

Tuesday, 2 September 2025

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## EXECUTIVE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Executive which will be held in Carterton Community Centre, Marigold Square, Carterton, OX18 1AX on **Wednesday, 10 September 2025 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Executive

Councillors: Andy Graham, Duncan Enright, Lidia Arciszewska, Hugo Ashton, Rachel Crouch, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner

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

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

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**  
To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Executive. The quorum for the Executive is 3 Members.
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations of interest from members of the Executive on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 18)**  
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 July 2025.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**  
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive or the Chief Executive.
5. **Participation of the Public**  
Anyone who lives, works, or studies in West Oxfordshire is eligible to ask one question at the meeting, for up to three minutes, directed at the Leader of the Council or any Executive Member on any agenda item or on any issue that affects the district or its people.

All questions must be no longer than three minutes long.

Members of the public wishing to speak at a meeting must notify [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk), or call Customer Services on 01993 861000 including their name and the agenda item or topic they wish to speak on, by 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting (e.g. for a Wednesday meeting, the deadline would be 2.00pm on the Friday before).

If the topic of the question is not within the remit of the Council, advice will be provided on where best to direct the question.

The Leader or relevant Executive Member will either respond to a question verbally at the meeting or provide a written response which will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

6. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
To consider any reports or recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which meets on 3 September 2025.
7. **Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**  
The Committee has not met since the previous meeting of the Executive.

8. **Leisure Planned Investment Programme (Pages 19 - 36)**

Purpose:

This report presents the forecast expenditure required to ensure the Council owned leisure facilities remain operationally effective and compliant with modern standards as well as improving the leisure services for residents into the future. A breakdown has been included to demonstrate the costs over a range of periods along with a summary of associated implications. The purpose of the report is to allow Members to decide on the preferred Planned Investment Programme.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Allocate funds in the Capital Programme for the delivery of a 5-year planned investment programme, as determined by the latest condition surveys conducted at all Council owned Leisure Facilities.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with Executive member for Leisure and/or the Section 151 Officer to approve the project specific procurement of works and services directly, or via the Leisure Operator to deliver the programme of works over the agreed time period.

9. **Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (Pages 37 - 76)**

Purpose:

To consider formal approval of the District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule following independent examination.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the content and recommendations of the independent examiner's report attached at Annex A, including the modifications (EM1 and EM2) which have been recommended in respect of the CIL Charging Schedule attached at Annex B;
2. Recommend to Council that the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule attached at Annex B be formally approved with an effective date of 31 January 2026 in accordance with Section 213 of the Planning Act 2008.
3. Recommend to Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning to further progress work on the draft CIL Implementation Plan in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

10. **Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning (Pages 77 - 110)**

Purpose:

To seek approval to proceed to Phase 2 of the Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Planning programme and complete a districtwide local area energy plan.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, to approve the remaining Phase 1 key deliverables of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning project programme.
2. Subject to the completion of Phase 1, agree to proceed to Phase 2 of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning project programme and the completion of a districtwide local area energy plan.

11. **West Oxfordshire District Council response to the draft Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (Pages 111 - 124)**  
Purpose:  
To consider the endorsement of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy for publication.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Executive resolves to:  
I. Endorse the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy for publication by Oxfordshire County Council.
12. **Quarterly Finance Review Q1 (Pages 125 - 142)**  
Purpose:  
To detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter One 2025-2026.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Executive resolves to:  
I. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter One 2025-2026.
13. **Quarterly Service Review Q1 (Pages 143 - 200)**  
Purpose:  
To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2025-26 Quarter One (Q1).  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Executive Resolves to:  
I. Note the 2025/26 Q1 service performance report.
14. **3 year Service Level Agreements - Year 1 reporting and future funding options (Pages 201 - 230)**  
Purpose:  
The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the performance at the end of Year 1 of all 7 organisations receiving grant funding. Furthermore, it is to consider the Council's appetite for offering future multi-year funding once this current arrangement comes to an end in March 2027.  
  
Recommendation:  
That the Executive resolves to:  
I. Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities, to explore the feasibility of securing a legacy position for the Voluntary and Community Sector in this year's budget setting round to continue to offer a multi-year funding arrangement from 2027-2030.
15. **Public Toilet Review (Pages 231 - 256)**  
Purpose:  
The review has considered current provision of public conveniences in each location, costs, income and building condition. The aim is to provide a balance between the continued provision of good quality public toilet facilities, protect essential facilities into the future and to reduce the financial burden on the Council.



Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Agree to work with Town and Parish Councils and the Public Convenience Task and Finish Group to explore the options in regards to transferring these assets where possible, either on long leases or freehold, as detailed in the report.
2. Delegate authority for the terms of any disposals arising from recommendation 1 to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance.
3. Agree that, where transfer cannot be achieved, to retain facilities at Langdale Gate in Witney, Guildenford and High Street in Burford, Bampton Town Hall, New Street in Chipping Norton, Hensington Road in Woodstock and Kilkenny Country Park, and to bring forward a further report regarding the repairs and improvements required to ensure good quality facilities are provided.
4. Agree, where transfer cannot be achieved, to terminate leases at the Town Hall in Chipping Norton and Charlbury, noting the lease implications set out in Annex D to the report.
5. Agree, where transfer cannot be achieved, to close facilities at The Leys, Witney, Browns Lane, Woodstock, Back Lane, Eynsham, Black Bourton Road in Carterton which are in the Council's ownership and consider options such as conversion, lease or sale of the buildings.

16. **Review of the Ubico Shareholder Agreement & Ubico Board Member Appointments**  
(Pages 257 - 290)

Purpose:

To seek approval to agree a new UBICO Shareholder Agreement and Ubico Board Member Appointments.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Approve the termination of the shareholders' agreement between the following local authority shareholders:
  - a. West Oxfordshire District Council
  - b. Cheltenham Borough Council
  - c. Cotswold District Council
  - d. Forest of Dean District Council
  - e. Stroud District Council
  - f. Tewkesbury Borough Council
  - g. Gloucester City Council; and
  - h. Ubico Ltdthat was entered into in January 2020 (the "2020 Shareholders' Agreement").
2. Approve the proposal described in this report to enter into a replacement Shareholders' Agreement between the above parties in the form set out in exempt Annexe B to this report.
3. Approve the proposal described in Exempt Annex D to this report in relation to the number of votes for each shareholder, further amending the agreement set out in Exempt Annex B.

17. **Decision Taken Under Urgency Powers: Ubico Growth Request (Pages 291 - 296)**  
Purpose:  
To report to the Executive on a decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer under urgency powers.
- Recommendation:  
That the Executive resolves to:  
I. Note the decision taken as set out in Annex A.
18. **Exclusion of Press and Public**  
If the Executive wishes to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Executive to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
19. **Exempt Annex D for Item 15 - Public Toilet Review (Pages 297 - 298)**  
Exempt Annex D for Item 15 – Public Toilet Review.
20. **Exempt Annexes B, C and D for Item 16 - Review of the Ubico Shareholder Agreement & Ubico Board Member Appointments (Pages 299 - 344)**  
Exempt Annexes B, C and D for Item 16 - Review of the Ubico Shareholder Agreement & Ubico Board Member Appointments
21. **Exempt Annex B for Item 17 - Decision Taken Under Urgency Powers: Ubico Growth Request (Pages 345 - 352)**  
Exempt Annex B – Item 17 Decision Taken Under Urgency Powers: Ubico Growth Request

(END)

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

### **Executive**

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB  
at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 9 July 2025**

### PRESENT

Councillors: , , Duncan Enright, Hugo Ashton, Rachel Crouch, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive Officer), Phil Martin (Director of Place), Claire Locke (Interim Executive Director), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services), Barry Bodin-Jones (Lead Project Manager), Michael David (Housing Delivery Programme Manager), Susan Hughes (Business Manager for Support and Advice), Hannah Kenyon (Climate Change Manager), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer), Maria Wheatley (Shared Parking Manager), Georgina Dyer (Chief Accountant), Philip Measures (Service Leader), Katie Fenton (Climate Change Officer) and Emma Peacock (Communications Officer)

Other Councillors in attendance: Andrew Coles, Julian Cooper, Dan Levy, David Melvin and Elizabeth Poskitt

#### **356 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Andy Graham and Councillor Lidia Arciszewska.

#### **357 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **358 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There were no amendments to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 June 2025.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council. Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive member for Finance, seconded the proposal.

This proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings held on 11 June 2025.

**359 Receipt of Announcements**

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, announced that the Council had been graded as the top rural district for climate action. Councillor Prosser highlighted Officers' work towards this and the successful collaborative efforts with other local authorities as key contributors to the achievement.

Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, advised that a Mental Health Summit was being held 10 July 2025 at Woodgreen. Twelve organisations were attending to share good practice and ways to improve services.

Councillor Hugo Ashton, Executive Member for Planning, advised that the Area Action Plan (AAP) hearing for Salt Cross Graden Village had been concluded. Councillor Ashton thanked those involved and noted that it would be some weeks before the views were presented.

**360 Participation of the Public**

Councillor Enright informed the meeting that a question had been received from a public participant, Mr Tom Harvey, who was not able to be present at the meeting. A written response would be provided to the question, and the additional comments submitted by Mr Harvey would form part of the consultation for the Car Parking Strategy (Item 9 of the agenda).

Mr Derek West addressed the Executive in relation to Item 12 of the agenda, Woodford Way Project, and made the following points:

- Gloucester Place was an old street and was still on the tourist attraction list for Witney.
- Residents of Gloucester Place had concerns around the proposed decrease in parking availability at Woodford Way.
- There had been an increase in the volume of parking required by residents but a decrease in access to such parking. Gloucester Place residents now had approximately 16 spaces for 40 residents.
- In 2007 residents had been promised permits by the Council, however the permits were not issued as there was no obligation on the Council to do so.
- Residents would like to see the Council explore all options in relation to parking.

**361 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 2 July 2025 and made recommendations to Executive in relation to agenda item 9 – Car Parking Strategy, and agenda item 11 – Climate Change Strategy.

In relation to the Car Parking Strategy, it was noted that some of the Committee's recommendations fell outside of the scope of the strategy, but other relevant comments would be discussed later in the meeting.

