street Boots**



**Additional pitch location – Middle Row**



**Witney Market (30/3/23)**



**Witney Market (30/3/23)**



**Witney Market, view from High Street (13/4/23)**



**Witney Market, view from High Street (30/3/23)**



**Witney Market (vans blocking adjacent business)**



**Witney Market (vans blocking adjacent business)**



**Witney High Street (closed to cars)**



**Side street from Market Square**

## Appendix

Stakeholder Representation – we have had conversations with the following persons and grateful for their time and assistance.

### District Wide

Duncan Enright Deputy Leader of WODC and the Executive Member for the Economic Development Portfolio

Pat Bliss, markets manager, Licensing team

### Carterton

Nicholas Leverton, Town Counsellor and former town mayor.

Kay Linnington and Katie Zasada, Town Council

### Chipping Norton

Patrick, Jaffe and Neale

Mayor Sandra Coleman and Luci Ashbourne, Town Council

Susan, an employee at Ticketty Boo

Nicola Edginton, Mark Making

Nathan, business owner Pie in the sky

Flower shop

Geoff Saul, Counsellor

Emma Kennedy, the Branch

Keith Ruddle, Chipping Norton News

### Witney

Sharon Groth, Town Clerk, Town Council

David Gambier, Great Experience Travel Group and Witney Chamber of Commerce

Iain, an employee at Edgars

Rob Steere, Woolgate Centre Manager

Simon Jones, Marriotts Walk, Centre Manager

### Others

Chris Gregory, Heartflood

Paul Almond, Banbury Town Council and former Street Scene at Cherwell District Council

Dermot McGillicuddy, LSD Promotions

Dave Joynes, Cotswold Markets

Richard Gould, Bicester and Kidlington Market Traders

Becky Coles, Cirencester Town Council

Alice Hemming, Cooperative Futures

David Busby, Thames Valley Farmers Markets

Nicci Taylor, Henley on Thames Town Council

## Interviews with Market Traders

We interviewed each stall holder on each of the three markets. Their comments and suggestions should be considered and reflected upon.

### Carterton – Interviews with Market Traders

No of stall holders	5
What other markets attend	All attend at least three markets per week
How far travel from (one way)	Average distance travelled, 33 miles. Closest is the card retailer with 18-mile journey from Wantage. Hot food seller travels the furthest, 58 miles from Ledbury. Total of 334-mile round trip by 5 traders.
What additional stalls would you like to see	Deli, artisan products, picture framer, regular hot food (as existing one not consistent).
How well out of 10 (10 highest and 1 lowest) is the market promoted to public	Positive comments about the sign on way into town (part of the Carterton welcome sign) but otherwise limited positive responses. Average of 1 – 3 out of 10.
How is the market organised. Stalls / layout / new entrants	There is much scope for additional stalls. Very limited footfall. Those traders present are all fairly long-term traders.
Takings	Four traders responded. X 3: £200 - £300 X1 £500
Council support	Admin is fine. Limited social media as TC has limitations on allowing trader comments on Facebook page. No in town signage. One trader had signs printed but not allowed to erect.
Other observations	Worst performing market for some of the traders. Market situated within triangle of supermarkets. Former locations better (town developments have led to changes).
How else can we help:	Increase footfall, better publicity, wider variety of stalls. Rent free for up to x4 weeks per year (allow holidays) Rent free /reduced rent for new traders

## Chipping Norton – Interviews with Market Traders

No of stall holders	8
What other markets attend	All attend at least one other. 5 out of 8 attend another market most days.
How far travel from (one way)	Average distance travelled, 39 miles. Closest was within 20 miles and furthest 70. Total of 630-mile round trip by 8 traders.
What additional stalls would you like to see	Hot food, coffee – increase dwell time. Vegan food, pet food, cold meats and more deli offer.
How well out of 10 (10 highest and 1 lowest) is the market promoted to public	Average score: 2.50. No promotion. Other comments – need to promote alongside a strategy for whole town.
How is the market organised. Stalls / layout / new entrants	Unanimous response of the market being self-organised (by stall holders). One trader suggested a re-location to better site (less slope) but others resigned to existing tricky trading locations. Lack of toilet facility.
Takings	Six traders responded. x2: under £100 X2: £200 - £300 X1: £300 - £400 X1: £1000 +
Council support	Much appreciation and loyalty to Pat Bliss notwithstanding the poor promotion.
Other observations	Tricky site, on a slope. Exposed to weather and traffic – wind and traffic emissions (next to traffic crossing, static vehicles with engine running) Need to retain vans alongside the stall to provide shelter and anchor down. Worst performing market out of those attended by traders. No electric provision.
How else can we help:	Remove the hoarding (due to building works) which limits the pitches, splits the market in two parts and prompted retirement by 2 traders. Rent free for up to x4 weeks per year (allow holidays) Rent free /reduced rent for new traders Promotion and advertising In town signage Shuttle bus from villages



## Witney – Interviews with Market Traders

No of stall holders	9
What other markets attend	Majority do 3+ in a week. Picture framer and plant stall only attend Witney.
How far travel from (one way)	Average distance travelled 30 miles. Closest less than 3 miles (the relatively new cake stall) and furthest is 69 miles. Total of 532-mile round trip by 9 traders.
What additional stalls would you like to see	Regular plant and cut flowers stall (existing Thursday trader is infrequent due to family circumstances). Hairdresser, cold meats, bric a brac, coffee, pet food. Artisan and crafts. One trader suggested an additional fruit/veg stall at other end.
How well out of 10 is the market promoted to public	Average score: 1.50 out of 10 (out of six expressing a score). One trader expressed satisfaction as has regular repeat customers.
How is the market organised. Stalls / layout / new entrants	Most keen for the high street to be re-opened. One trader happy with closure and suggesting use the space for stalls instead of traffic. Most not advocating a return to pre covid layout where central area had stalls. One trader been coming 4 weeks – had limited introduction and assistance with practicalities. Stalls are generally a bug bear for many. Require a van due to their size. Too heavy for average person to self-erect. Intimidating for new entrants. Lack of toilet facility.
Takings	Five traders responded. X1: £100 - £200 X1: £300 - £400 X1: £900 - £1,000 X 1: £1,000 X1: £2 - £2,500
Council support	Appreciation and loyalty to Pat Bliss notwithstanding the poor promotion.
Other observations	One trader aspiring to have own shop after period of market trading. Cheese seller noted that customers prefer quality over value.
How else can we help:	Bring in more stalls, fill in the gaps.

## Comments from Pat Bliss, WODC Licencing

### Chipping Norton –

The Charter (for Market and Mop Fair) has been in place for many centuries.

The market which I have known for several decades is at present in the midst of external building works which have cut the ground area and made access difficult. A number of traders stopped trading as there was not sufficient space.

Chipping Norton lower car park is on a quite considerable gradient and this does curtail some pitches especially during building works.

Chipping Norton was hit by the closure of the two big banks, by the market, which served the town and surrounding communities.

For many years all the outlying villages were served by buses and a regular bus run was always present on Market Day and weekends. The idea of people shopping, drinking, socialising etc in Chipping Norton is fine but the people who would use the town need their cars to get into Chipping Norton and therefore need parking.

Parking is a big issue in Chipping Norton and the recent change from WODC to OCC has made it difficult and likely to get worse. The whole of the top car park is always full and would be difficult to use for any other purpose.

### Witney –

Again this and the Fair are within a Charter.

Loss of footfall has been noticeable since the High Street was closed to traffic.

The use of WODC Gazebos has been a problem as they are far too heavy for most stall holders and we have allowed traders to use their own as long as they are safe and in keeping. Unless WODC are willing and able to handle and erect the Gazebos they are not a good idea for the future.

To run further markets within the Town, the Square or on the Green would be for WTC and OCC as they are in charge of these areas except on Thursday/Saturday Charter Markets.

We do have several enquiries at present and hope to set up further stalls in the centre of the Market which was cleared and spaced out due to Covid.

With both Towns, the idea of other smaller individual markets is fine but needs to be closely monitored for Health & Safety, Public Liability, Food & Hygiene etc.

## Interviews with Other Stakeholders

### Carterton – Interviews with Other Stakeholders

Appearance & Curation	Too few stalls. Pleasant market square.
Community Value	
Operational	Consistent
Promotion	Lack of in town signage, finger posts
Practicalities	Former locations better
Suggestions	
Town Benefits	Provides a market town narrative and connects back to its formation (horticultural business)

### Chipping Norton – Interviews with Other Stakeholders

Appearance & Curation	<p>Not good visually</p> <p>Vans and stall backs create a barrier</p> <p>Slope doesn't facilitate increased dwell time</p> <p>Hard to see from High Street</p> <p>Not a good advert for the town</p> <p>Limited stall mix</p>
Community value	Forms part of the weekly routine but disappointing offer and mix of stalls. Loyal customer base. Sells products not available elsewhere in town centre.
Operational	<p>Disruption from the building works</p> <p>Potential for further disruption when HSBC developed.</p>
Promotion	<p>Little if any promotion of the market to public/visitors/tourists.</p> <p>Council have left it to its own devices and its own fortunes.</p>
Practicalities	<p>Arguably in wrong location – sloping site, exposed to elements and road noise and road pollution</p> <p>No electrical supplies (other than from local shop keeper)</p> <p>Discussion on markets quickly linked to town centre accessibility.</p> <p>Market on a slope is part of the overall challenge of navigating round town on foot.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Create a common branding for each stall.</p> <p>Add stall mix with offer to help increase dwell time – food stalls with seating.</p> <p>Create boards with “The Chippy Market – on Today” (or similar) for the stall holders to use as wind breaks instead of the vans, while making it look appealing and being advertising at the same time.</p> <p>A town with strong community spirit. Engender some of this spirit with local involvement.</p> <p>Town Council willing to consider market support and operation, provided costs covered.</p>

Suggestions (continued)	<p>Ensure the proposals from the LCWIP complement the accessibility to/from the market's location.</p> <p>Consider re-locating the market. Look how Christmas in Chippy is run and locations of market stalls.</p> <p>Best way to implement change is to start afresh with new location.</p> <p>Enhance the long stay parking, build a second tier.</p>
Town Benefits	<p>Other town traders keen to see it be successful but at present operating below par and potential. Willing to see changes in operation and location for sake of improvements.</p>

### Witney - Interviews with Other Stakeholders

Appearance & Curation	<p>This end of town has become quieter. Loss of some key retail units and significant empty units.</p> <p>Benefit of two adjacent cafes (Corn Exchange and Coffee #1) with outside seating</p>
Community value	<p>Question over competition with town retailers (butcher) and whether extra stalls will negatively impact.</p>
Operational	
Promotion	<p>No in town promotion</p>
Practicalities	<p>Loss of traffic to High Street is suggested to be leading to a loss of customers although opportunity for improved street scene and more pedestrian friendly town centre on back of the changes.</p>
Suggestions	<p>Include music and other entertainment</p>
Town Benefits	

## 2.6 SWOT ANALYSIS

### ASSESSING: CARTERTON WEEKLY RETAIL MARKET

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Designated market square, fully pedestrianised</li> <li>2. Adjacent to town centre parking</li> <li>3. Large town</li> <li>4. On the spot Town Council with designated staff support</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. limited local businesses taking part</li> <li>2. Limited existing footfall</li> <li>3. No clear branding</li> <li>4. No income generated, as rent free to traders</li> <li>5. No link to a wider town centre strategy</li> <li>6. Limited community group representation</li> </ol>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Growing town with new housing</li> <li>2. Lovely square with attractive public realm</li> <li>3. Limited retail provision in town centre, provides a unique opportunity for more traders on the market</li> <li>4. Close to supermarkets and car parking, opportunity for more trade</li> <li>5. Chance to get more involvement from local businesses and community groups</li> <li>6. Build on the RAF connection and the war memorial situated within the market square</li> <li>7. Chance to improve curation and layout</li> <li>8. Space exists for more stalls.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing strength of the three town supermarkets</li> <li>2. Potential for additional supermarket</li> <li>3. Strength of Witney town centre – draws people away</li> </ol>

## SWOT ANALYSIS

ASSESSING: CHIPPING NORTON WEEKLY RETAIL MARKET

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Long standing market presence in town centre</li> <li>2. Loyal customer base</li> <li>3. Long standing traders present</li> <li>4. Town with strong pride and community strength</li> <li>5. Compact town centre – enabling cross visibility</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No local businesses trading</li> <li>2. Practically difficult site</li> <li>3. Busy road cutting through the small town</li> <li>4. No or little promotion to the public</li> <li>5. No branding</li> <li>6. Poor visibility from top side of High Street</li> <li>7. Poor curation of stalls, compounded by site impracticalities</li> <li>7. Building works on adjacent property causing disruption and disjointed layout – led to cessation of the farmers market</li> <li>8. Loss of parking spaces when market trading</li> <li>9. No electric points</li> <li>10. No other regular town markets or events (apart from Christmas)</li> <li>11. No clear town centre strategy</li> <li>12. Loss of farmers market, compounds bad news</li> </ol>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Growing town with new housing</li> <li>2. Chance to get more involvement from local businesses and community groups</li> <li>3. LCWIP provides opportunity to improve street scene for pedestrians</li> <li>4. Build on the success of Christmas in Chippy</li> <li>5. Town Council willing to support</li> <li>6. Options to re-locate and add to the pitch locations throughout the town</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing pressure on town car parking due to new housing on edge of town</li> <li>2. Reliance on traders who travel great distance to reach the town</li> <li>4. Older generation traders who may retire</li> <li>5. Potential for more building work disruption from HSBC renovations</li> <li>6. More residents travelling away from town for work, less shopping on midweek days</li> </ol>


## SWOT ANALYSIS

ASSESSING: WITNEY CHARTER MARKET

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Long standing market presence in town centre</li> <li>2. Loyal customer base</li> <li>3. Long standing traders present</li> <li>4. Town with strong pride and community strength</li> <li>5. Attractive market square</li> <li>6. Positive buildings and uses adjacent</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Only 1 local business trading</li> <li>2. Footfall drops at this end of town centre</li> <li>3. No or little promotion to the public</li> <li>4. No branding</li> <li>5. No connection with Town Council operated Corn Exchange with its own craft market</li> <li>6. No other regular town markets or events</li> <li>7. No clear town centre strategy</li> </ol>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Growing town with new housing</li> <li>2. Chance to get more involvement from local businesses and community groups</li> <li>3. High Street pedestrianisation provides chance for additional markets</li> <li>4. Town Council willing to support</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Loss of trade due to high street road closure</li> <li>2. Reliance on traders who travel great distance</li> <li>3. Older generation traders who may retire</li> <li>4. Markets at Marriotts Walk will draw people away and highlight weakness of the charter market</li> </ol>

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 <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>	<p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 DECEMBER 2023</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>FLY-TIPPING UPDATE</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment Email: <a href="mailto:Lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk">Lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Assistant Director for Resident Services Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Environmental, Welfare and Revenues Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To give an update on fly-tipping activities during the first two quarters of the financial year 2023/2024.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Incident reported by type. Annex B – Initiatives</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I. Note the report.</p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li> <li>• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
<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, Executive Member for Environment, Group Finance Director (Publica)</p>



## 1. BACKGROUND

1.1 On 23 March 2023 officers presented a presentation to the Climate and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee which covered:

- Fly-tipping data
- Enforcement action in respect of fly-tipping
- Mapping and reporting of fly-tipping
- Achievements
- Future initiatives

1.2 This report provides an update on activities in respect of fly-tipping during the first two quarters of this financial year (2023/2024)

## 2. MAIN POINTS

2.1 The total fly-tipping incidents report for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Q1) was 233. This was a 6.4% decrease on the same period in 2022/2023. 268 incidents were reported for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023 (Q2) which shows an 9.4% increase on the same period for 2022/2023.