In relation to the Climate Change Strategy, all recommendations from the Committee were accepted by the Executive. Councillor Prosser advised that the report had been revised to include the recommended amendments.

The Executive members thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments and engagement.

### **362 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**

There were no matters raised by the Audit and Governance Committee which met on 26 June 2025. The Committee were thanked for their continued work in this area.

### **363 2024/25 Quarterly Finance Review Q4**

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, presented the item, the purpose of which was to report the financial performance of the Council in 2024/25.

Councillor Smith advised that:

- The original budget provided for a contribution to general fund reserve of £5,107. During the year the Council had been consistently forecasting a cost of service overspend, mitigated by an overachievement of interest on Treasury Management activities.
- At year end overspend on services had amounted to £247,274. The main adverse variances were expenditure on temporary emergency accommodation and the loss of Housing Benefit Subsidy.
- The number of people in emergency accommodation was a situation that the Council did not want to persist. Therefore, £3m had been included in the Capital Programme to purchase high quality temporary housing in the district to mitigate this.
- Costs had been incurred in respect of the Elmfield refurbishment, and unlet units at Marriotts Walk. However, both assets remained good investments.
- The £200k contingency on the leisure contract had proved to be unnecessary.
- Treasury management investment income was higher than budgeted due to high interest rates.

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- Performance on trade waste was positive, and this had resulted in an underspend in this area. This was driven by Officers' work to ensure that correct charging was applied and customers moved to direct debit payments.
- At the end of the year the Council was able to make a contribution to general fund of £6,345.
- In relation to capital spend, the first phase of the waste vehicle fleet replacement was now incorporated into a county wide waste transformation programme.
- The decarbonisation of Witney Leisure Centre was the subject of a separate report which had been brought to this meeting of the Executive.

Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive:

1. Noted the 2024/25 financial performance.
2. Recommend to Council to carry forward the capital budget of £4,951,242.
3. Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report.

**364**

**Car Parking Strategy**

Councillor Tim Sumner, Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy, presented the item, the purpose of which was to consider and agree the revised car parking strategy 2016 – 2031. In presenting the item Councillor Sumner explored the conundrum of car parking which he stated had no absolute solution. Therefore, a car parking strategy needed to balance the demands of parking volume, traffic flow, the needs of residents and businesses and decreasing traffic pollution. It was noted that satisfying one group would not necessarily satisfy others. Councillor Sumner encouraged local engagement with the process and advised that this would be factored into the strategy in future. Finally, Councillor Sumner advised that the Council had finite resources for parking and must maintain and continue to monitor these resources as well as continuing with the free parking offered in the district.

In the discussion the following points were raised by the Executive and Members of the Council present at the meeting:

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- It was noted that there was a difference in the figures for parking need in Witney between the proposed strategy, which showed a surplus of parking spaces, and the previous strategy, which showed a deficit. It was explained that this was reflective of changing parking habits since the previous version of the strategy. This change may have been attributable to changes in working and shopping habits.
- The figures were explored in relation to Woodford Way. The data suggested that the main users of this car park were shoppers and not workers. The data had been gathered using two surveys over a two-year period. The surveys included asking customers the purpose of their visit to the car park.
- The potential use of Council owned land for car parking, in particular Brook Hill and Union Street in Woodstock, was questioned.
- The balance of the number of long stay and short stay parking spaces at Hensington Road car park in Woodstock was explored. It was noted that the survey for Hensington Road had also been completed over a two-year period.
- It was concluded that the strategy provided a platform based on data and was therefore a snapshot. The strategy would go out to consultation following the decision of the Executive. Operational and management matters would also be considered following the consultation. When changes were made subsequent parking orders would be required and this would result in a further consultation.

Councillor Enright informed the Executive that the wording of recommendation 6 was to be amended in accordance with a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The revised wording of the recommendation would be:

“Approved the funding to investigate the drainage and mitigate flooding at Guildenford car park in Burford at a cost estimated at £20,000”.

Councillor Ashton noted that the report showed that the amount of parking needed in Burford was not provided for at present and advised that the Town Council was looking into ways of increasing parking provision.

Councillor Ashton proposed a wording change to the strategy on page 15. He proposed that the wording:

“With on-street parking charges being introduced by the County Council, the management of the district council car parks require a careful balance”.

Be amended to read:

“Where on street parking charges are introduced by the County Council the management of the district county car parks would require a careful balance.”

Councillor Ashton also proposed an additional recommendation be added under 5.4 of the Strategy, Options – Sustainable Transport, to read:

“To investigate the practicality of promoting local public transport services at appropriate locations within the Council owned car parks”.

Councillor Sumner proposed accepting the recommendations of the report, with the amended wording to the Strategy as suggested by Councillor Ashton, and the amendment to recommendation 6, as recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Prosser seconded the recommendations and noted that maintaining free parking was central to the strategy, as was aiming to reduce congestion to achieve climate goals.

This proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive:

1. Endorsed the revised West Oxfordshire District Council Car Parking Strategy 2025 -2031 at Annex A.
2. Authorised the Business Manager (Support and Advice) to make minor amendments to the draft strategy prior to finalisation in consultation with the accountable member of the Executive.
3. Adopted the Action plan in Annex A of the strategy recognising it as a working document to be updated throughout the life of the strategy as a consequence of further consultations with Towns and Parishes.
4. Instructed Officers to make a variation to the Parking Order to implement a mixture of long and short stay times to better meet customer demand in Woodstock, Burford and Charlbury. Recommended splits are attached at Annex B with final exact splits to be determined by Officers in consultation with Executive Member for Environment
5. Delegated authority to Executive Director of Resident Services in conjunction with the Executive Member for Environment to consider consultation feedback on the variations to the parking order and decide whether to make the variation to the Order in whole or in part or to abandon the proposal.



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6. Approved the funding to investigate the drainage and mitigate flooding at Guildenford car park in Burford at a cost estimated at £20,000.

7. Delegated further minor amendments to Parking Orders to the Executive

Director Residents Services in consultation with the Executive Member for

Environment to deal with items arising from Parish and Town Council liaison

meetings subject to formal Parking Order consultation requirements

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### **HMO Licence Fee, Civil Penalties Enforcement and Amenity Standards Policies**

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Care, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to review the HMO licence fee and period, to renew the HMO Amenity Standards policy and the Civil Penalties Policy. Councillor Saul noted that the new policies and standards being proposed took account of legislative changes and guidance, including the Renters' Rights Bill. At present the Council had 36 HMO licences issued, which had previously been granted on three-year terms. Following the licence expiry a new licence was required. The proposed change was to a five-year licence period, with a risk rating approach to prioritising inspections. It was hoped that these changes would better use Council resources and improve the process for landlords.

In the discussion the following points were raised:

- Council Officers met regularly with Officers from neighbouring districts to check and review fee levels and terms.
- The change in the licence fee period and inspection process was not expected to reduce the standard of HMO. The Council decided when to inspect and was not therefore bound to only undertaking such inspections on grant of a licence.

Councillor Saul proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Smith seconded the recommendations

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive:

1. Amend the HMO Licence Fees as set out in this Report and for them to apply from 1st September 2025;
2. Approved the HMO licence period increases from 3 years to 5 years;

3. Approved the HMO Amenity Standards Policy and

4. Approved the Policy for Civil Penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England)

Regulations 2020.

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### **Climate Change Strategy**

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to approve the West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030. Councillor Prosser summarised the item making the following points:

- West Oxfordshire had declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019 and committed to carbon neutrality by 2030 for Council operations.
- Recent surveys had demonstrated that local public support for climate action remained strong.
- The strategy had set out the actions over the next five years towards district wide net zero by 2050.
- The strategy was not focused solely on the Council's own emissions from operations, but also on what would be done to influence emissions across the district.
- The strategy supported achievement of the vision in terms of local clean energy; community resilience and independence; continuous retrofit programmes; tackling fuel poverty; active travel; ultra-low emissions transport; new developments meeting high energy and environmental standards; nature recovery; community led climate action.
- The strategy was aligned with the Paris Agreement and the UK 2050 targets. It also worked closely with other Oxfordshire authorities.
- The achievements and challenges of the Council over the last five years in terms of climate action were listed. Councillor Prosser summarised the priority actions from the strategy and noted that there were challenges to overcome but stated the Council was playing its part and was on the right track with this strategy.

In the discussion the following points were raised:

- The substantial increase in tree planting in the district was noted. Tribute was made to the Town and Parish Councils efforts in this area.
- The value of planting meadows as well as trees to sequester carbon was highlighted.
- It was noted that it was also important to encourage the more sustainable use of water for water resilience.
- The recommendations on this item received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had all been accepted.

Councillor Prosser proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive:

1. Approved the West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030 to achieve districtwide net zero by 2050 and climate resilience.

**367 Woodford Way Project**

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Care, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to outline the initial work involved in exploring options to deliver social rented homes with a Registered Provider (RP) on part of the Woodford Way Car Park. This proposal formed part of the Council's long-term strategy to deliver the right homes in the right places and to make it easier for local people to afford homes in their communities. This site had always been earmarked for such a development, and this was the first step towards achieving this. The development would be for high-quality affordable one and two-bedroom homes. The Council had seen this as a key opportunity to provide such homes and enable people to stay close to work, schools and support networks. There was a large need for such a development, and it was the Council's responsibility to use such Council owned land to provide social rent housing. Initially the proposal would retain seventy parking spaces, including all existing EV spaces, and took account of the community's overnight parking need. Councillor Saul thanked the earlier public speaker and noted that bringing this item forward at such an early stage was to gather such views. Finally, it was noted that the scheme was at a very early stage and therefore all residents and stakeholders would have the chance to comment through consultation.

In the discussion the following points were raised by the Executive and Members in attendance:

- It was welcome that the scheme was for 100% social housing with a small number of emergency housing units. Also welcome was the retention of seventy parking spaces.
- A residents' permit parking scheme should be considered as part of the scheme. It was agreed that this would be investigated as the scheme is developed.
- Priority for the social housing should be given to key workers, in particular with the proximity of the site to key emergency services.

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- Currently the view was that it would be better for the Council to work with the expertise of a Registered Provider to develop the site, rather than for the Council to develop and manage the site itself. It was noted that the legislation that would allow the Council to develop the site itself was not thought to be in place at present.
- It was noted that providing market housing for sale to raise funds did not align with the Council's priorities. It was noted that better grant funding would be available with 100% social housing rather than a mixed development.
- It was noted that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may allow for an increased stock of property for such schemes.
- The change in the use of town centres in general was discussed. Whilst a shopping need would continue there was a swing to leisure and living. Town centre living also enabled sustainable living which was important given the Council's climate goals.

Councillor Saul proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Smith seconded the recommendations and noted that the proposed development would allow younger residents to remain in the area.

This proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive:

1. Earmarked £215,000 S106 developer contribution funding to support the provision of social housing in Witney
2. Approved the Director of Place to start formal discussions based on developing up to 70% of the Woodford Way Car Park with local Registered Providers in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Member for Housing and Social Care

**368 Carterton Units 1-3 and Station Lane Roofing Project**

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to request allocation of funding for the re-roofing of investment and service properties that form part of the Capital Expenditure Budget for 2025/26 and to seek approval of these costs so that officers could proceed with the works with external contractors. Councillor Smith gave background to the properties and noted that at the time of acquisition, a business case included planned works to the roofing. Significant upgrades were needed to avoid future degradation and fulfil Council obligations to the tenants. A tender process had taken place for the works and detailed negotiations with the main contractor with input from specialist consultants had been completed.

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Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Enright seconded the recommendations

This proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Recommend to Council that the total cost detailed in Annex A is allocated to the project from the Investment Properties Programme.
2. Recommend to Council that delegated authority be given to Director of Finance (S151) in consultation with Executive Member for Finance to approve the final cost of the projects

**369**

### **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3c. Windrush Leisure Centre**

Councillor Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to present the business case for the decarbonisation of Windrush Leisure Centre. This process involved removal of the reliance on gas fired heating systems and replacing these with Air Source Heat Pumps. Councillor Prosser detailed the reduction in the Council's annual carbon emissions achieved by the scheme. Funding for the scheme was explained to be a combination of Council funding and Salix grants. The scheme must be delivered and operational by 31 March 2026 to secure the remaining grants.

In the discussion it was noted that the 8.8% reduction in total Council carbon emissions achieved by this scheme demonstrated the huge step this scheme would be making towards climate goals. It was noted that the March 2026 deadline carried risk of losing funding, however Officers dealt with such projects and timescales regularly and had expertise in doing so. The Climate Change Manager noted that preparations had been made to enable contractors to be on site very soon following approval by the Executive, the planning permission application was going to Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee, and it was the aim to complete the scheme by January to allow room to resolve any issues.

Councillor Prosser proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Smith seconded the recommendations

This proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Executive:

1. Agreed to progress to the construction phase of the Windrush Leisure Centre decarbonisation scheme.
2. Recommended to Council to allocate an additional council contribution of £340,683 towards the project in addition to the £224,866 already included within the capital programme.
3. Requested Officers to bring forward a works programme for the activities identified in the recent condition survey for the Windrush Leisure Centre.

**370 Exclusion of Press and Public**


The item was not considered at the meeting.

**371 Exempt annex for Item 13**

This was not discussed, as the item was dealt with in the open part of the meeting without reference to the exempt material.

The Meeting closed at 3.34 pm

CHAIR

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>APPROVAL OF CAPITAL FUNDING FOR THE DELIVERY OF A PLANNED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME FOR LEISURE FACILITIES</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Tim Sumner – Executive Member for Leisure and Carterton Area Strategy. Email: <a href="mailto:tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk">tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
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Summary/Purpose	<p>This report presents the forecast expenditure required to ensure the Council owned leisure facilities remain operationally effective and compliant with modern standards as well as improving the leisure services for residents into the future.</p> <p>A breakdown has been included to demonstrate the costs over a range of periods along with a summary of associated implications.</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to allow Members to decide on the preferred Planned Investment Programme.</p>
Annexes	Annex A – PIP Headline Report Annex B – PIP Headline data tables Annex C – PIP Overview Table Annex D – Site Specific Key Items List
Recommendation(s)	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allocate funds in the Capital Programme for the delivery of a 5-year planned investment programme, as determined by the latest condition surveys conducted at all Council owned Leisure Facilities.</li> <li>2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with Executive member for Leisure and/or the Section 151 Officer to approve the project specific procurement of works and services directly, or via the Leisure Operator, to deliver the programme of</li> </ol>

	works over the agreed time period.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> </ul>
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	External consultation/surveying services were provided by CS2 – Chartered Surveyors to compile condition surveys.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights the forecast costs of repair and maintenance works which fall under the Councils duty as owners of the leisure facilities will ensure that the Council owned leisure facilities remain operationally effective and compliant with modern standards as well as improving the leisure services and experience for residents into the future.
- 1.2 These costs are presented as a Planned Investment Programme (PIP) which is over-arched by the adopted Asset Management Strategy 2024/29.
- 1.3 The programme will be scheduled to deliver both the compliance and operational elements that are detailed over the 5 Year recommended period to improve the services and standards that the community and customers of these Council owned facilities experience.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### LEISURE FACILITIES

- 2.1 The Council owns a portfolio of Leisure Facilities across the District including three Leisure Centres, two outdoor heated pools, sports pitches (natural and artificial turf) including changing/pavilion facilities, a country park, and playing fields which provide accessible leisure services to residents.
- 2.2 The facility-based services are currently contracted for delivery by the charitable trust GLL Better, except for Chipping Norton Lido which is operated by Chipping Norton Lido Ltd (a company limited by guarantee) which operates the lido site on an underlease from the Councils current lease.
- 2.3 Under the existing leisure contract, which runs until July 2027, there is a shared obligation for the repair and maintenance of the facilities between the Council and the Operator. This risk share is weighted towards the Operator for most day-to-day repair and maintenance requirements. The balance of this obligation has been considered and duly reflected in the forecast 2-year option.
- 2.4 For modelling purposes, it has been assumed that a more neutral share position for repairing obligations would be established for the period from year 3 to year 10. This position is supported by market intelligence which is emerging as part of the Leisure Strategy.
- 2.5 The Council considered the option of replacing the Windrush Leisure Centre when it was looking at how best it could invest in safeguarding the provision of leisure facilities for residents into the future and does recognise at some point it may be necessary to do this. However, the opportunity for the Council to pursue this option further is curtailed by the timing of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which will result in the District Council being subsumed into a larger Unitary Council structure in 2028. Notwithstanding the LGR changes the Council faces it also does not have sufficient funding to be able to finance the building of a new Leisure Centre, which could cost upwards of £40 million. The current location of the Windrush Leisure centre is also a key consideration as it is easily accessible via current public transport and cycle routes, has parking available close by to supplement what's available on site and is within walking distance of the town centre.

## ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 2.6** In 2024 the Council adopted an Asset Management Strategy (AMS) which provides strategic direction on how to manage buildings over the next five to ten years. This pulls together the Councils corporate objectives, latest financial situation, service needs, and regeneration and housing requirements to guide future property decision making.
- 2.7** Phase 1 of the AMS sets out a longer term (five to ten year) strategy for the estate. An implementation plan (Phase 2) will be developed to provide targeted Asset Plans for those properties being considered for change. Considering income and expenditure profiles, tenant events, and hold/disposal options for implementation.
- 2.8** Supporting the AMS is a 'Schedule of assets by priority', which falls under the implementation plan (Phase 2) this schedule details how asset plans will then be commissioned based on a priority ranking process.
- 2.9** Asset Plans will be supported by detailed Planned Preventative Maintenance programmes (PPM's) which will be collated to inform the next capital estates programme, allowing the Council to forecast spend over the next five years. Typical PPM information would include:-
- Condition Surveys
  - Running cost and energy performance data
  - Future maintenance, repair and replacement costs
  - Occupancy and space data
- 2.10** The 'Schedule of Assets by Priority' is being compiled to determine the appropriate rankings for all facilities, including the Leisure Centres, which will establish where they will fall under the forthcoming asset plan process.
- 2.11** The AMS also advises that the Council uses the latest leisure strategy (due in October 2025) and planned preventative maintenance data in understanding the long-term options for the Leisure Centres. This will include investment in planned repairs and maintenance. The first stage in progressing with the planned preventative maintenance data is therefore to obtain condition surveys as noted in 2.8. The information from these surveys can then be reviewed to provide a Planned Investment Programme (PIP) for a comparable purpose to the Capital estates programme which will be developed from the Asset Plans.

## CONDITION SURVEYS and PIP

- 2.12** In April 2025, the Council commissioned CS2 (Chartered Surveyor Consultancy) to complete condition surveys at the leisure facilities to provide a detailed overview of the facilities.
- 2.13** The completed condition surveys have identified a backlog of required maintenance in the facilities and using industry knowledge and experience CS2 have forecast future maintenance requirements based on the conditions observed. This information has been reviewed to form the PIP.
- 2.14** The elements within a facility have a cyclical nature relating to the need for building refurbishments and replacements. Typically, 25 years is a common time period for a larger requirement of investment due to the lifecycle expectancy of building fabric and mechanical equipment. Currently Chipping Norton leisure centre and the original Phase one of

Carterton leisure centre have reached 25 years of age whilst Windrush leisure centre is 50 years old, this has led to higher level of cost requirements for these sites in the next two years in line with this lifecycle period. When comparing Carterton leisure centre with Chipping Norton leisure centre there are cost differences created as Phase two of Carterton leisure centre was completed in 2019 and is therefore only 6 years old.

- 2.15** High traffic areas and sanitary areas also reach an age where despite regular cleaning they become tired and do not meet customer expectations. Typically, this is a 10 to 12 year cycle and consequently aligns with the 25-year cycle noted in 2.13. This further increases required costs at these time periods.
- 2.16** The period that a PIP should be considered for will be impacted by factors including, but not limited to, the availability of funds and the emerging landscape associated with the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
- 2.17** The condition surveys have been broken down into three time periods; 2 years (this period aligns with the current duration of the Leisure Contract), 5 years, and 10 years. The surveys were provided split into discipline themes for Building Fabric and Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) and these themes have subsequently been assessed in relation to the contractual repairing obligations that are in place and that are likely to be in place in the future.
- 2.18** A further review of the condition surveys has been completed to determine elements which would be critical to the function of the facilities – Compliance items, and elements that will afford the expected standard of service provision or that may be considered as optional. In some cases, costs have been value engineered out, and in others supplementary costs have been factored in to cover expected outcomes.
- 2.19** It has also been assumed that should the leisure contract be extended with the current operator or marketed for new bids that a standard repairing obligations agreement would be entered into. The impact of this obligation has been reflected in the 5-year and 10-year options, with the impact being applied from 2027 when the existing contract with GLL expires.
- 2.20** Delivery of the PIP will support the Council leisure facilities by ensuring a continued provision of services, maintaining public use and support of the facilities, and providing the Council with a more attractive leisure estate for the purposes of negotiating extension/procurement options to the leisure contract post 2027.