Incidents Reported	Apr – June 2022	Apr – June 2023	July – Sept 2022	July – Sept 2023
	249	233	245	268

\*\* a breakdown on the type of incidents can be found in Annex A

2.2 The total number of investigations during 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Q1) in comparison to the same period in 2022/2023 did increase; however, due to low resources for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023 (Q2), investigation work and the issuing of FPNs decreased.

	Apr – June 2022	Apr – June 2023	July – Sept 2022	July – Sept 2023
Investigation	0	5	2	1
FPN	1	1	0	0

2.3 There is a vast improvement showing on this during October 2023, with 19 investigations being undertaken, 7 warning letters being sent and 8 FPN's issued. In comparison to the full quarter 3 period of 2022/2023 (Oct to Dec) when there were no investigations and 2 FPN's issued.

2.4 The mapping of fly-tipping hotspots continues, and cameras will be very shortly deployed to these known hot spots; subject to the appropriate approvals being given. Similar cameras have been deployed in our neighbouring authority, Cotswold District, which has supported the Council in obtaining successful prosecutions for fly-tipping offences.

- 2.5 Work continues to strengthen communications with other external organisations, such as the local neighbourhood policing teams and housing associations; whilst continuing to develop stronger links with local communities.
- 2.6 The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 has also increased the amount of a FPN from £400 to £1,000. A report is scheduled with the Executive in November 2023 with recommendations for the Council to adopt the increased charge.
- 2.7 The list of ongoing initiatives continues to increase since March 2023. A full list of these can be found in Annex B. Further work is still required against each initiative to consider the objectives, achievements, and any associated additional costs.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 There are no alternative options to consider at this point. The work continues to evolve.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Ubico, as the Councils waste collection contractor collects the majority of items fly-tipped and this service forms part of the main waste contract. Based on the collections for Q1 and Q2 this cost approximately £6,000.
- 4.2 The financial benefits for fly-tipping offences have yet to be realised; however, it should be noted that fly-tipping investigations is one of several duties being carried out by the Environmental crime officer.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Fly-tipping is an offence under section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

### **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 There are no risks associate with this report. The report is for noting only.

### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

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

### **8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Measures to reduce fly-tipping and ensure the quick removal of fly-tips will reduce ecological harm and risks to human health.
- 8.2 The recent acquisition of an electric vehicle to carry out investigations will have a positive impact on carbon footprint.

### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

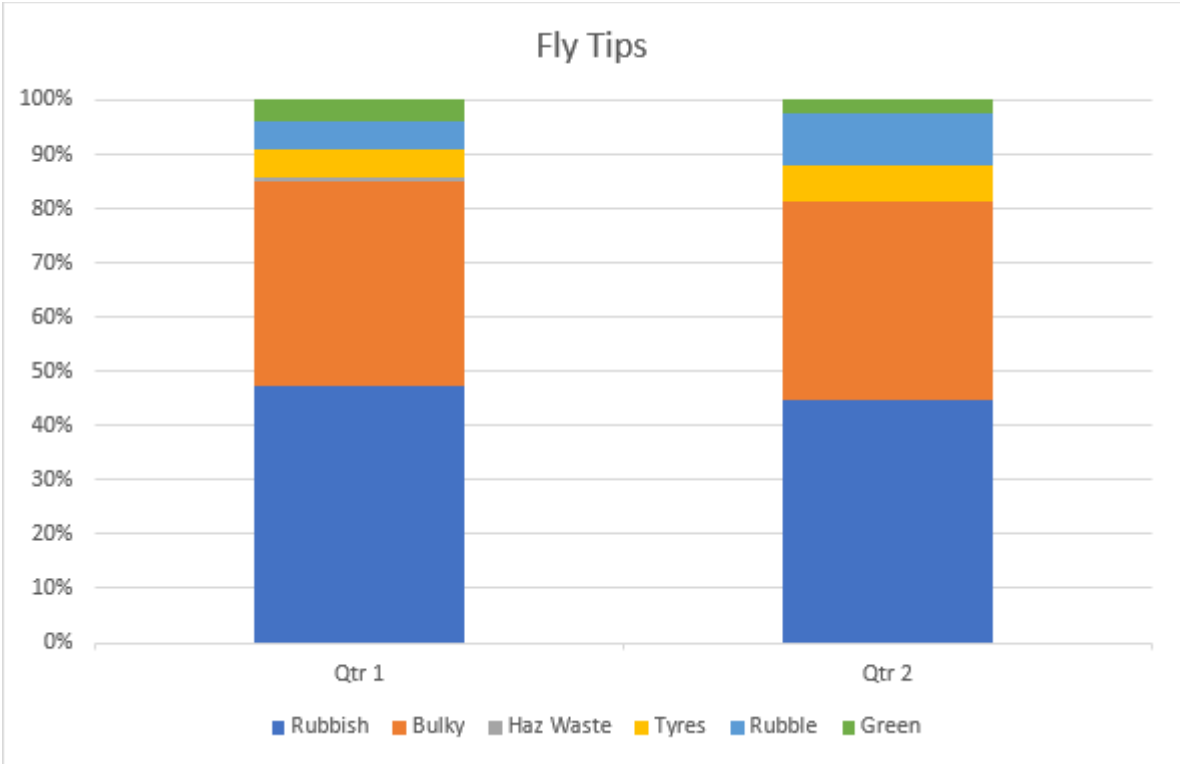
Annex A

Period	Highway	Footpath/ Bridleway	Alleyway	Council Land	Agricultural	Private Residential	Commercial/ Industrial	Watercourse/ Banks	Other	Total
Q1 2022/23	97	18	1	1	0	1	1	2	128	249
Q2 2022/23	73	22	1	0	10	3	2	2	132	245
Total	170	40	2	1	10	4	3	4	260	
Q1 2023/24	95	10	1	3	2	12	1	0	109	233
Q2 2023/24	94	10	4	0	3	27	4	0	126	268
Total	189	20	5	3	5	39	5	0	235	

\*\* 'Other' is when a person reports a fly-tip but does not indicate which type it falls in to.

Period	Highway	Footpath/ Bridleway	Alleyway	Council Land	Agricultural	Private Residential	Commercial/ Industrial	Watercourse/ Banks	Other	Total Incidents
Q1 2022/23	97	18	1	1	0	1	1	2	128	249
% of total incidents	38.96%	7.23%	0.40%	0.40%	0.00%	0.40%	0.40%	0.80%	51.41%	
Q2 2022/23	73	22	1	0	10	3	2	2	132	245
% of total incidents	29.80%	8.98%	0.41%	0.00%	4.08%	1.22%	0.82%	0.82%	53.87%	
Q1 2023/24	95	10	1	3	2	12	1	0	109	233
% of total incidents	40.77%	4.29%	0.43%	1.29%	0.86%	5.15%	0.43%	0.00%	46.78%	
Q2 2023/24	94	10	4	0	3	27	4	0	126	268
% of total incidents	35.07%	3.73%	1.49%	0.00%	1.12%	10.08%	1.49%	0.00%	47.02%	

\*\* 'Other' and 'Highway' are the highest reported incidents with 'Footpath/Bridleways' and 'Private Residential' following



Annex B

Initiative	Objectives	Achievements/Outcomes	Associated costs (additional)
Increase awareness around Duty of Care	<p>Improve the local environment by reducing fly-tips.</p> <p>Reduce financial burden on council with reduction in fly-tips.</p>		
Increase awareness of what to do 'if you encounter a fly-tip'	Ensuring fly-tips are reported as quickly and as accurate as possible and that any evidence is not tampered with, and public health is not a risk.		
Enhance enforcement in respect of waste transfer notices/licenses, working with local rubbish tips	Ensuring the safe management of waste to protect human health and the environment, and that enforcement action is taken when and where appropriate to increase deterrent.		
Work in partnership with TVP rural crimes taskforce	To support local farming community in defending against rural crimes and how to deter and address them on their land.		
Deploy Cameras	To act as deterrent against fly-tips. Provide a good source of evidence when investigating enviro-crime.		
Communications in respect of increases in FPN fines	Help deter fly-tips by making people aware of the increase in fines.		



With local businesses work to improve their waste handling and storage	Better engagement will enhance awareness which will help protect the local environment and reduce enviro-crime.		
Deliver early intervention to schools in partnership with TVP regarding ASB and Civic Pride	To help sustain the local environment, by being more responsible through early education/awareness and engagement.		
Improve processes for abandoned vehicles/caravans	Enhance enforcement options and support in improving the local environment.		
Enhance communication through available media channels and future publications in promoting enviro-crime achievements	To deter enviro-crime being committed. Increasing awareness to show 'crime does not pay'. Improve local environment.		
Develop relationships with conservation groups	To support in the up-keep of areas particularly affected or damaged by excessive waste/fly-tipping.		

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# Agenda Item 8

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 DECEMBER 2023</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24 QUARTER TWO</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham – Leader. Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author</p>	<p>Alison Borrett – Senior Performance Analyst. Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To provide details of the Council’s operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Two (Q2).</p>
<p>Annex</p>	<p>Annex A - Council Priorities report Annex B - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex C - Performance indicator report Annex D – Financial Performance Summary</p>
<p>Recommendation.</p>	<p><i>That the Committee Resolves to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Note the 2023/24 Q2 service performance report.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All</li> <li>• Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li> <li>• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.</p>

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- I.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.
- I.2** A high-level Commissioning Framework was approved by the Executive in October 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica provides the necessary information, including a range of performance indicators, to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard.
- I.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 Q2 include:
  - The Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan has been created on the Modern.gov system but has not yet been published to the website.
  - Outstanding information has been provided to consultants in relation to the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) alongside ongoing discussions with key stakeholders including landowners/developers with regards to development typologies to be tested and the approach to consultation with key stakeholders including landowners/developers.
  - A Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper was presented and approved by the Executive on 15 November.
  - Options for a new proposal of the new Net-Zero Carbon housing development at Waterbush Road, Chipping Norton is being worked up with Green Axis, the Planning service and Homes England.
  - Improvement works to the bridges for the Deer Park South Access Project have been completed.
  - Regulation 18 for the Local Plan is ongoing with four public exhibitions and three Town and Parish Council workshops undertaken during September and October.
  - The planning application has been submitted in late August for the decarbonisation of Carterton Leisure Centre.
  - Crowdfunding website, in collaboration with Spacehive, launched in October.
- 2.2** The Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex A with an overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan attached at Annex B.

## **3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

- 3.1** Service performance above target:
  - Percentage of Council Tax Collected (64.26% against a target of 53%)
  - Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected (63.85% against a target of 57%)

- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3.25 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.11% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (96.51% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (92.59% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (86.39% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (96.49% against a target of 80%)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (4313 memberships against a target of 3990 memberships and 179007 visits against a target of 184970)
- Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 90%)

### 3.2 Service Performance below target:

#### **Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (23.98 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (9.83 days against a target of 4 days)**

Q2's standalone figures show that Council Tax New Claims are being processed in 17.05 days, against the target of 20 days and Housing Benefit Changes of Circumstance are being processed in 6.07 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:** Following procedural changes to manage the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers, we are now achieving a level of 60-70% of automation for the DWP work up from 40-45% in Q1 allowing for more focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is currently investigating improvements to the data that is sent through to local authorities via a Working Group. Once the improvements have been made there is the potential, in conjunction with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The outstanding workload is reducing week by week and management of the resource to support the reduction is underway. The improvements to the automation system have freed up officer capacity to help reduce the backlog of claims. It is anticipated that the trial for reduced phone line opening hours will further free up capacity for officers to process claims.

Publica remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and is 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. Publica will continue to monitor, assess, and report on the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

#### **Building Control Satisfaction (50% against a target of 90%)**

Two surveys were returned during Q2, one of which was satisfied.

**The Resolution:** 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. Given the low numbers of survey returns discussions are proposed with ICT to investigate an SMS notification service linking customers to an online survey. The service retains a strong hold in the share of the market.

**Missed Bins per 100,000 (135.31 against a target of 120)**

The number of missed bins per 100,000 has increased since last quarter but is lower than this time last year. This has been attributed to the retirement of an experienced crew member and the misreporting of Service Failures, which were incorrectly logged as access issues in the in-cab technology (Alloy).

**The Resolution:** Additional training with crews and supervisors to bring the misses down. Performance will be continuously under review by the Contract Monitoring Team.

**Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (83.58% against a target of 90%)**

The Councils performance has improved dramatically since last year but is lower than last quarter and below target.

**The Resolution:** Monthly performance meetings with the Assistant Director responsible for most of the answering teams have been set up, where issues are discussed to ensure the process runs efficiently and teams where delays are occurring can be identified and action taken to ensure targets are met. Tweaks to the current escalation process, has improved responses times so reducing delays and sessions lead by the Land Charges Team Leader has raised the awareness of the importance of responding to requests within the timescales set.

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. The migration of the local land charges register under the HMLR project was completed earlier this year.

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

Eighty-one properties including 51 for affordable rent and 30 for shared ownership have been delivered at Woodstock, Witney, Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham during Q2 with forty-five delivered during Q1.

**The Resolution:** 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. The slightly lower numbers are attributed to forecasted completions at Carterton and Enstone having been delayed. They are now due to be completed during Q3 and Q4.

- 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. EXECUTIVE**

4.1 This report will be reviewed by the Executive at its meeting on 13 December 2023; and any comments from the Committee will be recorded and shared with the Executive.

**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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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT  
**July 2023 - September 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, and 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 following a Town and Parish Forum to discuss this in March 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.

## 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 a proposal regarding internal management and modelling to be presented to the Executive in a paper compiled by the Public Assistant Director of Planning and Sustainability during the November Executive session. Simultaneously, a Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper is set to go before the Executive on the 15th of November. As part of this strategic approach, a new role, the "Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager," is in the process of creation, with a completed job specification and recruitment planning underway. 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 of eight 2 and 3 bedroom zero carbon homes, offered at discount market sale, in the market town of Chipping Norton will be custom built allowing buyers to influence elements of the design and specification of their new home. Whilst delays have occurred with a project a new delivery model proposal, jointly developed by Green Axis and Homes England, is set to go to the Executive in November to resolve the next actions for the development.



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 use to relieve pressures on short term accommodation with a longer term of objective to see the housing being used for more general affordable purposes. During Q2 the Council exchanged contracts between Cottsway and Miller Homes for delivery of an additional 23 affordable units within the district.

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 is to be heard in the High Court on 14 November 2023.

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 in Quarter 2. The priorities for the Witney Town Partnership were 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 currently underway. Officers from both planning and parking teams are involved to ensure that any proposals will be acceptable in planning terms and also to tie up with existing WODC work to update carparking signage in Witney.

## 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 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. The consultation was held predominantly online via the Council's digital engagement platform citizenlab (<https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/>) 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/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.

A Biodiversity Land Management Plan has been created in collaboration with Ubico which aims to establish habitat enhancements, comprising decreasing mowing frequency, establishing urban meadows, adjusting floodplain meadow management, implementing invasive species control, and addressing subsidence issues. Ubico successfully concluded summer works of invasive species and meadow management. A review of the summer and winter activities has been undertaken which highlighted the challenges in the rise of the volume of grass arisings and addressing the Madley pond management intricacies.