### **3. PLANNED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME CAPITAL COST IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 Table of costs.**

Facility	2 Years £	5 Years £	10 Years £
Carterton Leisure Centre	525,500	787,400	1,693,150
Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	972,200	1,121,200	1,504,100
Carterton Pavilion	93,000	178,400	218,600
Witney ATP	121,300	134,200	275,200
Windrush Leisure Centre	708,000	880,250	2,539,250

Woodstock Outdoor Pool	211,600	400,100	528,600
Total	2,631,600	3,501,550	6,758,900

- 3.2** The table above includes items for Compliance and Operational elements and is adjusted to reflect a change to a standard repairing obligations contract from July 2027.
- 3.3** The table above excludes items which were considered desirable but that would not have had a significant detrimental impact on the service provision in the allotted timeframes.

#### **4. ASSOCIATED OUTCOMES FOR THE PLANNED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PIP)**

- 4.1** The standard and quality of the facilities that the Council owns is linked to the level of services which can be provided. This in turn has a proportional impact on the reputation of the Council and the Leisure Operator and will determine the level of income which can be generated by the sites. The balance of income and expenditure is reflected in the management fee position that the Council can secure with a Leisure contract operated model and it is therefore prudent to invest for higher returns where possible.
- 4.2** A further benefit to investing in the facilities is an increase in the income generated by the leisure contractor, whereby an element of their generated surplus is recycled as investment back into the Council owned facilities further improving their condition.
- 4.3** The Council recognises the importance of providing residents with high quality leisure facilities, whilst accepting the challenges the age of the current assets brings and to reflect this the PIP, will not only replace / upgrade key operational items within the centres but also focus on areas that will improve users of the facilities experiences, both in terms of the environmental conditions and service area standards.
- 4.4** If no funding is allocated there is a risk that as facilities degrade through age and use that they would become inoperable, which would ultimately lead to loss of income claims under any contracted service and unmanaged costs for emergency repairs etc.
- 4.5** When retendering or extending the current leisure contract the level of investment and improvements undertaken will impact the market value of the facilities. This value is affected two-fold, through the reduced costs associated with forced closures and unserviceable areas – and through the improved income generated through providing high quality facilities and the associated enhanced customer experience provided.

#### **4.6 Table of advantages and disadvantages for a planned investment programme**

Period	Advantages	Disadvantages
No investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No initial Council financial outlay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deterioration of facilities with short term required improvements not being delivered.</li> <li>Loss of service delivery through closures and poor standards</li> <li>Failure to meet remaining contract obligations with GLL until July 2027</li> <li>Financial losses</li> <li>Significant Reputational Damage</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak portfolio for tendering post July 2027</li> </ul>
2yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesser financial outlay</li> <li>Accords with responsibilities under existing contractual arrangement</li> <li>Short term improvements would be completed but these would not secure facilities in the medium to long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower impact on services, costs and reputational damage which is delayed until July 2027</li> <li>Post July 2027 impacts as noted above begin, and having extended the contract or reprocured with no planned improvements in place a weak return would be expected from the market.</li> <li>Providing an investment programme for 2 years (until April 2027) would cause an additional risk to services as the programme would end in alignment with the LGR timeframe adding to uncertainty in the facility management and operation</li> </ul>
5yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a plan (and budget allocation) for Facilities which extends through the LGR process without over prescribing budgetary requirements into the new LGR framework.</li> <li>Medium term improvements would be completed securing the key areas of the facilities for years ahead.</li> <li>A contract extension or re-procurement with a plan in place will be stronger and may deliver future income to the Council through the management fee for re-investment in the facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delayed impact on services, costs, and reputational damage until 2030</li> <li>Post 2030 reduced impacts recur due to medium term investments that have been completed.</li> <li>A contractual risk would be factored in by Operators for post 2030 as facility conditions would then be at risk of deterioration</li> </ul>
10yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long term plan would be in place securing Facility condition.</li> <li>Longer term improvements would be made that would benefit the users and Council as facility owners with risks associated with income, costs, reputation etc.</li> <li>A stronger position would be held in current and future contract extension or procurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High financial commitment</li> <li>Beyond 5 years the forecast of condition surveys becomes less accurate, so further costs may be identified as time progresses that haven't been budgeted for</li> <li>Increased risk from prescribing budgetary requirements into an as yet undetermined LGR landscape</li> </ul>

## 5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Council could choose to allocate an alternative level of funding to the recommended 5 Year PIP which is detailed in this report. However, as demonstrated by the 2 Year or 10 Year options, alternative options which deviate from the 5-year recommendation will

increase potential risks to reputation or financial stability – as highlighted in 4.4 Table of Advantages and Disadvantages.

- 5.2 The Council could choose not to allocate funding to the PIP. This option would adversely affect the current leisure contract, and future leisure contract options, and would bring reputational and service risks.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Head of Finance recommends that the Planned Investment Programme is included in the capital programme for 2026/27-2031/32 to be funded through a combination of capital receipts and earmarked reserves.
- 6.2 Allowance will be made in the Revenue Budget for any additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) that will be payable for qualifying capital works i.e. replacing plant and equipment like Air Handling Units. MRP is not payable on capital expenditure for maintenance or wear and tear.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 N/A
- 8.2 Note. The recommendation on this report is for the Council to allocate funding to the PIP and consequently there are no directly applicable risk assessment implications. However, further detailed assessments would be undertaken as part of the procurement and delivery of the ensuing works programme where applicable.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1 N/A
- 9.2 Note. The recommendation on this report is for the Council to allocate funding to the PIP and consequently there are no directly applicable equalities impact implications. However, further detailed assessments would be undertaken as part of the procurement and delivery of the ensuing works programme where applicable.

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

- 10.1 As the recommendation on this report is for the Council to allocate funding to the PIP, there are no direct Climate and Ecological implications.
- 10.2 The Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool (SIAT) has been used to verify this and has confirmed that no actions are required.
- 10.3 Projects and works packages that will be delivered should the PIP be approved will be subject to further SIAT review based on their size and scope, and all repair and maintenance works will be undertaken with a low carbon refurbishment approach. Coupled with effective project procurement and management this will ensure that where applicable reduced carbon outcomes are delivered.

- 10.4** It is noted that by completing regular repair and maintenance works the facilities will improve in efficiency – particularly with the updating of Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) systems, enhancements to insulation, and improvements of air tightness in the building fabric.
- 10.5** The PIP will also, in some cases, extend the lifecycle of M&E components reducing the need to replace equipment. This accords with the waste hierarchy and its associated carbon impact.
- 10.6** The decision to extend the usable lifespan of the Windrush Leisure Centre holds climate benefits as the site location is suitable for access using public transport and cycle routes as well as being within walking distance of the town centre.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** None

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# Planned Investment Programme (PIP)

## Headline Report

The tables below show high-level costs, based on the recent Condition Surveys, for the Leisure Facilities to cover a 2 Year, 5 Year, and 10 Year period. These costs take account of the costs shared with the existing Leisure Operator and forecast the cost share for post July 2027 when the existing Contract ends or changes.

The cost forecast data provided with the Condition Reports has been assessed and detailed based on several approaches. These include separating costs that would be covered by a leisure contractor, determining where costs will have a compliance and/or operational impact on the services, and assessing costs that may be desirable although not necessary for the continued operation of the facilities.

A report to provide an overview and recommendations for a decision is currently being drafted and will be presented at the August Informal Executive meeting.

Table A – 2Yr PIP	Facility	£
	Carterton Leisure Centre	525,500
	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	972,200
	Carterton Pavilion	93,000
	Witney ATP	121,300
	Windrush Leisure Centre	708,000
	Woodstock Outdoor Pool	211,600
April 2025 to March 2027	2 Year Total cost	2,631,600

Table B – 5Yr PIP	Facility	£
	Carterton Leisure Centre	787,400
	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	1,121,200
	Carterton Pavilion	178,400
	Witney ATP	134,200
	Windrush Leisure Centre	880,250
	Woodstock Outdoor Pool	400,100
April 2025 to March 2030	5 Year Total cost	3,501,550

Table C – 10Yr PIP	Facility	£
	Carterton Leisure Centre	1,693,150
	Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	1,504,100
	Carterton Pavilion	218,600
	Witney ATP	275,200
	Windrush Leisure Centre	2,539,250
	Woodstock Outdoor Pool	528,600
April 2025 to March 2035	10 Year Total cost	6,758,900

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PIP HEADLINE DATA TABLES.