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 are scheduled, and the contractor is due to visit during Q3 to explore ways to enhance access from the bridleway to the designated view place. 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.



## 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 Councils carbon-neutral commitment and developing 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 to Carterton Leisure Centre, focusing on carbon reduction through the replacement of the heating and hot water system with a low-carbon alternative and the expansion of on-site solar PV with a planning application submitted in late August.

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, 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 site was agreed by 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, a nature and online hub fostering community action for a greener future, was successfully launched on July 17, 2023, incorporating a greenspace competition, Q&A sessions, and local group events.

The Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) is 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/>, has been introduced specifically to revitalise and grow local infrastructure as part of the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Levelling Up scheme by offering capital grants of up to £20,000 or 50% of the projects crowdfunding target. With a generous budget of £40,000 this financial year - £226,000 in total over two years - this fund will back projects that restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging and contribute positively to health and wellbeing. The Council will be encouraging submissions of projects that champion environmental sustainability, support those who are most vulnerable in our communities, and those that face exclusion, whether due to mental health, physical or mental disability, or financial hardship. There will also be a focus on projects brought forward by or designed to meet the needs of young people, as part of the Council's commitment to empowering young voices. A well attended project creators workshop was hosted by the Spacehive team to inform potential applicants how to develop a project and secure funds to enable project delivery. The Council will pledge up to £10,000 for eligible projects alongside monies pledged from the wider public via the platform.

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 which will assist other parishes to work towards nature recovery through the management of their land.



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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
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# Corporate Strategy Action Tracker

	Our Focus	Actions	Quarter 2 Update	Start Date	Date Due	Status	Executive Member	Link Officer	Updates Provided by	
1.1	<b>Putting Residents First</b>	The Council will listen and act in the best interests of residents by: -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.			Not Scheduled to Start	Joy Aitman	Emmy-Lou Bossard / Heather McCulloch		
			Customer Experience Improvement Programme	HMLR project has been completed to target and has now become Business as Usual. Channel Choice project key milestones are being met through the Customer Services project which goes live week commencing 16th October 23. ICT are continuing to work to timeframes to complete projects in line with the spec. Open Portal changes are increasing.	01/07/2020	01/01/2024	On Target	All	Giles Hughes	Michelle Clifford
			Proposal to implement a robust system and process for: > 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 has been created on the Modern.gov system (but not yet published to the website).	01/05/2021	31/12/2023	On Target	Andy Graham	Giles Hughes	Andrew Brown
			Procurement: Public-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	Alaric Smith	Ciaran O'Kane / Phil Martin	Ciaran O'Kane
1.2	The Council will act with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability, with high standards of governance and trustworthiness.					Ongoing		Will Barton / Chris Jackson		
1.3	<b>Putting Residents, Young and Old, at the Heart of What We Do</b>	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.								
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.									
2.1	<b>Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All</b>	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.	Adopt and implement CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy).	Further outstanding information provided to consultants. Discussions ongoing in relation to development typologies to be tested and approach to consultation with key stakeholders including landowners/developers. WODC has sent out survey information on behalf of consultants - responses currently awaited. Updated overall project timetable requested from consultant.	01/11/2019	31/08/2024	On Target	Charlie Maynard	Giles Hughes / Charlie Jackson / Chris Hargraves	Chris Hargraves
			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.	Max Associates are currently working through stage 1 and 2 of the Strategic Outcomes Planning model. This involves stakeholder engagement, analysis of data and a review of the current leisure provision. We anticipate completing stage 1 by the end of the November, therefore I propose presenting the findings of the outcomes review at Informal executive early December. Leisure Net are in the process of developing the online residents survey which will go live in December. Stage 3 which is the determination of service and facility interventions will be developed in the early part of the new year, with the final report due to be received by the end of March 2024.	01/09/2023	01/04/24	On Target	Tim Sumner	Rachel Biles	Rachel Biles
			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. No specific work has been identified yet regarding opportunities around green investment.			Not Scheduled to Start	Tim Sumner, Andrew Prosser	Philippa Lowe	Philippa Lowe

		Explore how the Local Plan can address the issue of securing long term maintenance of green infrastructure on large SDA's.	The issue of stewardship and maintenance of community assets (including green infrastructure) was included as part of the recent informal (Regulation 18) consultation on the emerging Local Plan. The next step is to scope out what a relevant policy or policies might look like and what if any evidence is likely to be needed to support it at examination. Discussions are also ongoing in terms of maintenance and stewardship arrangements as part of S106 negotiations for a number of SDAs including West Eynsham.	31/08/2022	31/08/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Chris Hargraves	Chris Hargraves
		Consideration of community stewardship and maintenance of Strategic Development Areas – how do we enable this?	The issue of stewardship and maintenance of community assets (including green infrastructure) was included as part of the recent informal (Regulation 18) consultation on the emerging Local Plan. The next step is to scope out what a relevant policy or policies might look like and what if any evidence is likely to be needed to support it at examination. Discussions are also ongoing in terms of maintenance and stewardship arrangements as part of S106 negotiations for a number of SDAs including West Eynsham.	31/08/2022	31/08/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Chris Hargraves	Chris Hargraves
2.2		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.					Andrew Prosser?	Hannah Kenyon?	
2.3	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: Internal management and modelling – proposals to be presented to Executive in paper compiled by Public Assistant Director Planning and Sustainability to November Executive.	Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper going to Exec 15th November.	01/04/2023	15/11/2023	On Target	Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Charlie Jackson
		Strategic Housing Project: Assessing scope for investment and modelling.	New role "Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager" to be created. Job specification complete and recruitment process being planned. Anticipate advertising in December, following Exec on 15th November. Once in post this new role will lead project work to identify and take forward new ideas and models to deliver more affordable housing.	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Alaric Smith, Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Charlie Jackson
		Strategic Housing Project: Overview of modelling options and delivery. Proposed approach to the November Executive.	Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper going to Exec 15th November.	01/04/2023		On Target	Tim Sumner, Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Charlie Jackson
		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).	New role "Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager" to be created. Job specification complete and recruitment process being planned. Anticipate advertising in December, following Exec on 15th November. Once in post this new role will lead project work to identify and take forward new ideas and models to deliver more affordable housing.	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Charlie Jackson
		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.	New role "Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager" to be created. Job specification complete and recruitment process being planned. Anticipate advertising in December, following Exec on 15th November. Once in post this new role will lead project work to identify and take forward new ideas and models to deliver more affordable housing.	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Geoff Saul	Andrew Turner	Charlie Jackson
		Further exploration of modular building – how, where and with whom including visits manufacturers. To understand options for delivery.	New role "Strategic Housing Development and Enabling Manager" to be created. Job specification complete and recruitment process being planned. Anticipate advertising in December, following Exec on 15th November. Once in post this new role will lead project work to identify and take forward new ideas and models to deliver more affordable housing.	01/04/2023		Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Charlie Jackson
		Emergency accommodation – Acquisition of - consider the balance – single/couple and family accommodation).				Not Scheduled to Start	Geoff Saul	Frank Wilson / Jon Dearing	
		Completion of housing development at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton.	New proposal developed with Green Axis, planning and Homes England. Report being considered at November Executive.	01/10/2021	31/07/2023	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Geoff Saul	Andrew Turner	Andrew Turner
	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.	Contracts exchanged between Cotswold and Miller Homes for delivery of an additional 23 affordable units supported by £<>m of government funding.	01/04/2023	31/09/2024	On Target	Geoff Saul	Jon Dearing	Jon Dearing	
2.4	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.  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.	Work with Carterton Town Council and other relevant stakeholders to identify economic regeneration priorities for the town and immediate area following completion of the UKSPF funded Carterton Strategic/Master Plan.	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.			Not Scheduled to Start	Duncan Enright	Will Barton / Chris Hargraves	
		Strategy and plan for reinvigorating the District's Charter Markets	Report to December Executive			On Target	Duncan Enright	Will Barton	
		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	Duncan Enright	Chris Jackson	Chris Jackson



2.5	Support the retention of existing and development of new services and facilities that contribute to the local economy, community wellbeing and cohesion.	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.	The Market Towns Study report received from the consultant was of poor quality and lacked the level of detail requested however the next stage works to form town partnerships had begun for Witney and Chipping Norton.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Duncan Enright	Will Barton	Will Barton
		Oxfordshire County Council improvements to Witney Town Centre linked to Marriots Walk redevelopment where appropriate.	Vegan market in Marriots walk taken place. Chirstams market in Marriotts planned for December. Work to deliver food and drink festival in the spring under way			On Target	Duncan Enright	Will Barton	Will Barton
		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	Joy Altman		
		Guide the future delivery of Salt Cross new garden village and associated infrastructure to enable delivery of Salt Cross Science Park.	<b>Area Action Plan (AAP)</b> - revised AAP incorporating modifications made at examination completed in preparation for adoption. (Subject to Net Zero outcome of High Court action by community against Inspector modifications made - 14 & 15 November 2023). <b>Outline Planning Application (OPA)</b> - WODC have agreed a programme with GDL to review the July 2020 (pre AAP examination) application. GDL awaiting certainty around the AAP before mobilising design teams. <b>Housing</b> - Salt Cross self build / community led affordable homes toolkit / SPD including design code underway. <b>Stewardship</b> - positive discussions with GDL / EPC commenced October 2023. EPC to update their Sec 106 ask (a number of items have now been delivered.) <b>Reporting to Homes England</b> - Capacity funding underspend reported. <b>A40 Improvements</b> - revised / reduced scheme being negotiated by OCC with Homes England (advised by Homes England) to meet agreed budget / timescales. OCC to present revised scheme to OCC officers & outline impacts of the reduced scheme on strategic housing delivery / viability.	01/01/2018	31/12/2034	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Duncan Enright	Andrea Clenton / Will Barton	Andrea Clenton
		Marriots Walk – implementation of CBRE recommendations inc. securing new tenants, public realm improvements & making enhanced use of the square.	Work is underway with CBRE recommendations inc. securing new tenants and marketing			On Target	Duncan Enright	Jasmine McWilliams	Andrew Turner
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 Work is underway and there is an expectation that a draft report will be available by the end of November. Consultants have been asked to meet with parish councils individually rather than as a group.	01/02/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Alaric Smith, Charlie Maynard, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner	Philippa Lowe	Mikki Liddiat		
3.1	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.	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	Lidia Arciszewska	Rachel Crookes / Bill Oddy	
		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 completed summer works, including invasive species work and meadow cut and collecting. Summer/winter review also completed, discussed challenge of large volume of grass arisings and Madley pond management. Winter works confirmed.	01/02/2022	01/03/2026	On Target	Lidia Arciszewska	Rachel Crookes / Bill Oddy	Rachel Crookes
		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.	Initial meeting with the NE Cotswold Farmer Cluster and Local Nature Partnership in July 23 to understand the scope of the project and how WODC can support its delivery.			On Target	Lidia Arciszewska	Janice Bamsey / Chris Hargraves	
		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. <a href="#">Linked to 3.5.</a>	Expression of Interested accepted by Heritage Lottery Fund.	01/05/2022	01/03/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Nick Dalby / Rachel Crookes	Rachel Crookes
		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.			Not Scheduled to Start	Lidia Arciszewska, Andrew Prosser	Will Barton / Chris Jackson	
3.2									

Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife

3.3	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.	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.	There has been a slight concern that the bridges were not high enough, but the contractors have resolved this by removing some slabs. There is already good feedback from residents on the improvements. Next steps: The footpath contractor is due to visit the site and look at ways to improve access from the bridle way to the view place. The team are working with a local artist to design a woodland trail in collaboration with the two local schools. An information plaque will also be installed but this will go in after the trail.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Duncan Enright	Rachel Crookes	Mikki Liddiatt
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 Oxfordshire.	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	Lidia Arciszewska, Duncan Enright	Janice Bamsey / Rachel Crookes	Janice Bamsey / Rachel Crookes
			Explore the potential for the Council to acquire land for Biodiversity Net Gain and nature-based carbon sequestration.				Not Scheduled to Start	Andrew Prosser	Frank Wilson / Hannah Kenyon	
3.5	Work with others to facilitate environmentally sensitive flood management of our river catchments.	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	Lidia Arciszewska, Andy Graham		
		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.	8-week informal (Regulation 18) consultation remains ongoing. Two public exhibitions held with 2 more to come. Town and Parish Council workshops arranged for 10 and 18 October. Next meeting of Member Working Group due to be held on 18 October. Officer working group expected to meet in November. Supporting evidence base in preparation including appointment of consultants for GTAA (countywide study). Timing of consultation is such that next stage (preferred policy approach) is now likely to slip to the new year.	01/06/2022	31/12/2024	On Target	Charlie Maynard	Will Barton / Chris Hargraves	Will Barton / Chris Hargraves	
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.	Secured funds for heat decarbonisation plans for Elmfield Council Offices and Welch Way from the Low Carbon Skills Fund and commissioned the work. Prepared for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3c by commissioning a heat decarbonisation plan for Windrush Leisure Centre and returning leisure centre emissions to Scope 1 in the carbon account.			Ongoing	Andrew Prosser, Dan Levy, Alaric Smith	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			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 application submitted in late August. Work is progressing with the preparation of the IGP (investment grade proposal) Options to resolve roof leak being addressed.			Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Andrew Prosser, Tim Sumner	Claire Locke	Claire Locke / Andrew Turner
			Waste Vehicle Strategy - Supporting the Waste team on the development of the strategy to reduce emissions from the Council's waste vehicle fleet.				Not Scheduled to Start	Lidia Arciszewska	Simon Anthony / Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			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.	Drafted Carbon Action Plan. Tested the market for the carbon baseline for the Climate Change Strategy.	01/07/23	30/6/2024	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			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.	Reviewed the pilot phase and drafted recommendations to make the assessment mandatory.	01/02/2023	01/04/2024	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			Solar PV project for tenanted buildings - A Public-wide long-term project to install rooftop solar panels on council owned buildings, increasing the amount of renewable energy generated in the District.	The project team are currently preparing a financial appraisal report for each site for the CFO to review and approve.	01/08/2022	01/12/2023	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Andrew Turner	Andrew Turner
4.2	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.	Scoped Biodiversity Action Plan, ensuring consistency between climate plans and strategies.	01/03/2023	01/03/2024	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Rachel Crookes	Rachel Crookes	
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.	Contributed to the Innovate UK bid preparation for the FutureFit Oxfordshire project to develop a standard for One Stop Shops. Bid was submitted on 5/9/23.			Ongoing	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon	
		Greenlight – nature and online hub to facilitate community action for a greener future.	Greenlight launched on 17/7/23 with greenspace competition, Q&A, local groups and events.			Ongoing	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon	
		Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) project for tenanted buildings - A Public-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 to be brought forward on options for assessment of buildings.	01/07/2023		On Target	Andrew Prosser	Jasmine McWilliams	Jasmine McWilliams	
		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.	Working in partnership with OCC to deliver HUG 2 funding. OCC led a mailout to residents and door knocking campaign to residents in the District who had already received the letter. WODC comms followed the Welcome the Warmth social media accounts.	01/06/2023	01/03/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Louise Croot	

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.	Contributed to the Eynsham Community Action Plan for Zero Carbon Energy. Started to examine local area energy planning with others, including links to the Local Plan review.			Ongoing	Andrew Prosser	Giles Hughes / Claire Locke / Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
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.	Prepared Oxfordshire Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure bid, in partnership with OCC and other councils. Woolgate - The contract is currently with the Legal team for review. Funding application has been made for Woodgreen - awaiting on DNO.	26/5/23	1/1/25	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
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.	Work underway. Update to Executive 15 November 23			On Target	Duncan Enright	Will Barton	Will Barton
			Successful implementation of new Grant Scheme: a) Crowdfunding, b) Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements and c) Youth initiatives.	<p><b>Crowdfunding</b> Working with Spacehive, our selected crowdfunding platform provider, the website has been built ready for launching during October 2023. A range of marketing and promotional has been produced to raise awareness of Westhive community crowdfunding. An all Member briefing was held on 27 September.</p> <p><b>Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements</b> At its September meeting the Executive agreed the maximum SLA award will be £25,000 per annum, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The commissioning approach has been agreed and the application process designed. A launch event for interested organisations took place on 5 October.</p> <p><b>Business Support Grants</b> In 2023/24 there is £140,000 in REPF capital funding that will be apportioned in 28 grants of £5,000. A meeting with Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, took place on 20 September to work through regulatory requirements of the scheme.</p>	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Joy Aitman	Andy Barge	Andy Barge
5.2		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.	Wild Oxfordshire (WO) are the selected partners for this project, but the contract has not yet been signed. The issue lies with liability over workplace accidents. It was suggested that a waiver for participants may be a solution. WO have narrowed down their selection of parishes from 5 to 3. The write up of the demonstrator projects is due to happen over the Christmas period with the intention of scheduling walk-throughs in February 2024.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Rachel Crookes	Mikki Liddiatt
5.4	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	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	<p><b>Crowdfunding</b> Working with Spacehive, our selected crowdfunding platform provider, the website has been built ready for launching during October 2023. A range of marketing and promotional has been produced to raise awareness of Westhive community crowdfunding. An all Member briefing was held on 27 September.</p> <p><b>Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements</b> At its September meeting the Executive agreed the maximum SLA award will be £25,000 per annum, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The commissioning approach has been agreed and the application process designed. A launch event for interested organisations took place on 5 October.</p>	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Joy Aitman	Andy Barge	Andy Barge
5.5		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.	Focused 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.				Not Scheduled to Start	Joy Aitman, Tim Sumner		
			Have Your Say Events – focussed topic event for young people.					Not Scheduled to Start	Joy Aitman	Emmy-Lou Bossard / Heather McCulloch
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

Delivering great services locally

**PERFORMANCE REPORT:**  
**July 2023 - September 2023**

# Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
<a href="#">Percentage of Council Tax Collected</a>	Green	6
<a href="#">Percentage of Non Domestic Rates collected</a>	Green	7
<a href="#">Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims</a>	Red	8
<a href="#">Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events</a>	Green	9
<a href="#">Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances</a>	Red	10
<a href="#">Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay</a>	Green	11
<a href="#">Customer Satisfaction - Telephone</a>	Green	12
<a href="#">Customer Satisfaction - Email</a>	Grey	13
<a href="#">Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face</a>	Green	14
<a href="#">Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time</a>	Grey	15
<a href="#">Building Control Satisfaction</a>	Red	16

# Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
<a href="#">Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>	Green	17
<a href="#">Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>	Green	18
<a href="#">Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)</a>	Green	19
<a href="#">Total Income achieved in Planning &amp; Income from Pre-application advice</a>	Orange	20
<a href="#">Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed</a>	Orange	21
<a href="#">Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days</a>	Red	22
<a href="#">Number of affordable homes delivered</a>	Orange	23
<a href="#">(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties</a>	Grey	24
<a href="#">(Snapshot) Number of households in B&amp;B/hotel-type accommodation &amp; Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&amp;Bs/hotels/hostels</a>	Grey	25
<a href="#">Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action</a>	Grey	26

# Summary Index

KPI Name	RAG	Page
<a href="#">Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales</a>	Green	27
<a href="#">Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day</a>	Green	28
<a href="#">Percentage of household waste recycled</a>	Orange	29
<a href="#">Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)</a>	Red	30
<a href="#">Missed bins per 100,000</a>	Red	31
<a href="#">Number of visits to the leisure centres &amp; (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships</a>	Orange	32
<a href="#">Complaints</a>	Grey	33
<a href="#">Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days</a>	Grey	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.



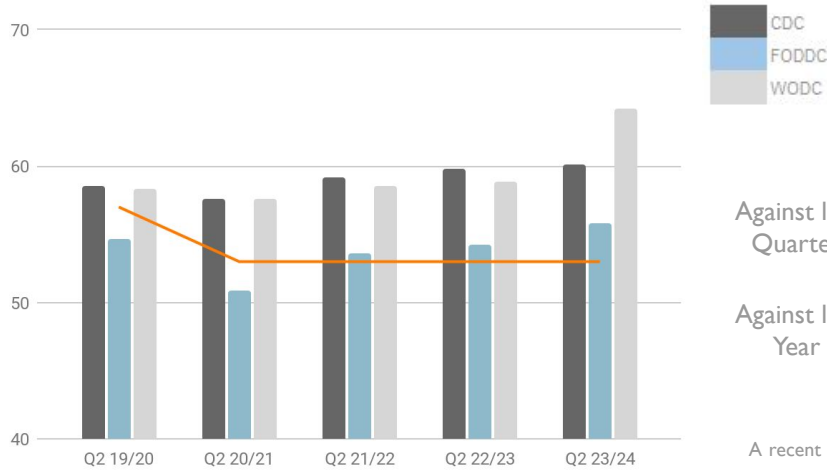
# Overall Performance

The Council's performance has been mixed, with commendable progress in Tax Collection Rates and and Planning Determination Times. However, the cost of living crisis continues to result in increased customer contact for certain services. The challenging economic situation has put additional strain on residents, leading to an upsurge in queries and concerns.

There are some indicators that are exhibiting a negative trend including the Missed Bins per 100,000 and Official Land Charge Search Times.

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

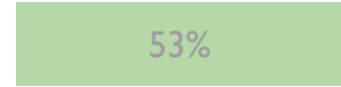


## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	N/A	N/A	N/A
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Improved since last year

## Q2 Target (high is good)



## 2023/24 Target

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

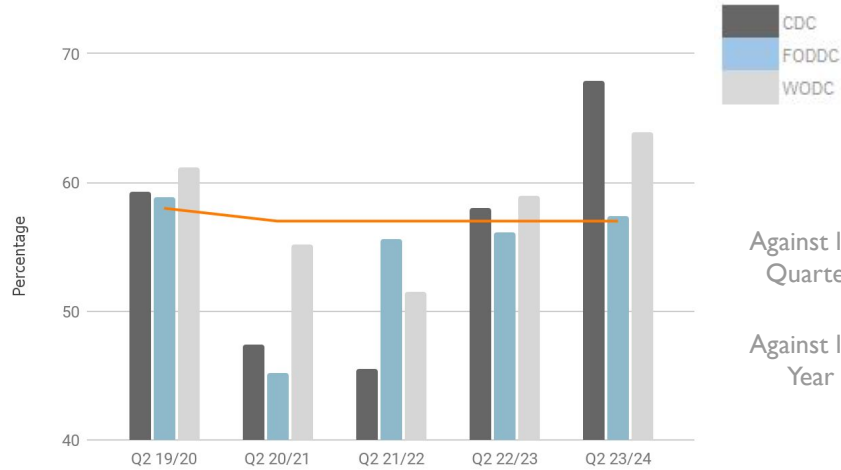
A recent audit of the Council Tax Services indicated that a significant sum of arrears had accumulated during challenging circumstances associated with the pandemic. The recovery of these arrears had been suspended to support customers in difficult financial circumstances and to facilitate the adoption of a new Council Tax platform enabling self service payments. The recovery process has now been reinstated and the current cycle is up to date, resulting in significant improvements in the collection of those arrears through manageable payment schedules for those residents affected. The service reports 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
<b>WODC</b>	10.44%	16.57%	16.01%	£5,233,646

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.

The collection rates for Q2 are well above target and are the highest they have been since prior to 2018/19.

# Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	N/A	N/A	N/A
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

Improved since last year

**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)

57%

**2023/24 Target**

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

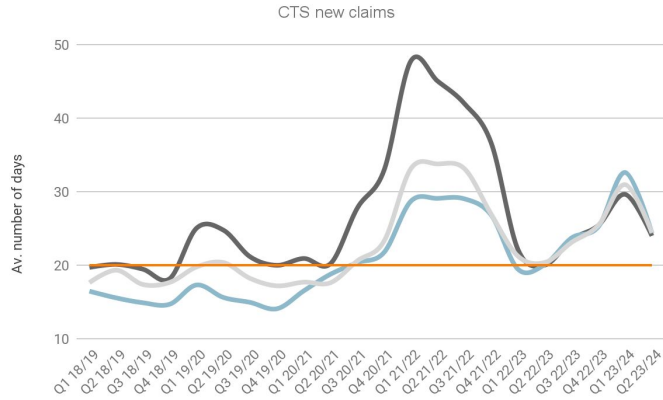
The current recovery cycle is up to date with the service reporting progress in collecting previous year's debt. The below table shows the percentage of aged debt that has been collected and the total outstanding:

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	Total Outstanding
<b>WODC</b>	33.49%	45.53%	17.46%	£1,240,917

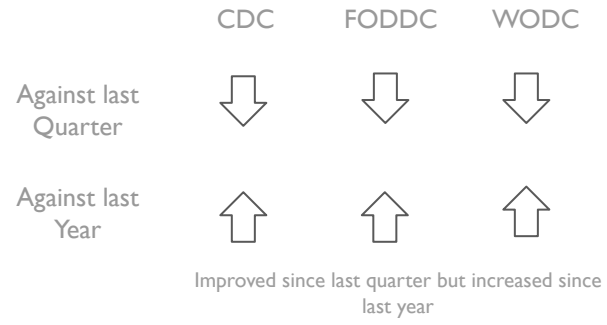
The arrears outstanding for previous year's debts for Business Rates include some data where the amount outstanding now is more than that brought forward at the beginning of the financial year. There are some processes which can increase the amount that needs to be collected, such as Rateable Value changes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

The collection rates for Q2 are well above target and are the highest they have been since prior to 2018/19.

# Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



## Direction of Travel



**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)



Page 116

### How do we compare?

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%

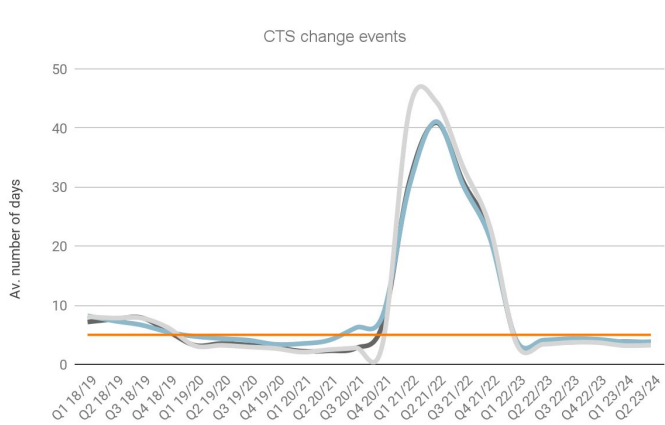
The processing stats for new CTS claims for Q2 are below the target of 20 days with West averaging 17.05 days, however, given the target is cumulative, the rolling stats are above target. It should be noted that the cumulative processing time decreased by 6.54 days from last quarter.

Following procedural changes to manage the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers, we are now achieving a level of 60-70% of automation for the DWP work up from 40-45% in Q1 allowing for more focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is currently investigating improvements to the data that is sent through to local authorities via a Working Group. Once the improvements have been made there is the potential, in conjunction with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The outstanding workload is reducing week by week and management of the resource to support the reduction is underway. The improvements to the automation system have freed up officer capacity to help reduce the backlog of claims. It is anticipated that the trial for reduced phone line opening hours will further free up capacity for officers to process claims, however, pressure on the team remains high.

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 will reduce, but it will not be a rapid process.

# Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↓	↓

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)

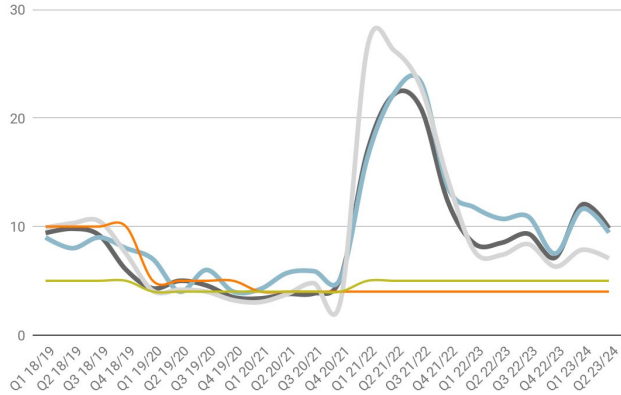


Cotswold - Improved since last quarter but increased since last year  
Forest and West - Increased since last quarter but improved since last year

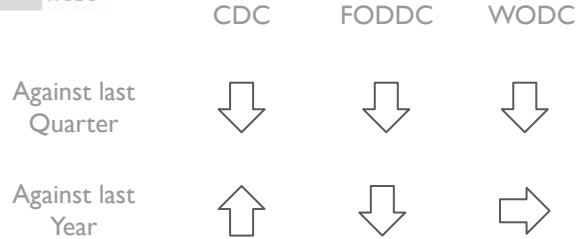
Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events remains well within the target of 5 days. Although there has been a small increase from last quarter, the change is only marginal (0.07).

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



**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)



Cotswold - Improved since last quarter but increased since last year  
 Forest - Improved since last quarter and last year  
 West - Improved since last quarter and slightly improved since last year

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

The observation for HB CoCs should be read in conjunction with the observation for HB CTS new claims and changes indicators as the work is performed by the same team. At the end of Q2, the average days to process HB changes decreased to 6.07 days, however, since the target is cumulative, the ongoing statistics show higher figures. Although above target, the reduction in HB Change applications means any delay in assessing an application due to outstanding evidence required has a more visible impact to the average processing days. As a significant amount of changes that affect HB are usually received during Q4 we may potentially see a decrease to the 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 - 920  
 CTS Changes - 3141

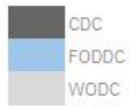
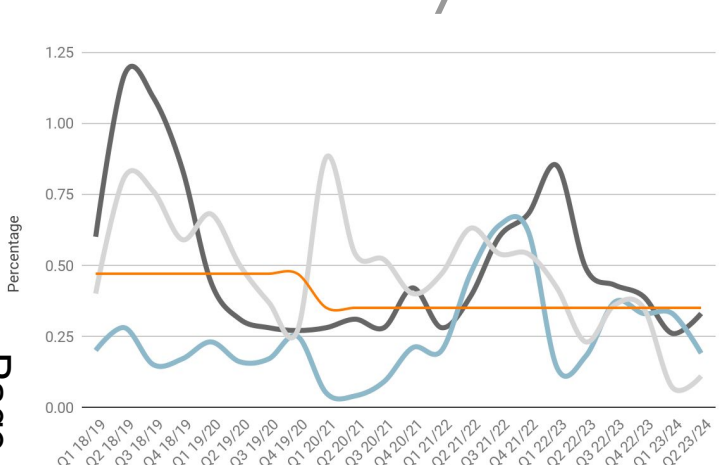
Managed migration of Housing Benefit to Universal Credit is being rolled out from April 2024 across the country.