To show detail of costings split between Council and Contractor and balance between Compliance and Operational elements

Carterton Leisure Centre			Carterton Pavilion			Chipping Norton Leisure Centre		
<b>Summary costs Yrs 1-5</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 1-5</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 1-5</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>
Years 1&2	525500	219250	Years 1&2	93,000	55,300	Years 1&2	972200	209350
Years 3 to 5	261900	110300	Years 3 to 5	85,400	21,000	Years 3 to 5	149000	100350
Total	787400	329550	Total	178,400	76,300	Total	1121200	309700
<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>		
Compliance	758400	146600	Compliance	138,200	14,350	Compliance	1058700	140600
Operational	29000	182950	Operational	40,200	61,950	Operational	62500	169100
Total	787400	329550	Total	178,400	76,300	Total	1121200	309700
<b>Summary costs Yrs 6-10</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 6-10</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 6-10</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>
Total	905750	152350	Total	40,200	32,300	Total	382900	205850
<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>		
Compliance	524750	53250	Compliance	29,000	0	Compliance	317000	108750
Operational	381000	99100	Operational	11,200	32,300	Operational	65900	97100
Total	905750	152350	Total	40,200	32,300	Total	382900	205850
<b>10 Year Total</b>	<b>1693150</b>	<b>481900</b>	<b>10 Year Total</b>	<b>218,600</b>	<b>108,600</b>	<b>10 Year Total</b>	<b>1504100</b>	<b>515550</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2175050</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>327,200</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2019650</b>
Windrush Leisure Centre			WATP			WODP		
<b>Summary costs Yrs 1-5</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 1-5</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 1-5</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>
Years 1&2	708,000	424,600	Years 1&2	121300	119350	Years 1&2	211,600	62,800
Years 3 to 5	172,250	122,475	Years 3 to 5	12900	55150	Years 3 to 5	188,500	22,100
Total	880,250	547,075	Total	134200	174500	Total	400,100	84,900
<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>		
Compliance	684,500	198,575	Compliance	69900	75550	Compliance	377,600	62,950
Operational	195,750	348,500	Operational	64300	98950	Operational	22,500	21,950
Total	880,250	547,075	Total	134200	174500	Total	400,100	84,900
<b>Summary costs Yrs 6-10</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 6-10</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>	<b>Summary costs Yrs 6-10</b>	<b>WODC £</b>	<b>Operator £</b>
Total	1,659,000	216,725	Total	141000	74250	Total	128,500	50,470
<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>			<b>Split of Expenditure</b>		
Compliance	912,000	41,225	Compliance	141000	0	Compliance	83,500	36,170
Operational	747,000	175,500	Operational	0	74250	Operational	45,000	14,300
Total	1,659,000	216,725	Total	141000	74250	Total	128,500	50,470
<b>10 Year Total</b>	<b>2,539,250</b>	<b>763,800</b>	<b>10 Year Total</b>	<b>275200</b>	<b>248750</b>	<b>10 Year Total</b>	<b>528,600</b>	<b>135,370</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,303,050</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>523950</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>663,970</b>

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PIP OVERVIEW TABLE - Council & Contractor

		WODC Compliance £	WODC Operational £		Contractor Compliance £	Contractor Operational £	NOTE
Summary Costs							
Years 1&2	CLC	499,000	26,500		120,100	99,150	GLL will not be liable to fund full operational amount. e.g. for items which do not become unserviceable during the contract term.
	CNLC	912,200	60,000		117,050	92,300	
	CPAV	63,000	30,000		14,350	40,950	
	WATP	57,000	64,300		74,800	44,550	
	WLC	619,000	89,000		169,100	255,500	
	WODP	189,100	22,500		44,600	18,200	
	Sub-total	2,339,300	292,300		540,000	550,650	
Years 3 to 5	CLC	259,400	2,500		26,500	83,800	New Contract will schedule operational items as a requirement to be delivered between April 2027 and April 2030
	CNLC	146,500	2,500		23,550	76,800	
	CPAV	75,200	10,200		0	21,000	
	WATP	12,900	0		750	54,400	
	WLC	65,500	106,750		29,475	93,000	
	WODP	188,500	0		18,350	3,750	
	Sub-total	748,000	121,950		98,625	332,750	
Years 6 to 10	CLC	524,750	381,000		53,250	99,100	Future Contract should schedule operational items as a requirement to be delivered between April 2030 and April 2035
	CNLC	317,000	65,900		108,750	97,100	
	CPAV	29,000	11,200		0	32,300	
	WATP	141,000	0		0	74,250	
	WLC	912,000	747,000		41,225	175,500	
	WODP	83,500	45,000		36,170	14,300	
	Sub-Total	2,007,250	1,250,100		239,395	492,550	
Totals				Overall Total			Overall Total
Yr 1&2 Total		2,339,300	292,300	£ 2,631,600	540,000	550,650	£ 1,090,650
Yr 1 to 5 Total		3,087,300	414,250	£ 3,501,550	638,625	883,400	£ 1,522,025
Yr1 to 10 Total		5,094,550	1,664,350	£ 6,758,900	878,020	1,375,950	£ 2,253,970

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## Site Specific Key Items List

List of items noted in the Planned Investment Programme (PIP) which will have significant financial, compliance, or customer experience implications.

Tables detailed by site and cover time periods of Yr1&2 and Yr 3to5.

Carterton Leisure Centre			
Yr	Item	Area	Cost
1&2	WC's	Reception/Foyer	£30,000
1&2	AHU's	Swimming Pool, Changing Room, fitness Suite	£250,000
1&2	Pool Plant	Swimming Pool	£120,000
3 to 5	Boiler	Plantroom	£115,000
3 to 5	Electrical	Mains LV supply	£100,000

Carterton Pavilion			
Yr	Item	Area	Cost
1&2	WC's	Activity Room, Changing Rooms, Accessible	£40,000
1&2	Kitchen fittings	Kitchen/Servery	£10,000
3 to 5	Showers	Changing Rooms	£30,000
3 to 5	Fire Alarm	Building	£14,000

Chipping Norton Leisure Centre			
Yr	Item	Area	Cost
1&2	Roof Leaks	Roof - various	£200,000
1&2	WC's/showers	Changing Rooms – Poolside, Dryside, Sports	£105,000
1&2	AHU's/Extract	Pool, Changing room	£154,000
1&2	Air-conditioning	Gym, Studio	£30,000
1&2	Pool Plant	Swimming Pool	£150,000
1&2	Electrical	Mains LV	£189,500


3 to 5	WC's/Cubicles	Pool Changing Room	£100,000
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Windrush Leisure Centre			
Yr	Item	Area	Cost
1&2	Roof coverings	Roof	£410,000
1&2	WC's	Cafe, Wellness Studio	£30,000
1&2	AHU's	Dryside, Poolside, Extracts	£155,000
1&2	Pool Plant	Swimming Pool	£40,000
3 to 5	Pool Plant	Swimming Pool	£50,000

Witney ATP			
Yr	Item	Area	Cost
1&2	WC's	General and accessible	£30,000
1&2	Fire System	Building	£14,000

Woodstock Outdoor Pool			
Yr	Item	Area	Cost
1&2	Paving, Tiling, Asphalt	External	£31,500
1&2	Fire compartmentation	Building	£20,000
1&2	Pool Plant	Swimming Pool	£25,000
1&2	Electrical wiring, lighting	Building	£70,500
3 to 5	Roof coverings/deck	Roof	£140,000
3 to 5	Boiler	Plant Room	£15,000
3 to 5	Pool Plant	Swimming Pool	£20,000



 <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>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) CHARGING SCHEDULE</b></p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Hugo Ashton – Executive Member for Planning Email: <a href="mailto:hugo.ashton@westoxon.gov.uk">hugo.ashton@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves – Head of Planning Email: <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Kim Hudson – Principal Planning Policy Officer Email: <a href="mailto:kim.hudson@westoxon.gov.uk">kim.hudson@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To consider formal approval of the District Council’s Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule following independent examination.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A - Independent Examiner’s Report on the Draft West Oxfordshire District Council CIL Charging Schedule (18<sup>th</sup> July 2025)</p> <p>Annex B - Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (DCS) July 2025</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the content and recommendations of the independent examiner’s report attached at Annex A, including the modifications (EM1 and EM2) which have been recommended in respect of the CIL Charging Schedule attached at Annex B;</li> <li>2. Recommend to Council that the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule attached at Annex B be formally approved with an effective date of 31 January 2026 in accordance with Section 213 of the Planning Act 2008.</li> </ol>

	3. Recommend to Council that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning to further progress work on the draft CIL Implementation Plan in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> <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>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The West Oxfordshire CIL draft charging schedule was published for an 8-week period of public consultation in August/ September 2024.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.2** Members will be aware that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that may be levied on most forms of development to help fund a range of infrastructure across the District.
- 1.3** Following a number of previously unsuccessful attempts to introduce CIL into West Oxfordshire, Members agreed that work should commence on a new CIL draft charging schedule in 2023 and new viability evidence should be commissioned to inform both CIL and in due course, the new Local Plan 2041.
- 1.4** Following work on a new Viability Assessment, the draft CIL charging schedule was published for an 8-week period of public consultation in August/ September 2024.
- 1.5** On close of this consultation, the responses received were considered and a number of minor modifications to the draft charging schedule were made before it was formally submitted for independent examination on 4 March 2025.
- 1.6** The examination involved a virtual hearing session held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 after which the appointed CIL examiner issued his report on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (attached at Annex A).
- 1.7** Importantly, the examiner has approved the Council's charging schedule, subject to one modification (EM1), which is required to meet the necessary drafting requirements: a reduction in the proposed rate for larger residential developments of 250 or more homes, from £225 per square metre to £150 per square metre (excluding strategic development areas).
- 1.8** A further modification (EM2), whilst not necessary to meet the drafting requirements, has been recommended for completeness and includes a number of minor typographical and drafting amendments which the District Council put forward when submitting the draft CIL charging schedule for examination.
- 1.9** Taking account of these two modifications, the final CIL charging schedule is attached at Annex B.

## **2. BACKGROUND TO CIL**

- 2.1** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that can be levied on most forms of development to help fund the infrastructure that is needed to support the future growth of

an area. CIL is intended to complement and ‘co-exist’ alongside the current system of Section 106 planning obligations.

- 2.2 Whereas S106 agreements focus on site-specific matters and are agreed through a process of negotiation, CIL is effectively a fixed charge that can be spent on new and enhanced infrastructure across the whole District.
- 2.3 Section 106 agreements will remain a matter for negotiation based on site specific and local considerations and it is therefore important that key stakeholders, in particular Town and Parish Councils, are given the opportunity to input into such discussions.
- 2.4 The key advantage of CIL is that, unlike Section 106 agreements, which tend to apply to larger developments only, CIL can be charged on much smaller scales of development, thus ensuring that the cumulative impact of such development can be addressed through new and improved infrastructure provision.
- 2.5 Specifically, subject to certain exceptions, CIL is generally payable on all new dwellings and on other forms of development which involve the creation of more than 100m<sup>2</sup> net additional floorspace. The amount charged through CIL must be based on evidence of viability to ensure that it does not hinder development from coming forward.
- 2.6 CIL rates must be set out in a document called a ‘Charging Schedule’ which explains what types of development are liable for CIL and the relevant rates that apply. Rates are expressed as pounds (£) per square metre.

### 3. DRAFT CIL CHARGING SCHEDULE

- 3.1 The West Oxfordshire CIL Charging Schedule is attached at Annex B and the rates which have been approved by the independent examiner are summarised below. These rates will be indexed for inflation annually.