## 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

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



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↓	↑
Against last Year	↓	→	↓

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)

0.35

Cotswold and West - Increased since last quarter but improved since last year  
Forest - Improved since last quarter but slightly increased since last year

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment error is 0.11% for Q2.

Measures are in place to ensure that HB overpayments due to local authority error are reduced as far as possible. Around 20% of the HB caseload is checked by Quality Assurance officers who target areas which have 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%





# Customer Satisfaction - Email



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	→	↓	↑
Against last Year	↓	↑	↑

**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)

*No Target*

Cotswold - Steady since last quarter but declined since last year  
 Forest - Declined since last quarter but improved since last year  
 West - Improved since last quarter and last year

541 residents responded to the survey of which 312 were satisfied. This equates to a rate of 57.67% satisfaction for the quarter. 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 failure; 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

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↑	↑
Against last Year	↓	↑	↑

Cotswold - Declined since last quarter and last year  
Forest and West - Improved since last quarter and last year

**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)

90%

**2023/24 Target**

90%

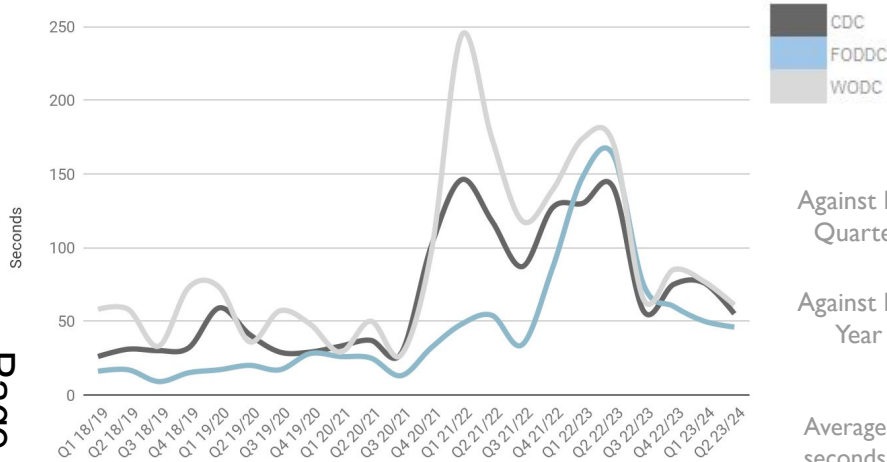
Customer Satisfaction from face to face interactions continues to be high with a 95.45% satisfaction rate for the quarter. 42 out of 44 surveyed were satisfied with the service.

## 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

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	↓
Against last Year	↓	↓	↓
Improved since last quarter and last year			

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)

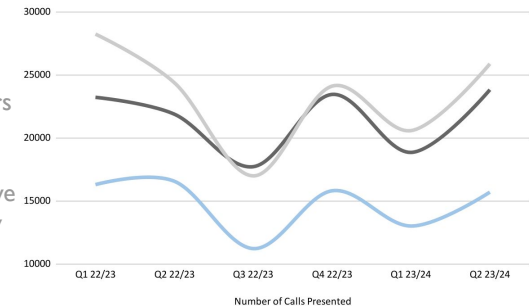
*NO TARGET*

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.

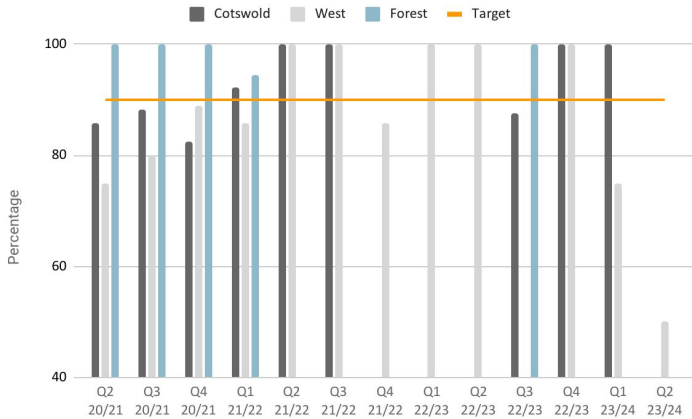
Average call waiting time for the Council saw reductions in comparison to last quarter by 16 seconds to an average of 61 seconds. There has been a marked improvement from Q2 2022-23 with reductions in average from just under 2 minutes. The peak waiting time during Q2 was 16 minutes 38 seconds.

Call numbers increased in comparison to last year and last quarter as can be seen from the chart to the right. The data indicates and 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 are proactively working with other services to reduce processing times and repeat contact by using direct links to back office systems resulting in improved customer experience.



# Building Control Satisfaction

## Direction of Travel



Against last Quarter

CDC FODDC WODC

N/A

N/A



**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)

90%

Against last Year

N/A

N/A



**2023/24 Target**

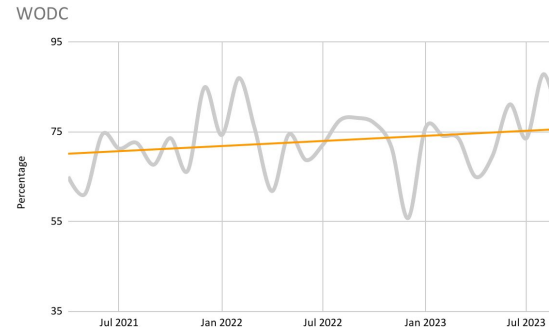
90%

Cotswold and Forest - No Data  
West - Declined since last quarter and last year

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 still suffers from low numbers of satisfaction survey returns within two surveys having been returned during Q2, one of which was satisfied. Discussions are proposed with ICT to investigate an SMS notification service linking customers to an online survey.

Building Control had 167 applications in Q2 and retains a strong hold in the share of the market. The below chart show market share over time.

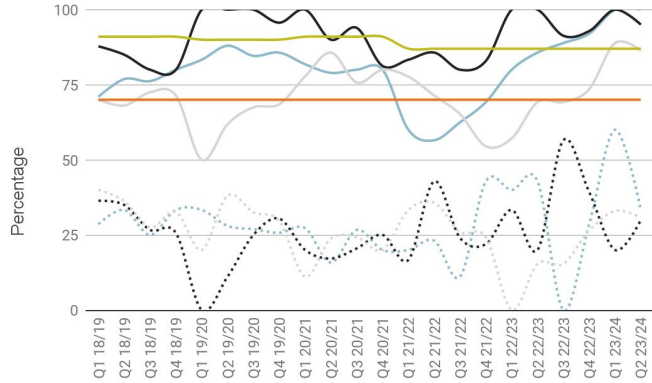
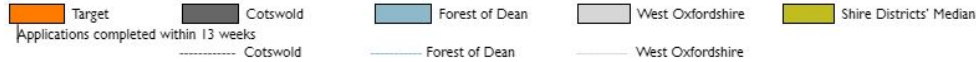


## How do we compare?

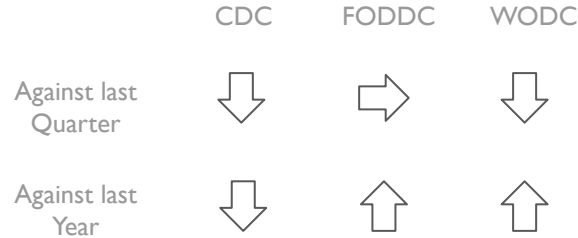
Percentage of share in the market

	July	August	September	Number of Apps for Quarter
Cotswold	62%	52%	55%	140
Forest	84%	61%	55%	112
West	74%	88%	75%	167

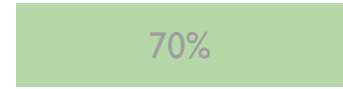
# Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



## Direction of Travel



**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)



Cotswold - Declined since last quarter and last year  
 Forest - Steady since last quarter but improved since last year  
 West - Declined since last quarter but improved since last year

The service has also performed very well processing Major applications within times, slightly dipping in comparison to last quarter from 88.89% to 86.36% for Q2 but notably increasing by 17.13% in comparison to the same period last year.

Thirteen major applications were determined during Q2.

## 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

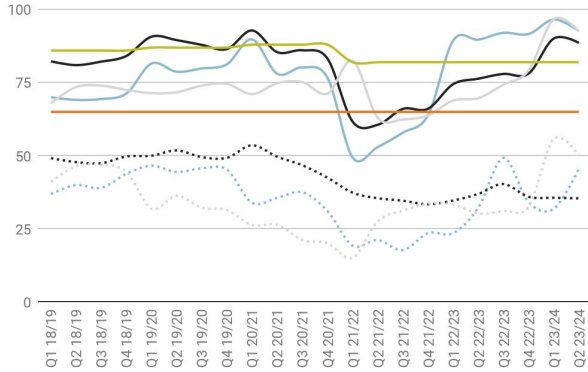
June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	90.00	83/164	3/6	29/59	Second
Forest	96.77	31/164	1/6	9/59	Top
West	83.33	117/164	5/5	43/59	Third

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

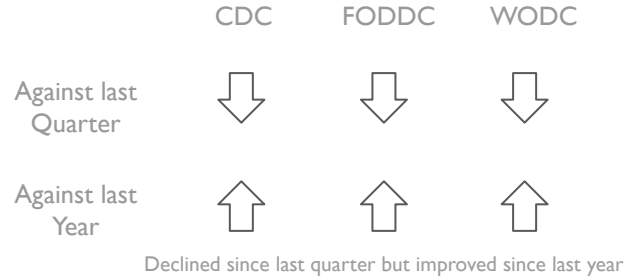
# Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)

■ Target   
 ■ Cotswold   
 ■ Forest of Dean   
 ■ West Oxfordshire   
 ■ Shire Districts' Median

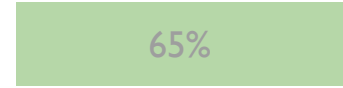
Applications completed within 8 weeks  
 - - - - Cotswold   
 — Forest of Dean   
 — West Oxfordshire



## Direction of Travel



**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)



## 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 times. 74 minor applications were determined in Q2.

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

The key findings requiring Member authorisation from the PAS report that went to cabinet this quarter are currently being implemented with the Negotiation Protocol the first to be rolled out.

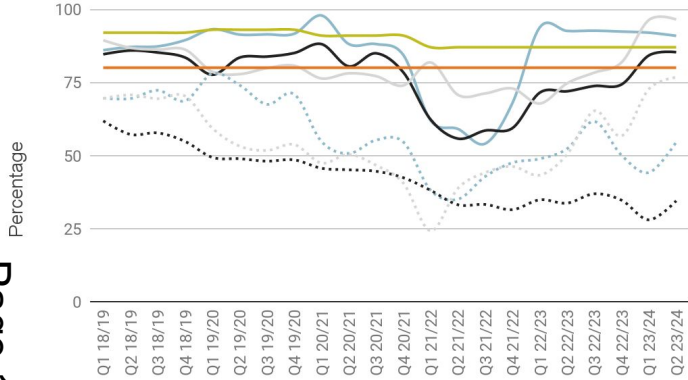
The service reports that due to impending resourcing challenges within DM, it is anticipated that the number of applications determined within time is likely to decrease over the next quarter.

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

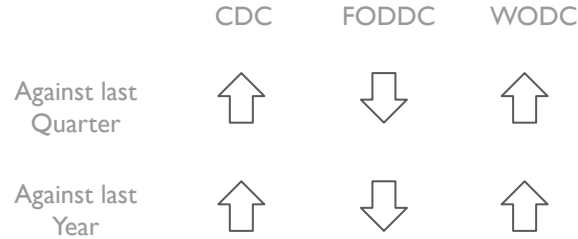
■ Target   
 ■ Cotswold   
 ■ Forest of Dean   
 ■ West Oxfordshire   
 ■ Shire Districts' Median

Applications completed within 8 weeks

- - - - Cotswold   
 — Forest of Dean   
 — West Oxfordshire



## Direction of Travel



Cotswold and West - Improved since last quarter and last year  
 Forest - Declined since last quarter and last year

**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)



Page 127

### 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

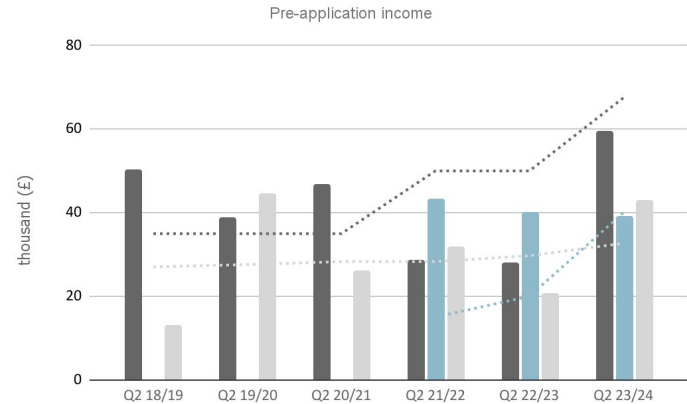
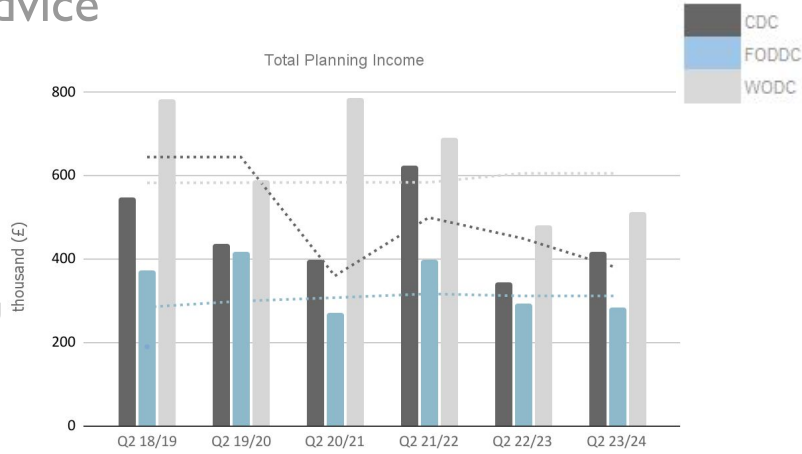
June 2022 - June 2023 Benchmark	%	District Rank	County Rank	Predominantly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	77.33	154/164	6/6	55/59	Bottom
Forest	91.90	68/164	1/6	21/59	Second
West	89.49	85/164	4/5	30/59	Third

Determination times for Other applications have also improved reaching a rate of 96.49% for the quarter, the highest they have been since prior to 2018/19.

236 Other applications were determined in Q2.

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

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



## Direction of Travel

Total Income	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Qtr	↑	↓	↓
Against last Year	↑	↓	↑
Pre App Income	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Qtr	↑	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↓	↑

## Q2 Targets (high is good)

Total Planning Income



Pre App Income



Cotswold - Total and Pre-App Income improved since last quarter and last year  
 Forest - Total and Pre-App Income declined since last quarter and last year  
 West - Total Income declined since last quarter but improved since last year, Pre-App Income improved since last quarter and last year

At the end of Q2, total planning income for the Council remained slightly below target but saw an increase in comparison to Q2 2022-23. Pre-app income more than doubled within the same time period and exceeded the target during Q2.

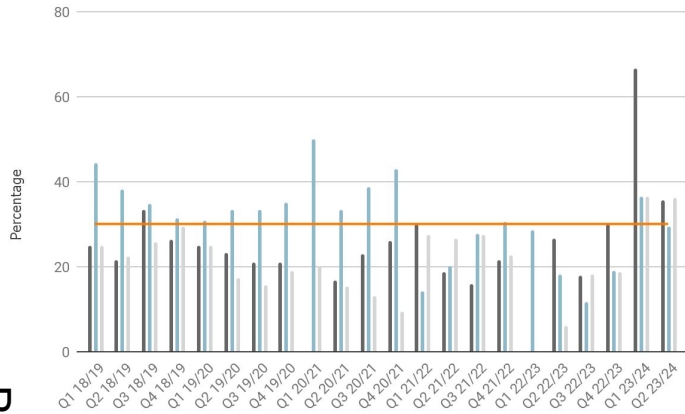
The service indicates a decrease in the number of major applications submitted, which generate significant revenue, leading to a reduction in income for this quarter.

## How do we compare?

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) planned to benchmark back in [2021](#). No data is available in the public domain, but the data team has been in contact with PAS to find further information and are awaiting an update.



# Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↓	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)



Cotswold and Forest - Improved since last quarter but increased last year

West - Increased since last quarter and last year

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

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 September 2023, seven appeals were decided; of which 4 decisions were supported what one partly supported.

This equates to a percentage of 35.71% for this quarter but a cumulative total of 36.11% for the year which is slightly above the target. As this metric is cumulative, it may well reduce throughout the year depending on how many appeals are received.

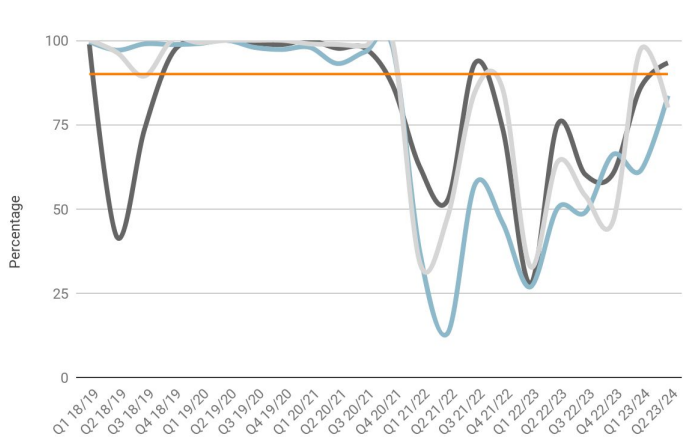
The service reports there has been a substantial reduction in enforcement cases.

### 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

Page 130

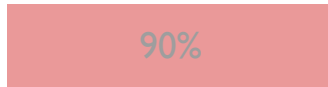


## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	↓
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

## Q2 Target

(high is good)



Cotswold and Forest - Improved since last quarter and last year  
West - Declined since last quarter but improved since last year

The Council's performance has fallen below the 90% target this quarter, standing at 80%. However, there is a notable improvement compared to the same period last year, with an increase of 16%.

During this quarter the answering teams have faced challenges with resourcing issues which is attributed to the decrease in performance since last quarter.

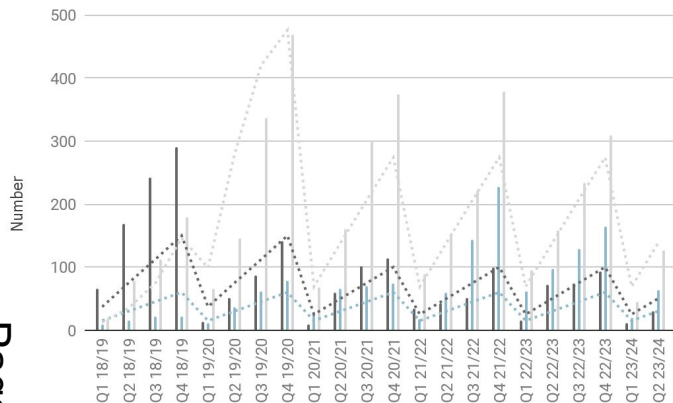
The monthly performance meetings with the AD responsible for the majority of the answering teams have been successful. Workshops are being arranged to offer additional support and guidance to the teams, emphasizing the importance of timely responses to searches and requests.

Due to impending resourcing challenges within the answering teams, it is anticipated that the number of searches completed within 10 days is likely to decrease over the next quarter.

### How do we compare?

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

# Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	↑
Against last Year	↓	↓	↓

**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)

138

Improved since last quarter but declined since last year

Eighty-one properties including 51 for affordable rent and 30 for shared ownership have been delivered at Woodstock, Witney, Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham during Q2. A total of 126 affordable homes have been delivered during Q1 and Q2 against a target of 138. Forecasted completions at Carterton and Enstone have been moved back to Q3 and Q4. Looking forward a number of schemes have experienced delays and so the projected numbers of affordable houses delivered looks lower for next year.

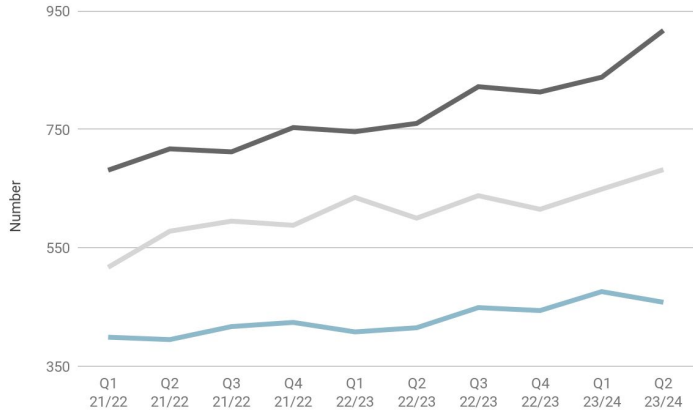
The service reports that completions fluctuate over the year. A housing development period is at least 12 months, with some schemes phased over several years.

## 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

# (Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↓	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)

*No Target*

Cotswold and West - Increased since last quarter and last year  
Forest - Improved since last quarter but increased since last year

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

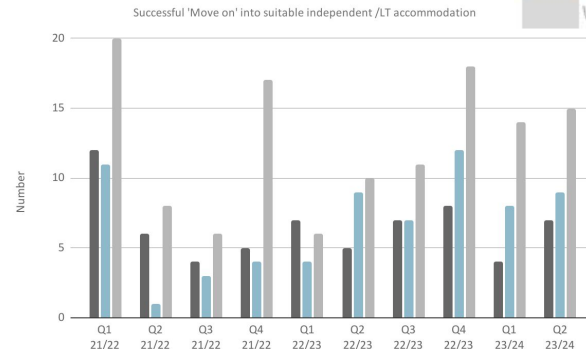
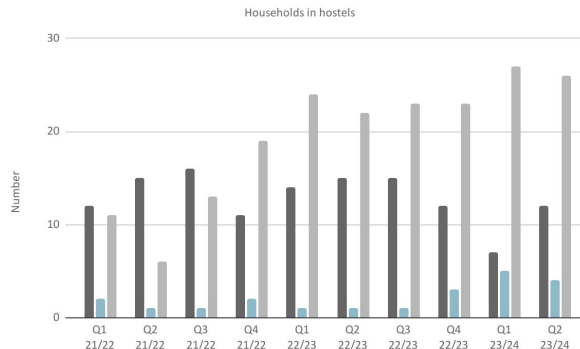
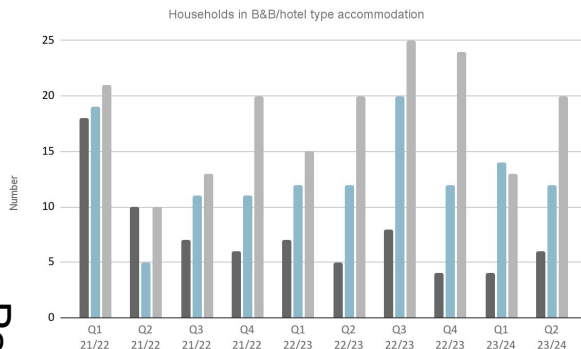
Maintaining registers of long-term empty properties, can help monitor the situation, target interventions, and communicate with property owners more effectively. The LTE list is constantly being addressed with all owners being contacted by email, phone or letter in an attempt to bring properties back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

The service reports that the LTE figures continue to be influenced by a number of retirement properties reaching the six months empty point. It's common for properties of this nature to experience a lengthier selling process.

### 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



## Direction of Travel

		CDC	FODDC	WODC
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 Q2, the number of homeless rose, attributed to the change in weather conditions. In comparison to last quarter has been a slight increase in households in temporary accommodation and 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 60% capacity due to ongoing maintenance.

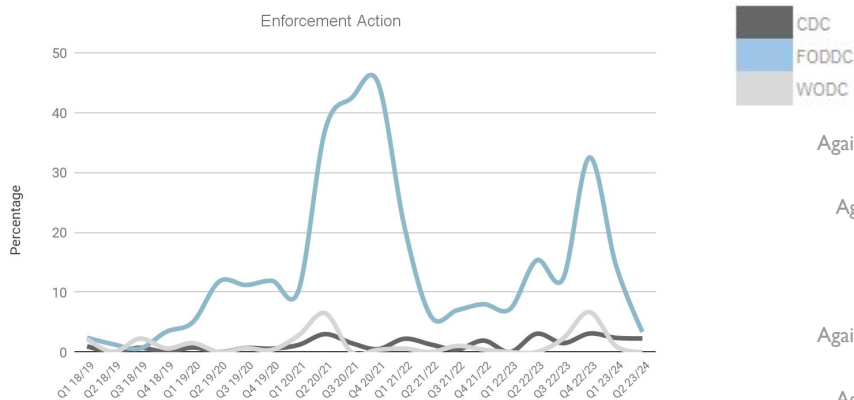
The Executive have granted approval for the conversion of fixed-term contracts into permanent positions which is providing stability within the team.

How do we compare?

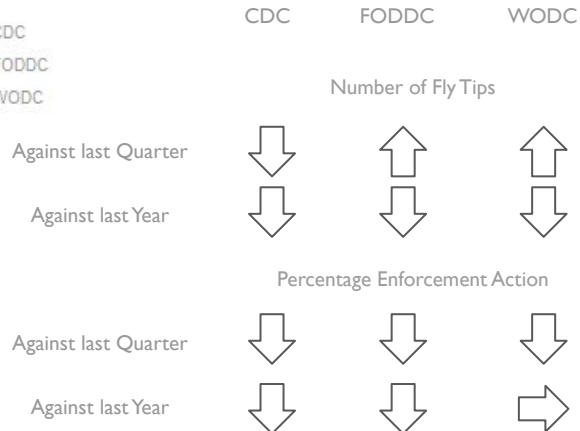
No benchmarking currently available. The Data & Performance Team will investigate options

# 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



**Q2 Target**

*No Target*

### 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

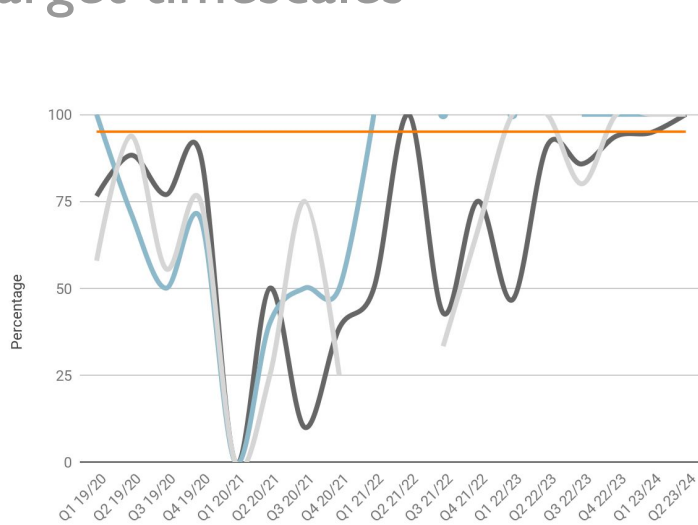
Fly Tips - Cotswold - Declined since last quarter and last year, Forest and West increased since last quarter and last year  
 Enforcement Action - Decreased since last quarter and last year, West stayed steady since last year

There was a slight increase in fly tipping across the district from last quarter with a drop in the enforcement action percentage.

During Q2, there have been challenges within the team due to resource issues, delaying the implementation of proposed surveillance cameras. However, the service reports the resource issue is now resolved and the cameras will be implemented soon at fly tipping hot spots.

The amendment for increased powers for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) has not yet been implemented.

# Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales

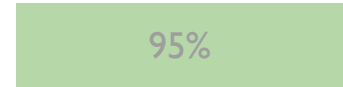


## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	N/A	→
Against last Year	↑	N/A	→

Cotswold - Improved since last quarter and last year  
 Forest - No Data  
 West - Steady since last quarter and last year

## Q2 Target (high is good)



The Council had 6 inspections, all of which were inspected within the timescales. The inspection rates for Q2 remain well 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.

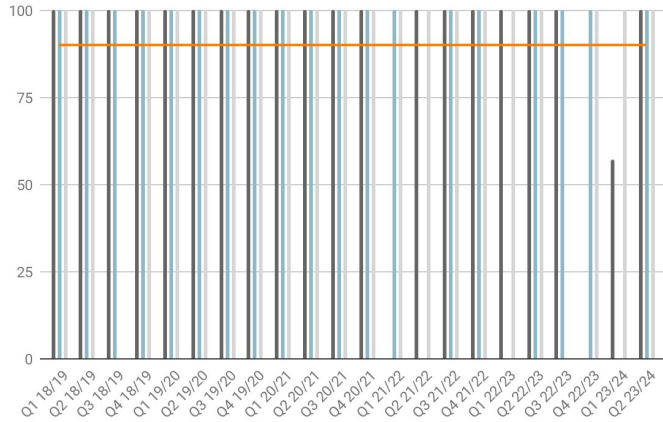
How do we compare?

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)

Page 136

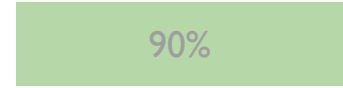


## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	↑	↑	→
Against last Year	→	→	→

Cotswold and Forest - Improved since last quarter and steady since last year  
West - Steady since last quarter and last year

**Q2 Target**  
(high is good)



There were five notifications received within Q2 regarding an alleged illegal eviction, a tenant without drinking water, concern over a child's cot in pub accommodation, a Legionnaires notification and a Private Water Supply do not drink notification. All were assessed within one working day.

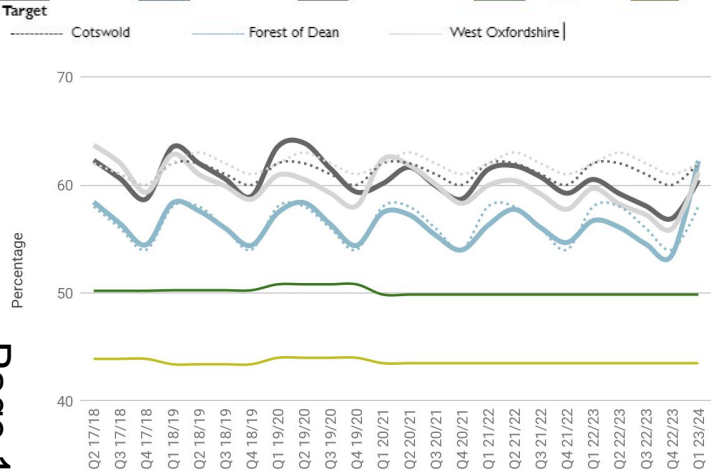
### How do we compare?