#### Residential CIL rates

- 3.2 The charging schedule identifies the following CIL rates (£ per m<sup>2</sup>) for residential uses:

CIL Zone	£ per m <sup>2</sup>	Notes
Residential District-wide of less than 250 homes (Greenfield)	£225	Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats).  On-site affordable housing on 11+ units.

		<p>Nil Affordable Housing on sites between 1-10 units.</p> <p>Affordable Housing financial contributions apply on sites between 6-10 units in the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).</p>
Residential District-wide of 250 homes or more (Greenfield)	£150	<p>Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats).</p> <p>On-site affordable housing applies in all cases.</p> <p>Excludes defined Strategic Sites.</p>
Residential District-wide (Previously developed land)	£125	<p>Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats).</p> <p>On-site affordable housing on 11+ units.</p> <p>Nil Affordable Housing on sites between 1-10 units.</p> <p>Affordable Housing financial contributions apply on sites between 6-10 units in the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).</p>
100% Flatted only development District-wide	£25	
Defined Strategic Sites	£0	<p>Defined sites include: Salt Cross Garden Village, West Eynsham, North Witney,</p>

		East Witney; and East Chipping Norton
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### 3.3 Key points to note are that:

- Through modification EMI, the examiner recommended a specific CIL rate for large-scale 'non-strategic' green field sites in recognition of the fact that infrastructure costs are likely to increase with the size of the potential development site. As such a new category for larger sites of 250 homes or more on green field sites has been included (£150 per m<sup>2</sup>);
- The rate for residential schemes on previously developed (brownfield) sites is lower (£125 per m<sup>2</sup>) than greenfield sites because of the additional costs associated with bringing such sites forward;
- 100% flatted developments have additional costs which warrant the application of a nominal CIL charge (£25 per m<sup>2</sup>);
- Strategic local plan 2031 sites (Salt Cross, West Eynsham, North Witney, East Witney and East Chipping Norton) are CIL exempt because of the significant infrastructure costs associated with bringing such developments forward, which will be secured through other mechanisms including Section 106 agreements.

#### Proposed non-residential CIL rates

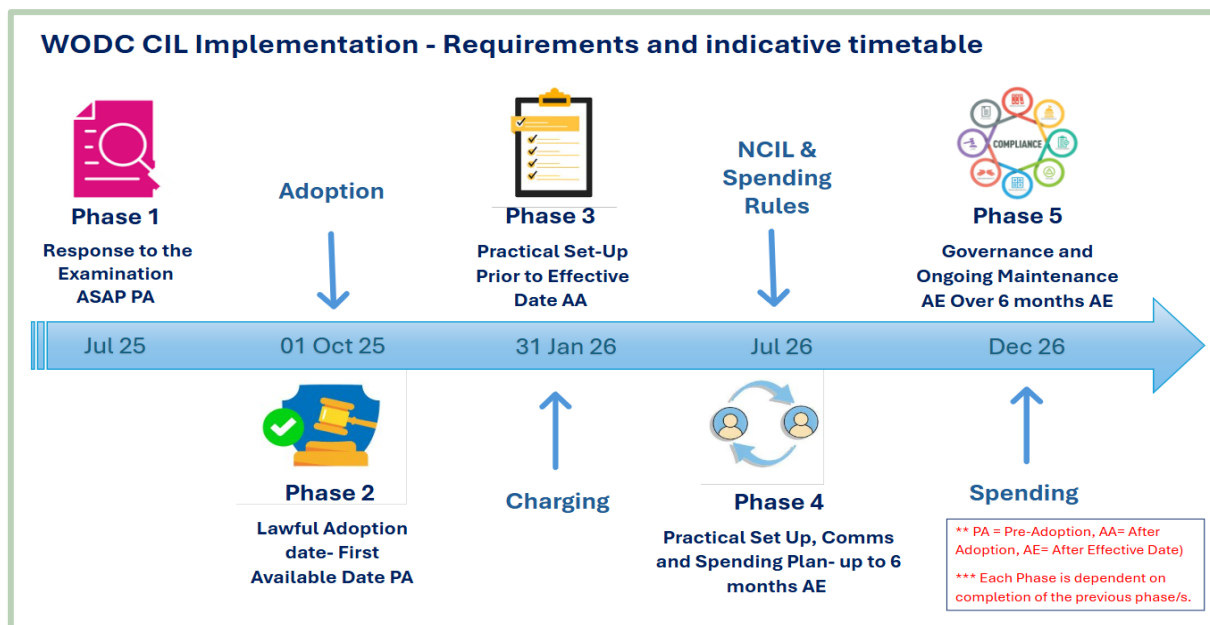
### 3.4 The charging schedule identifies the following CIL rates (£ per m<sup>2</sup>) for non-residential and commercial uses:

CIL Zone	£ per m <sup>2</sup>	Notes
Large Format Retail e.g. Supermarkets, Foodstores, Retail Warehousing	£125	
All other non-residential development	£0	Nil rated

## 4. NEXT STEPS

### Approval of CIL Charging Schedule

- 4.1 Subject to the recommendations of the Executive, Full Council will be invited to formally approve the CIL charging schedule on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025.
- 4.2 Notably, the charging schedule is required to stipulate an 'effective' date i.e. the date upon which CIL will begin to be charged. In this instance, Officers are proposing to set an 'effective' date of 31 January 2026. This is reflected in the indicative timeline below.

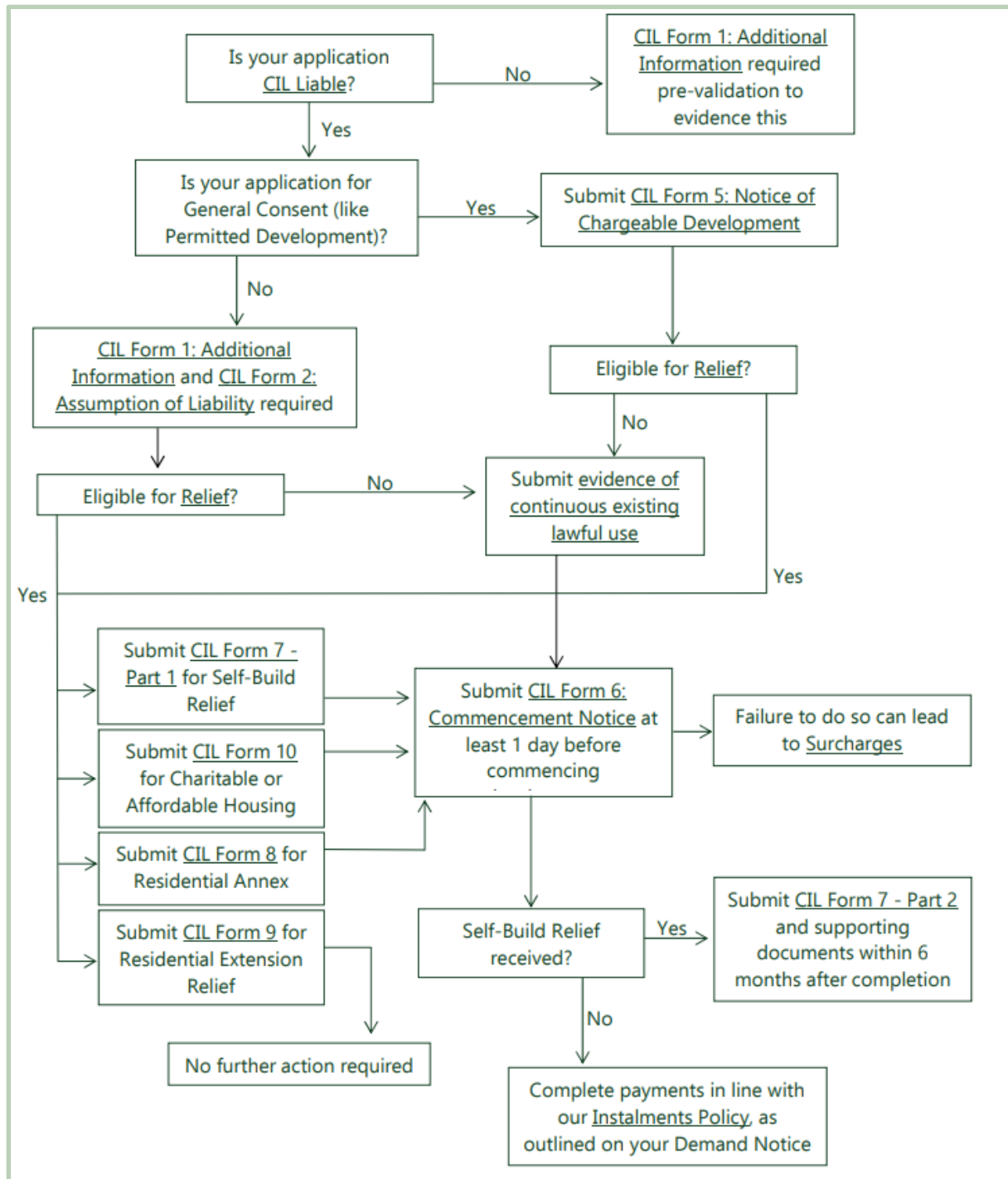


- 4.3 The Implementation Plan clearly illustrates each stage in the process and the extensive work that needs to be undertaken in order for the Council to be in a practical position to be able to charge and administer CIL.
- 4.4 Based on the proposed effective date of 31 January 2026, any applications receiving planning permission on or after 31 January 2026 will need to comply with the CIL requirements and will be chargeable.
- 4.5 This means that planning applications submitted around the time of adoption in October/ November 2025 may fall into CIL charging, depending on how long it takes for planning permission to be approved. In some cases, those submitted earlier may be chargeable if there are complex matters which means that planning permission takes longer to resolve.
- 4.6 The Implementation Plan includes provision of a raft of external communications and guidance, which will form a communications strategy. Regular communications and training will be rolled out towards internal stakeholders (such as development management, customer support and members), as well as external stakeholders (such as town and parish councils). Town and Parish training will focus on the collection and spending of Neighbourhood CIL.