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

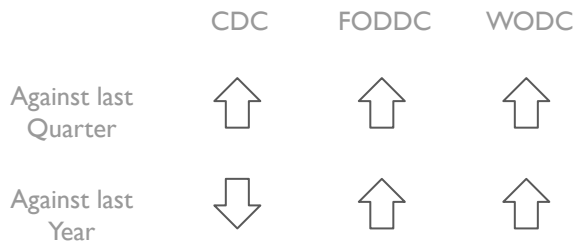


# Percentage of household waste recycled

Cotswold
  Forest of Dean
  West Oxfordshire
  Top Quartile
  Shire Districts' Median

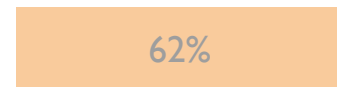


## Direction of Travel



Cotswold - Improved since last quarter but declined since last year  
 Forest and West - Improved since last quarter and last year

## Q1 Target (high is good)



## How do we compare?

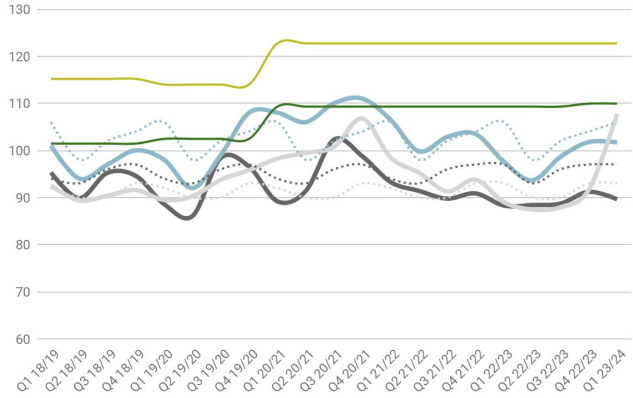
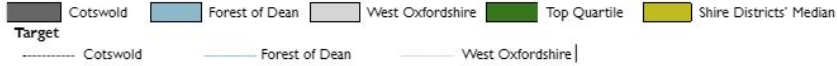
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting

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

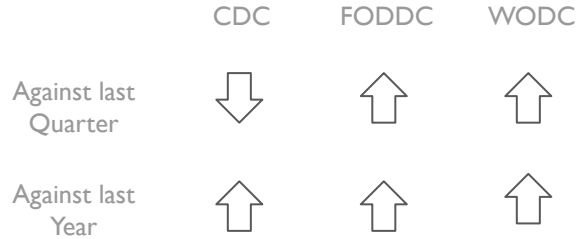
The data regarding recycling rates is received by the data team from Oxfordshire County Council, but it is a quarter behind. Therefore, the narrative and graphs pertain to Q1 2023/2024 (April - June).

During Q1, recycling rates saw a notable improvement of 5.18% from the previous quarter, reaching 61.13%, just shy of the 62% target. Compared to the same period last year, rates showed a modest improvement of 1.44%.

# Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



## Direction of Travel



Cotswold - Improved since last quarter but increased since last year  
 Forest and West - Increased since last quarter and last year

## Q1 Target (low is good)



## How do we compare?

Residual household waste per household (kg/household)

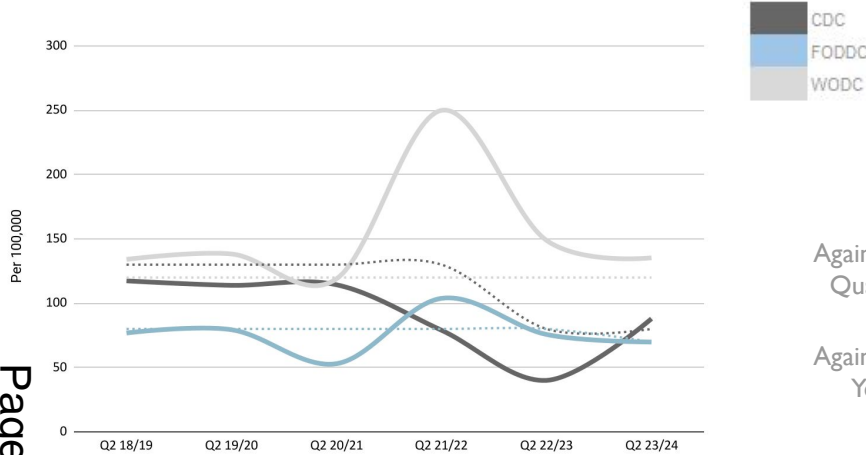
2021-22 Benchmark	Tonnage	District Rank	County Rank	Mainly Rural Rank	Quartile
Cotswold	364.70	16/174	2/6	4/37	Top
Forest	412.10	38/174	4/6	12/37	Top
West	377.90	23/174	4/5	10/37	Top

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 Q1 2023/2024 (April - June).

In Q1, West saw a substantial increase in the tonnage of household waste in comparison to last quarter increasing by 16.14kg to 107.79kg. In comparison to Q1 2022-2023 the tonnage has increased by 18.78kg.

# Missed bins per 100,000

Page 139



CDC  
FODDC  
WODC

## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Against last Quarter	→	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↓	↓

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)

120

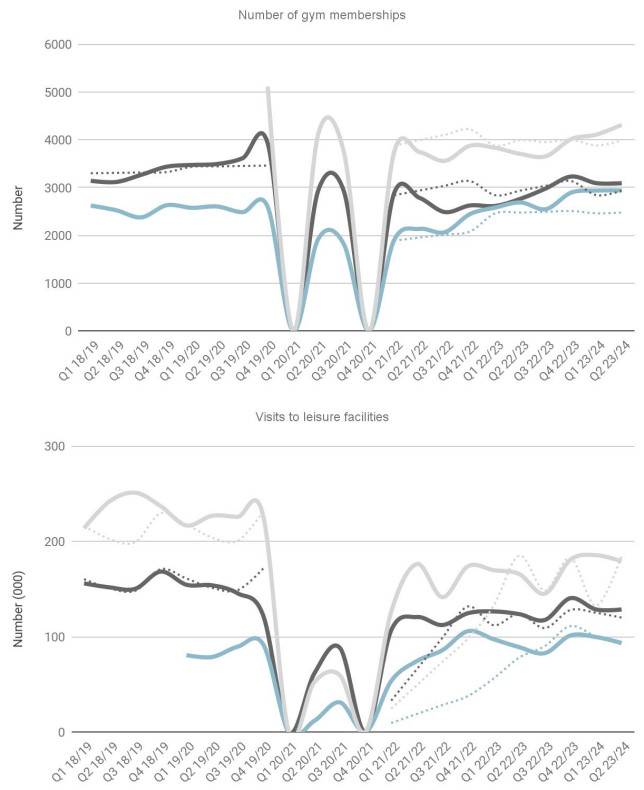
Cotswold - Steady since last quarter but increased since last year  
Forest and West - Increased since last quarter but improved since last year

The number of missed bins for Q2 are above target and higher than last quarter but are lower than this time last year. This increase is primarily linked to the retirement of an experienced crew member and the misreporting of Service Failures, which were incorrectly logged as access issues in the in-cab technology (Alloy). Ongoing efforts are in place to train and ensure that crews accurately log issues in Alloy.

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.

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.

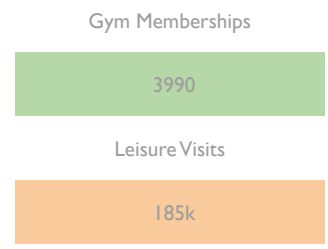
# Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships



## Direction of Travel

	CDC	FODDC	WODC
Gym Memberships			
Against last Quarter	→	↑	↑
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑
Leisure Visits			
Against last Quarter	→	↓	↓
Against last Year	↑	↑	↑

## Q2 Targets (high is good)



Gym Memberships - Improved since last quarter but declined since last year - Cotswold steady since last quarter  
 Leisure Visits- Declined since last quarter but improved since last year - Cotswold steady since last quarter

The leisure targets were reviewed at the end of 2021-22 which resulted in increases in the target for visitor numbers.

Visits to leisure facilities decreased in comparison to the previous quarter, but are still 13k higher than the same period last year.

Gym memberships continue to increase compared with last quarter and quarter two 2022-23.

The Learn to Swim figures show continued growth in their numbers for this quarter, despite the summer holidays, leading to a waiting list due to resourcing pressures.

The Council has been successful in their bid for a revenue grant from Sports England which awards funds to assist in the energy costs associated with running the facilities.

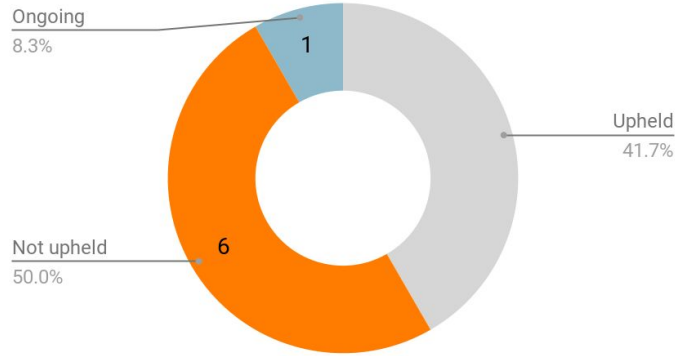
Note: Gym memberships were frozen during the first and third lockdowns. No targets were set for 2020-21

### 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.

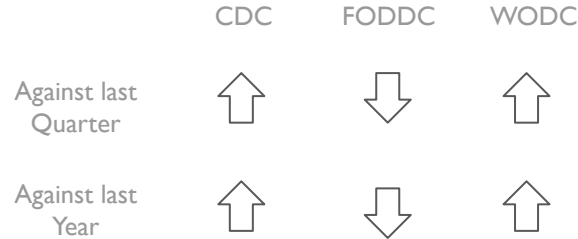
# Number of complaints upheld

Complaints by Status



## Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage I



Cotswold and West - Increased since last quarter and since last year  
Forest - Improved since last quarter and last year

**Q2 Target**  
(low is good)

*No Target*

### 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 Q2, the Council experienced an increase in complaints received from last quarter with a balanced picture of upheld/not upheld.

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

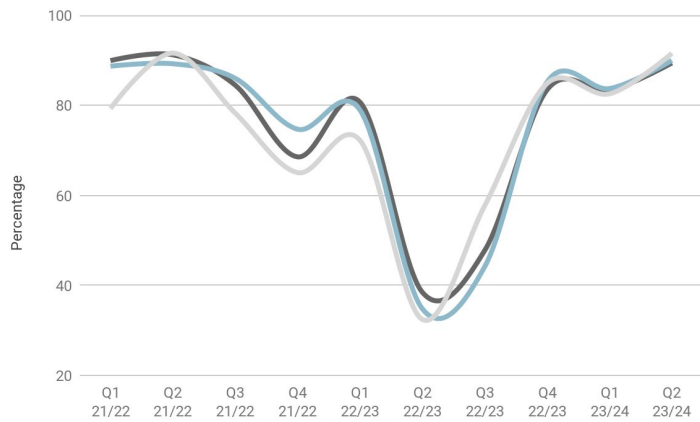
A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st October 2021.  
The new process has the following stages:

- 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 response	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	4
Planning	Unhappy with service of Enforcement Notice	Dealt with by Depot/Contact Monitoring Officer	Upheld	10
Revenues and benefits	Business Rates;Attitude of Officer	Dealt with by Service	Upheld	7
Housing	Ongoing issues with Housing dept	Reinforce training for standard of communication with customers and internal review of processes for the Council's temporary accommodation.	Upheld	15
Waste and Recycling	Upset that assisted collection for garden waste was not being made from the agreed location	Dealt with by Depot/Contact Monitoring Officer	Upheld	10

# Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



## Direction of Travel

CDC      FODDC      WODC

Against last Quarter



Against last Year

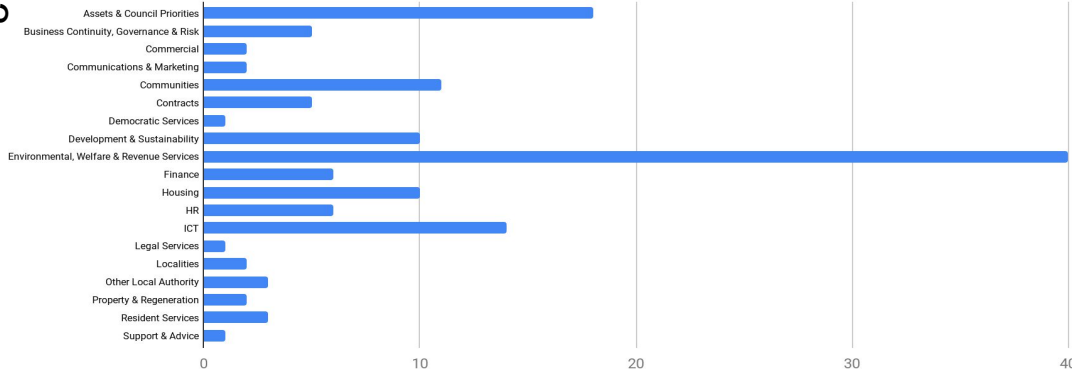


Improved since last quarter and last year

**Q2 Target**  
(High is good)

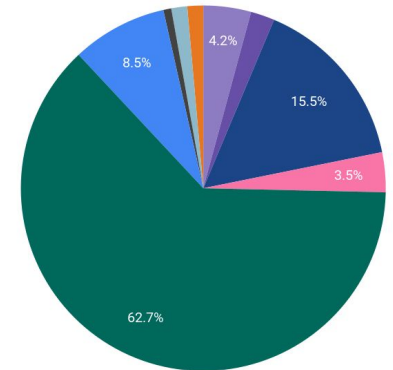
*No Target*

## Requests by Service Area



## Response Type

- Directed to other Local Authority
- Directed to Website
- Exemption Applied
- Information Not Held
- Information Provided in Full
- Information Provided in Part
- Not an FOI
- No Response
- Transferred to ERS



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

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# WODC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

1st July - 30th September 2023

Service Area	£k			Variance (under) / over
	Original Budget	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp.	
Democratic and Committee Services	1,195	695	682	(13)
Environmental & Regulatory Services	594	255	302	47
Environmental Services	8,041	3,323	3,515	192
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,035	1,234	1,228	(6)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,210	1,526	1,529	3
Land, Legal & Property	1,147	555	583	28
Leisure & Communities	1,282	172	(106)	(278)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,174	569	632	63
Revenues & Housing Support	1,408	730	635	(95)
Investment Property and Retained Services	(3,125)	(599)	(168)	431
<b>Total cost of services</b>	<b>14,961</b>	<b>8,460</b>	<b>8,832</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Plus:</b>				
Investment income receipts	(1,102)	(638)	(688)	(50)
<b>Cost of services before financing:</b>	<b>13,859</b>	<b>7,822</b>	<b>8,144</b>	<b>322</b>

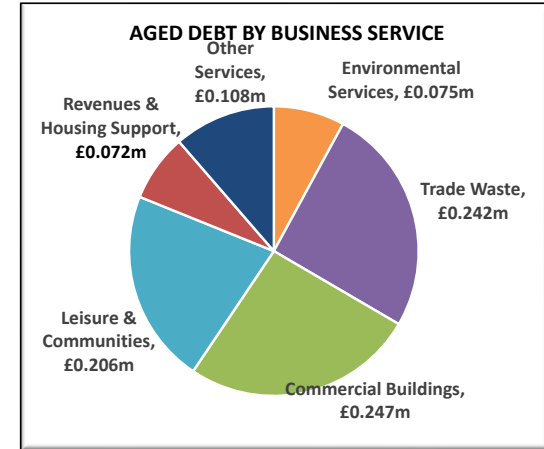
## AGED DEBT SUMMARY

	Sep-23	Jun-23	Mar-23	Movement vs. prior period		
	Invoices	1,638	1,666	1,233	-28	-2%
£k	951	1,088	1,913	-137	13%	↓

### Aged Debt Summary:

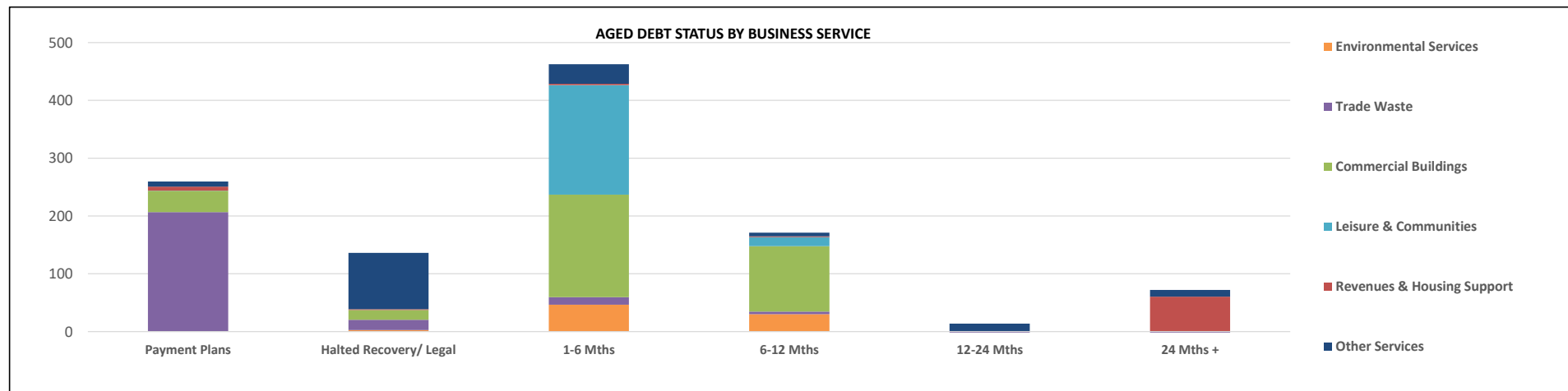
Trade Waste & Investment Property make up half of our current Aged Debt with 85% of Trade Waste arrears being subject to payment plans enabling customers to spread the cost of the service over 12 months. The move to Direct Debit payments has significantly improved collection levels.

Investment Property has seen some significant collection issues since 2020 but the current position has no debt being over 12mths old and 15% of debt being subject to payment plans. The Estates team continue to work closely with our tenants to recover the remaining balances.



### Overall Summary:

Q2 results show an overall overspend compared to budget of £323k. The most significant variances are in Investment Property, Environmental Services and the Leisure Contract. Investment Property is forecast to be £600k over budget at year end due to voids and current rent free periods in place with new tenants. The 24/25 budget has been updated to reflect the income receivable in the year net of voids and known rent free periods. The overspend in Environmental Services is driven by the increasing costs of our recycling contract with Suez which runs until Q3 of 24/25. The Waste team are investigating other service delivery options to bring sustainable long term savings for the Council. The inclusion of an income contingency against the leisure contract, the requirement for which will be assessed at year end, is producing a significant underspend due to invoices being raised at the contractual amount. Discussions are ongoing with GLL to make the contract sustainable and improve the outcome for both parties beyond the existing contract which runs until 2027.



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## Executive response to a recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Financial Performance Report 2023/24 Quarter 2

Recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8 November 2023.

### Context

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that budget provision of £1,000,000 has been made in the capital programme for Chipping Norton Roof Replacement but that only £80,000 was expected to be spent on repairing the roof (including related internal damage).

Recommendation	Agree (Y / N)	Comment	Responsible Executive Member	Lead Officer
1. That the Council draws up proposals for a full refurbishment of Chipping Norton Leisure Centre, utilising the underspent capital allocation for roof replacement, to improve the centre and address the issues caused by water damage over a number of years. This project should include, for example, replacing flooring and carpeting, repainting walls and replacing gym equipment.	Y, in principle	The Executive is supportive of this recommendation in principle and is keen to address the issues caused by the water damage. We would however want a more extensive capital refurbishment programme to be an informed piece of work. The recently commissioned Strategic Outcomes Planning Model will provide the evidence base for the most effective use of this capital allocation at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre.	Councillor Tim Sumner, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Major Projects	Andrew Turner, Business Manager for Assets and Council Priorities

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME  
1 DECEMBER 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Council currently operates the Strong Leader and Executive form of governance. The Council has appointed one Overview and Scrutiny Committee which has the power to investigate Executive decisions and any other matters relevant to the district and its people, making recommendations to the Council, Executive or any other Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council. Overview and Scrutiny has an important role in holding the Executive to account and in contributing to policy development.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates a work plan which is agreed annually but provides for flexibility to enable the Committee to respond to emerging issues or priorities. The work plan will include a mix of Executive reports that have been selected for pre-decision scrutiny, and reports on other Council services, topics or issues which have been specifically requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In setting and reviewing its work plan, the Committee will be mindful of the constraints of the organisation and may prioritise based on the following considerations (TOPIC criteria):

**Timeliness:** Is it timely to consider this issue?

**Organisational priority:** Is it a Council priority?

**Public Interest:** Is it of significant public interest?

**Influence:** Can Scrutiny have meaningful influence?

**Cost:** Does it involve a high level of expenditure, income or savings?

**Call in**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider any “call-in” of an executive decision that has been made but not yet implemented. This enables the Committee to consider whether the decision made is appropriate given all relevant information (but not because it would have made a different decision). It may recommend that the Executive, an Executive Member or the Council should reconsider the decision.

Item	Executive Member	Lead Officer
<b>Wednesday 6 December 2023</b>		
Fly Tipping Enforcement Update	Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Lidia Arciszewska	Jack Graham, Environment Support Officer Jack.Graham@publicagroup.uk
Review of Weekly Markets	Deputy Leader - Economic Development - Cllr Duncan Enright	Will Barton, Business Development Officer william.barton@westoxon.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Two	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
<b>Monday 18 December 2023 "Spotlight" Session on Publica Review</b>		
Publica Review	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
<b>Wednesday 10 January 2024 - "Spotlight" Session on the Draft Budget</b>		
Draft Budget 2024/25	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
<b>Wednesday 7 February 2024</b>		
Community Safety Partnership	Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities - Cllr Joy Aitman	Emmylou Brossard, Safer Communities Officer Emmylou.Brossard@publicagroup.uk

Safer Streets	Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare - Cllr Geoff Saul	Emmylou Brossard, Safer Communities Officer Emmylou.Brossard@publicagroup.uk
Carbon Action Plan	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk
Biodiversity Action Plan	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk
<b>Thursday 29 February 2024</b>		
Approval of Upgrade to WODC Public Space CCTV Provision and Monitoring Arrangements	Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare	Astrid Harvey, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer Astrid.Harvey@westoxon.gov.uk
<b>Wednesday 10 April 2024 – no business currently scheduled</b>		

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Suggested items for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – scored against the TOPIC criteria

Suggested item	Timeliness (2)	Org. priority (3)	Public Interest (3)	Influence (2)	Cost (2)	Total (12)	Comments
Development Management	2	3	3	1	2	11	To receive an update on the implementation of the Development Management Improvement Programme.
Affordable housing delivery	2	3	3	1	2	11	To consider the Council's approach to the delivery of affordable housing, including through planning policies.
Waste service	1	2	3	2	2	10	To consider the effectiveness of the service, performance (including missed collections) and options for change.
Supporting market town and village centres	2	3	3	1	1	10	Possible task and finish review of support for market towns and village centres, considering the visitor economy.
Community grants	1	3	3	2	1	10	To consider the benefits to communities of grants for community facilities and activities.
Consultations	1	2	2	1	1	7	To consider how the Council assesses what consultations by external/partner organisations it responds to.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME  
INCORPORATING NOTICE OF DECISIONS PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE  
SESSION AND NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MAKE A KEY DECISION  
1 DECEMBER 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024

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

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

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

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

### Key Decisions

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, some matters are considered with the public excluded. The public may only be excluded if a resolution is passed to exclude them. The grounds for exclusion are limited to situations where confidential or exempt information may be disclosed to the public if present and, in most cases involving exempt information, where in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The definitions of these are set out in the Council's Constitution.

### **Documents and Queries**

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

Democratic Services - Email: [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk) Tel: 01993 861000

West Oxfordshire District Council: Executive Members 2023/24

Name of Councillor	Title and Areas of Responsibility
Andy Graham (Leader)	<b>Leader of the Council:</b> Policy Framework; Town and Parish Council engagement, Council Plan; Strategic Partnerships including Pan regional Partnership, Future Oxfordshire, South East Councils and OXLEP; Oxfordshire Leaders; Publica and partnership authorities and Ubico, Democratic Services; Communications; Legal Services; Counter Fraud; Emergency Planning; and Customer Services
Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader)	<b>Economic Development:</b> Business Development; Visitor Economy; Town and Village regeneration; and Customer Services.
Alaric Smith	<b>Finance:</b> Finance & Management; Council Tax and Benefits; Asset Management, South West Audit Partnership; Performance management; Capital Investment strategy; Strategic Housing Investment; and Customer Services
Charlie Maynard	<b>Planning and Sustainable Development:</b> Local Plan; Government planning policies and guidance; Conservation and Historic Environment; Landscape and Biodiversity; Development Management; and Ensuring planning policies meet 2030 requirement; and Customer Services
Tim Sumner	<b>Leisure and Major Projects:</b> Leisure provision including swimming pools; Culture and Heritage; Public Art; Agile Working, Car Parking and Customer Services
Joy Aitman	<b>Stronger Healthy Communities:</b> Voluntary sector engagement; Health and Safety; Community and Public Health; Refugee Resettlement Programme; Young People; Equality and diversity; and Customer Services
Geoff Saul	<b>Housing and Social Welfare:</b> Housing Allocations; Homelessness; Provision of affordable homes; Sheltered Housing Accommodation; Safeguarding – Community Safety Partnership; Crime and Disorder; Neighbourhood Policing; Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioner; and Assets of Community Value.
Lidia Arciszewska	<b>Environment:</b> Flood alleviation and sewage; Environmental Partnerships – WASP and Evenlode, North East Cotswold Cluster; Waste collection and recycling; Street Scene (cleansing, litter and grounds maintenance); Air Quality; and Land, food, farming and Customer Services Delivery
Andrew Prosser	<b>Climate Change:</b> Energy Advice; Renewable energy and retrofit investment; Biodiversity across the District; Carbon neutral by 2030; Fossil fuel dependence reduction; Local, national and county wide liaison on climate; EV Charging Rollout. and Customer Service

For further information about the above and all members of the Council please see [www.westoxon.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/councillors)

Item for Decision	Key Decision (Yes / No)	Open or Exempt	Decision – Maker	Date of Decision	Executive Member	Lead Officer
Council Tax Support Scheme 2024	Yes	Open	Executive Council	13 Dec 2023 31 Jan 2024	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Mandy Fathers, Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service mandy.fathers@publicagroup.uk
Windrush Leisure Centre - PSDS 3c Funding Bid	Yes	Open	Executive	13 Dec 2023	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk
Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Two	Yes	Open	Executive	13 Dec 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Review of Weekly Markets	Yes	Open	Executive	13 Dec 2023	Deputy Leader - Economic Development - Cllr Duncan Enright	Will Barton, Business Development Officer <a href="mailto:william.barton@westoxon.gov.uk">william.barton@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Review of Legal Services	No	Open	Executive	13 Dec 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Andrea McCaskie, Director of Governance <a href="mailto:andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk">andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Update on Improvement Work with Thames Water	No	Open	Executive	13 Dec 2023	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment	Phil Martin, Assistant Director for Business Support phil.martin@publicagroup.uk
Annual Monitoring Report (2021 – 2023)	No	Open	Executive	17 Jan 2024	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk">chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk</a>

Draft Budget 2024/25	Yes	Open	Executive	13 Dec 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
Local Plan 2041 Update (including Local Development Scheme (LDS))	No	Open <i>!NotSet!</i>	Executive	17 Jan 2024	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk
Response to Oxford City Council Local Plan 2040 - Regulation 19 Consultation	No	Open <i>!NotSet!</i>	Executive	17 Jan 2024	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk">chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk</a>
Employment Policies	No	Open	Executive	17 Jan 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Zoe Campbell, Assistant Director for Organisational Effectiveness zoe.campbell@publicagroup.uk
Biodiversity Action Plan	Yes	Open	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk
Carbon Action Plan	Yes	Open	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk
Climate Change Strategy	Yes	Open	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk

Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Yes	Open	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance <a href="mailto:Madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">Madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Business Case in to Acquiring Emergency Accommodation	No	Open	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare - Cllr Geoff Saul	Jasmine McWilliams, Assets Manager <a href="mailto:jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk">jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk</a>
Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)	No	Open	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Climate Change - Cllr Andrew Prosser	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk">chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk</a>
Community Infrastructure Levey (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule	No	Open <i>!NotSet!</i>	Executive	14 Feb 2024	Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development - Charlie Maynard	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk">chris.hargraves@publicagroup.uk</a>
Approval of Upgrade to WODC Public Space CCTV Provision and Monitoring Arrangements	Yes	Open	Executive	6 Mar 2024	Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare	Astrid Harvey, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer <a href="mailto:Astrid.Harvey@westoxon.gov.uk">Astrid.Harvey@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Endorsement of the Oxfordshire Town and Parish Charter	No	Open	Executive	6 Mar 2024	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Key Decisions Delegated to Officers</b>						



Allocate Funding from the Project Contingency Earmarked Reserve	Yes	Open	Finance Director - Madhu Richards	Before 31 Dec 2023	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Madhu Richards, Director of Finance madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
Standing Delegation: Settlement of Legal Claims	Yes	Open	Interim Head of Legal Services - Helen Blundell	Before 31 Dec 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham, Executive Member for Finance - Cllr Alaric Smith	Helen Blundell, Principal Solicitor, Land, Legal and Property helen.blundell@fdean.gov.uk
Allocation of New Initiatives Funding	Yes	Open	Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service - Giles Hughes	Before 31 Dec 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
<b>Other business for Council meetings</b>						
West Oxfordshire District Council Draft Programme of Meetings 2024 – 2025	No	Open	Council	29 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Max Thompson, Senior Democratic Services Officer max.thompson@westoxon.gov.uk
South Leigh and High Cogges	No	Open	Council	29 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Sharon Ellison, Electoral Services Manager sharon.ellison@publicagroup.uk
Recommendations from the Constitution Working Group	No	Open	Council	29 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk">andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk</a>

Appointment of Independent Persons	No	Open	Council	29 Nov 2023	Leader of the Council - Cllr Andy Graham	Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk">andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk</a>
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