### **Payment of CIL**

- 4.7** The collection of CIL includes several discrete stages, which involves developers submitting several forms and evidence to the Council at each stage. The Council will be required to monitor and ensure that we receive the relevant information at each stage. If not, the developer becomes liable to multiple late payment surcharges and interest, which are mandatorily imposed. There are also several exemptions or reliefs to CIL liability that developers may apply for. There are additional discretionary reliefs which the Council may consider allowing; these would need to set out in the Instalments and Reliefs Policy. The developer flowchart below illustrates these stages:





- 4.8** Put simply, when planning permission is granted, the District Council will issue a liability notice setting out the amount payable through CIL, and a demand notice, including the payment procedure.
- 4.9** Typically, CIL payments must be made within 60 days of the commencement of any chargeable development. However, recognising the importance of assisting the timely delivery and viability of new development, the District Council proposes to accept the

payment of CIL by instalments in respect of larger CIL payments and will publish a separate Instalments and Reliefs Policy in accordance with the CIL Regulations (as amended).

**4.10** The Council will also need to produce an Enforcement Policy for those relatively rare occurrences where developers do not comply with demand notices. Liable parties can also appeal CIL demand notices based on a number of predetermined grounds.

**4.11** Where development is permitted on a phased development, each phase will be considered as a separate chargeable development and will therefore be liable for payment in line with the Council's proposed Instalment and Reliefs Policy.

### **Spending CIL**

**4.12** CIL is mandatorily divided into a series of separate 'pots' upon receipt, in line with the CIL Regulations (as amended). The first 'pot' is that 5% of the total receipts are set aside for the administration of CIL, given that it is a very involved and intensive process.

**4.13** The second 'pot' known as Neighbourhood CIL or NCIL, is transferred to 'neighbourhoods' (Town and Parish Councils) in April and October of each year. The phasing of the Implementation Plan takes these statutory deadlines into account. NCIL is to be spent directly by the neighbourhoods, however those neighbourhoods can pool their resources with other neighbourhoods. NCIL must be used/ spent to support the development of the local council's area, or any part of that area, by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area<sup>1</sup>. Neighbourhoods must report their spending to the Council once a year. NCIL can be used to fund affordable housing.

**4.14** The amount of NCIL to be transferred depends on whether the neighbourhood has an adopted ('made') Neighbourhood Plan:

- If yes, 25% of the total receipts deriving from that neighbourhood area will be transferred.
- If no, 15% of the total receipts deriving from that neighbourhood area capped at £100 per council taxable dwelling within that neighbourhood will be transferred.
- If a development straddles two parish boundaries, NCIL is paid to each in proportion with the development it has in its area.

**4.15** The remainder goes into a third 'pot'- 'Strategic CIL'. Strategic CIL can be used by the District Council to fund a wide range of infrastructure including transport, flood defences, schools, green space and community and cultural facilities. It can be used to increase the

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<sup>1</sup> CIL Regulation 59C

capacity of infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development. It cannot be used to fund affordable housing. There are various ways to identify strategic CIL spending projects and to make these funds available; these options will be set out in a draft Spending and Bidding Policy, in line with the CIL Implementation Plan.

- 4.16** Ultimately, strategic CIL will need to be directed towards unlocking strategic development in line with the Local Plan, but the Council might also consider directing a proportion of strategic CIL towards sustainable and healthy communities and/ or climate and ecological emergencies.

#### **Reporting CIL**

- 4.17** Since December 2020, the District Council has been required to prepare an 'Infrastructure Funding Statement' (IFS) setting out information on the payments received through CIL and section 106 planning obligations during the previous financial year.
- 4.18** The Council will need to work closely with Neighbourhoods throughout the year to ensure that they are able to produce the reports on NCIL prior to the Council's publication of the IFS.
- 4.19** The IFS must also include an 'infrastructure list' which identifies what infrastructure is identified as necessary by the Council and how it is likely to be funded (including s106 and CIL). The IFS infrastructure list must address the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) as well as any other infrastructure needs which have been identified in the interim. To this end, the Council will implement and maintain an Infrastructure Tracker.

#### **Reviewing CIL**

- 4.20** Once adopted, the District Council will keep its charging schedule under review to ensure that levy charges remain appropriate over time. The Council may seek to review its charging schedule in whole or in part taking account of relevant considerations including changes in market conditions and infrastructure needs.
- 4.21** In particular, the charging schedule will be reviewed to take account of the policies of the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 as those reach a more advanced stage.

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1** Given the time and resource invested into the progression of CIL and the subsequent approval of the Charging Schedule by an independent examiner, moving to formal approval by the District Council is considered to be the logical option.

- 5.2** Members could choose not to progress CIL, but this would represent a missed opportunity to seek additional funding from new development towards the supporting infrastructure that is needed to support growth within the District.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The progression of CIL to formal approval will allow the District Council to charge qualifying developments from the 'effective date' onwards and the CIL revenues received will then be able to be spent on infrastructure provision as appropriate.
- 6.2** A proportion of future CIL receipts (5%) can be used to cover the costs of adoption/implementation. This is likely to eventually cover costs, so that CIL becomes self-funding as well as revenue generating.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** The adoption of CIL needs to follow the correct procedure, as demonstrated in this report.
- 7.2** Spending of CIL will also need to follow the lawful allocations, to avoid future challenges involving projects to which the CIL was allocated.
- 7.3** Non-payment of CIL can bring about severe consequences and therefore an enforcement policy will be required as soon as CIL is in place so that developers are aware of the steps the Council will take in these rare cases.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** The report presents no significant risks.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** Affordable housing schemes will be exempt from CIL and therefore the report is not considered to raise any particular implications for any of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. Strategic CIL may be directed towards healthy and sustainable communities, which may include accessibility of infrastructure to promote equality.

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

- 10.1** The report raises no direct implications although a proportion of future CIL receipts may be spent on infrastructure projects that have a climate change and ecological focus.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None



AN EXAMINATION UNDER SECTION 212  
OF THE PLANNING ACT 2008 (AS AMENDED)

**REPORT ON THE DRAFT WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY CHARGING SCHEDULE**

Independent Examiner (appointed by the Council): Keith Holland BA (Hons)  
DipTP MRTPI ARICS

Charging Schedule Submitted for Examination: 4 March 2025

Date of Report: 18 July 2025

## Main Findings - Executive Summary

In this report I have concluded that the draft West Oxfordshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule provides an appropriate basis for the collection of the levy in the area.

The Council has provided sufficient evidence that shows the proposed rates would not threaten delivery of the Local Plan.

One modification (**EM1**) is necessary to meet the drafting requirements. This can be summarised as follows:

Revise the Residential District-wide (Greenfield) category to include a rate for development for 250 or more units (excluding defined strategic sites) of £150 per square metre.

The specified modification recommended in this report does not alter the basis of the Council's overall approach or the appropriate balance achieved.

Whilst not necessary to meet the drafting requirements, a further modification (**EM2**) is recommended for completeness.

## Introduction

1. I have been appointed by West Oxfordshire District Council, the charging authority, to examine the draft West Oxfordshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. I am a chartered town planner with more than 25 years' experience inspecting and examining Development Plans and CIL Charging Schedules as a Government Planning Inspector.
2. This report contains my assessment of the Charging Schedule in terms of compliance with the requirements in Part 11 of the Planning Act 2008 as amended ('the Act') and the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 as amended ('the Regulations')<sup>1</sup>. Section 212(4) of the Act terms these collectively as the "drafting requirements". I have also had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the CIL section of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>2</sup>.
3. To comply with the relevant legislation, the submitted Charging Schedule must strike what appears to the charging authority to be an appropriate

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<sup>1</sup> The Regulations have been updated through numerous statutory instruments since 2010, most notably through the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England)(No. 2) Regulations 2019.

<sup>2</sup> The CIL section of the PPG was substantially updated on 1 September 2019, and most recently updated 26 April 2024. At the time of completion of the examination, no further updates have been made to the CIL section of the PPG following publication of the December 2024 NPPF. For example, in relation to Development contributions, the paragraph referenced in the current PPG as 34 is now paragraph **35** (albeit the text remains unchanged).

balance between helping to fund necessary new infrastructure and the potential effects on the economic viability of development across the district.<sup>3</sup> The PPG states<sup>4</sup> that the examiner should establish that:

- the charging authority has complied with the legislative requirements set out in the Act and the Regulations;
  - the draft charging schedule is supported by background documents containing appropriate available evidence;
  - the charging authority has undertaken an appropriate level of consultation;
  - the proposed rate or rates are informed by, and consistent with, the evidence on viability across the charging authority's area; and
  - evidence has been provided that shows the proposed rate or rates would not undermine the deliverability of the plan (see NPPF paragraph 34<sup>5</sup>).
4. The basis for the examination, on which a hearing session was held 10 June 2025 is the submitted schedule of June 2024 which is effectively the same as the draft Schedule published for public consultation in August/September 2024.
5. In this report all references to the CIL rate are in £/sq.m. In summary, the Council propose a rate of £225 for residential development (excluding flatted development) on greenfield sites throughout the district. On previously developed land (PDL) throughout the district the rate would be £125. For flatted development throughout the district the rate proposed is £25. For identified strategic sites the intention is to apply a nil rate. For large format retail the proposal is for a rate of £125. All other non-residential development would have a nil rate.

**Has the charging authority complied with the legislative requirements set out in the Act and the Regulations, including undertaking an appropriate level of consultation?**

6. The draft Charging Schedule was formally published for consultation for an 8 week period between 2 August and 27 September 2024. Consultation documents were made available on the Council's website, at the Council's town centre shop and at local libraries. All parties held on the Council's planning policy database, as well as all those who had responded to previous CIL consultations, were notified in writing. 96 responses were received.

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation 14.

<sup>4</sup> See PPG Reference ID: 25-040-20190901.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph **35** of the current NPPF (December 2024).

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7. The Charging Schedule complies with the Act and the Regulations, including in respect of the statutory processes and public consultation, consistency with the adopted Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and is supported by an adequate financial appraisal. I also consider it compliant with the national policy and guidance contained in the NPPF and PPG respectively.

**Is the draft charging schedule supported by background documents containing appropriate available evidence?**

*Infrastructure planning evidence*

8. The Council produced a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) in 2016. This IDP identified three broad categories of infrastructure – physical, social and green detailing the infrastructure need for the period 2011 – 2031. In 2020 an Infrastructure Funding Gap Analysis was produced showing an expected gap of a little under £200 million. The potential CIL revenue was estimated to be around £24.5 million. A new updated IDP is being prepared as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan 2041. In November 2024, the Council produced an Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/2024 that detailed funds that had been collected through s106 agreements in 2023/2024. The March 2025 Infrastructure Funding Gap Analysis Note acknowledges the central Government funding secured by the County Council for public transport improvements along the A40 corridor. The current funding gap is estimated by the Council to be at least £143.9 million, with estimated CIL revenue being £20.5 million. These figures justify the imposition of a CIL which would make a modest contribution to filling the infrastructure funding gap.
9. The adopted Local Plan runs to 2031. It provides for 13,200 homes for the district (2011 – 2031) and 2,750 homes to assist Oxford to meet its needs. Five strategic sites are identified - Salt Cross, West Eynsham, North Witney, East Witney and East Chipping Norton. The need for additional employment land is identified in several locations. The Council is progressing a revised Local Plan for the period to 2041 with an expectation that the housing need will be 14,480 new homes between 2025 and 2041. The housing policies in the adopted and emerging Local Plan are the most relevant for the purposes of this CIL examination.

*Economic viability evidence*

10. The Council commissioned the Dixon Searle Partnership (DSP) to undertake a CIL Viability Assessment (VA). The VA, dated May 2024, uses the residual valuation approach commonly used in CIL viability work. The assumptions used in the VA were discussed with stakeholders in the development industry, local agents and affordable housing providers.
11. The usual typology approach is used with testing taking place over a range of value levels established during the autumn and winter 2023/24. Sensitivity testing was also undertaken to assess the impact of changing market

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conditions. For residential development 16 typologies were tested. These typologies included schemes varying in size from 1 dwelling to 250 dwellings in a variety of formats including standard housing, flatted schemes, mixed use schemes, sheltered housing flats and build-to-rent developments. The site types tested included greenfield land and PDL. Account is taken in the testing of the Council's current affordable housing policy and the assumptions made about dwelling sizes are provided. For flats, the additional cost of providing communal/shared space is taken into account.

12. Additional testing has been undertaken on the five strategic sites/allocations in the district. These sites are currently in agricultural use and the assessment is based on the estimated capacity of each site.
13. The commercial and non-residential typologies tested include large and small retail, offices in and out of town, research/development uses, small and large industrial/warehousing, a budget hotel and a nursing/care home.
14. Geographical variations in residential values are addressed by adopting the value zones set out in Policy H3 of the Local Plan. Three value zones, high medium and low, were identified in the Local Plan as part of the formulating of an affordable housing policy. The VA uses seven value levels (VLs) and each typology is tested against these levels. New house prices are the basis for the VLs which range per square metre from £4,000 to £5,500. Noting that sheltered housing, retirement living and extra-care developments generally achieve higher values, an extended range of values (£5,250 - £7,000) for these typologies are tested.
15. The market housing sales values were researched during the autumn and winter 2023/2024. A variety of sources were used including previous viability studies, the Land Registry, the Valuation Office Agency, sale and marketing reporting and other web sites. Floor areas of residential properties have been derived from the Domestic Energy Performance Certificate Register. Details of the research are provided in Appendix 6 of the VA.
16. For affordable housing revenue the VA assumes a mix of 66% affordable rented tenure, 25% First Homes, and 9% shared ownership. The conventional approach of capitalising the net rental stream is used, with the capital value of retained equity applied as appropriate in shared ownership schemes.
17. The Gross Development Value (GDV) of commercial development is based on rental values and yields. Data for rents and yields is derived from several sources including the CoStar property intelligence database, the Valuation Office Agency and property industry publications/websites. For each typology, a range of rental values is tested and these are then capitalised by applying yields of between 4.5% and 8%.
18. Data regarding the assumed base build cost is based on Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) figures rebased using the West Oxfordshire

location factor. For standard residential development, the base costs per sq.m identified a range from £1,394 for mixed housing and flats development to £1,699 for flats only. For commercial uses the highest base cost identified (£2,936) is for research and development uses.

19. An allowance varying between 10 and 15% for external works and normal servicing and access costs is applied. The equivalent of £500,000 per hectare (ha) has additionally been incorporated for site preparation costs. Contingencies are dealt with by an allowance of 5% of build costs. Fees, profit levels and finance costs are detailed separately for residential and non-residential development. These costs are based on assumptions that are frequently seen in CIL viability work. Build periods are based on BCIS data using the Construction Cost calculator sense checked against site specific examples. Based on discussions with the Council, DSP apply a site specific s106 contingency of £3,000 per dwelling. A comprehensive range of policy requirements, including sustainable design/climate change/carbon reduction, biodiversity net gain, water efficiency, wheelchair accessibility and electric vehicle charging points are taken into account.
20. Benchmark land values (BLV) are based on the recommended existing use value (EUV) plus a premium approach. For greenfield land, the testing done by DSP ranges from £250,000/ha to £500,000/ha with the upper level relating to paddock land or similar. These figures apply a premium on agricultural land value of between 10 and 20 times. For garden sites through to high value existing use sites in the main town centres, the BLV tested a range from £800,000 to £2,500,000 per hectare. DSP note that the expectation is that the great majority of development in the area is expected to take place on greenfield sites.

**Are the proposed rates informed by and consistent with the evidence on viability across the charging authority's area?**

21. For residential development, the VA provides a comprehensive assessment of possible CIL rates. Typologies ranging from 1 house to a 250 dwelling mixed houses/flats scheme are considered as are schemes for specialised forms of housing. The Council's affordable housing policy is incorporated in the testing while the sensitivity of the results is dealt with by varying new build sales values. The testing also involves trial CIL charging rates and the trial CIL rates are also expressed as a percentage of GDV to provide what DSP describe as a "health check". DSP consider that realistic CIL rates should not usually exceed a range of 3 – 6% of GDV.
22. The viability buffer concept is incorporated based on a charging rate of up to 70% of the theoretical maximum rate identified in the VA.
23. Not surprisingly, the testing undertaken shows a wide range of theoretical CIL rates. For scenarios below the affordable housing threshold outside the Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB)<sup>6</sup> looking at schemes from 1 to 5

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<sup>6</sup> Known as the Cotswolds National Landscape.

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houses, DSP conclude that a CIL of around £300 could be set. For 6 – 10 house schemes inside the AONB, the figure favoured by DSP is £250.

24. For developments above the affordable housing threshold on greenfield sites, DSP calculates that a theoretical maximum CIL rate of £800 could be charged. Taking into account relevant considerations, such as the need for a buffer, the recommendation from DSP is that rates between £140 and £350 could be considered across all affordable housing policy zones.
25. For PDL sites above the affordable housing threshold, the VA notes a more challenging viability picture, especially for flatted development. For housing and mixed use schemes the conclusion is that CIL rates of between £50 and £200 appear to be supportable. For flatted schemes, the view is that a nominal rate of £25 would be appropriate. DSP considers that the evidence is that build-for-rent schemes reflect the same viability prospects as flatted schemes and should be charged at the £25 rate.
26. For older persons housing, including care homes, the VA notes that these schemes usually produce mixed viability outcomes. The assessment is that generally it would be appropriate to treat housing for older people in the same way that flatted development is treated and to apply a nominal CIL rate of £25. The same applies to build-to-rent schemes.
27. Turning to the analysis of the 5 strategic sites, the DSP note that the scope for a CIL charge is highly dependent on-site specific details. The conclusion is that using key mid-point value levels the viability prospects range from a deficit of £16,000 per dwelling to a surplus of about £3,500 per dwelling. The clear conclusion is that the strategic sites should have a nil charge, with the necessary infrastructure being delivered on a site-by-site basis through s106 agreements.
28. As regards commercial developments for large format supermarkets and food stores, using medium rental levels and a 4.5% yield, DSP regards a charge of £125 as supportable. Other forms of retail, including town centre and comparison retailing, do not show sufficient viability to support a CIL charge. The same applies to office and hotel development in West Oxfordshire.
29. The VA looks at the development prospects of a wide range of other uses including leisure centres, day nurseries, garages, storage premises and surgeries. The conclusion is that these types of uses do not demonstrate clear viability prospects and should be subject to a nil CIL rate.
30. In summary, the CIL rates proposed in the draft Charging Schedule follow the recommendation provided by DSP. These recommendations are in line with the viability evidence produced.

**Has evidence been provided that shows the proposed rate or rates would not undermine the deliverability of the plan (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 34<sup>7</sup>).**

31. On behalf of Hallam Land, Turner Morum (TM) challenge a number of the assumptions used by DSP. This challenge includes reducing the value of affordable rented units to 50% of open market value, increasing target profit levels for both market housing and First Homes to 20%, and applying a finance rate of 7.5%. In relation to build costs, TM use BCIS data for flats generally and housing generally rather than mixed developments generally. A 15% uplift is applied to flats to account for circulation and common areas and site-specific costs are calculated at £20,000 per unit. For site areas calculations, the net to gross allowance favoured by TM is 100%.
32. As regards profit margins for market housing, there is no convincing evidence that suggests that the risk of developing in West Oxfordshire is unusual. For this reason, I do not support a profit margin assumption that is higher than the 17.5% frequently seen in CIL viability calculations. The finance cost assumption of 6.5% is also one that is frequently used and I can see no good reason why it should be higher. With the exception of the two matters discussed below, the other differences in the assumptions made by DSP and TM are relatively small and are unlikely to make a significant difference to the viability conclusions reached by DSP. The two assumptions that I consider merit further consideration relate mainly to relatively large green field sites.
33. In relation to infrastructure costs for the two large typology sites, the VA assumes a figure of £16,250 per unit plus a site specific s106 contingency of £3,000. TM refer to the figures for the strategic sites and the s106 funding being sought by the Council in on-going negotiations relating to a 370-unit site being promoted by Hallam Land, where currently the Council is seeking £24,000 per unit. The Council point out that this figure is not yet finalised or agreed. TM say they are acting on sites in West Oxfordshire where s106 contributions exceed £23,000 per plot. TM conclude that an allowance of £20,000 per unit for site specific costs for infrastructure and abnormals would be an optimistic assumption. The evidence provided by TM suggests that an assumption of £20,000 for infrastructure costs on large green field sites is not unrealistically high.
34. In relation to the benchmark land values, the approach used by DSP is affected by the gross/net figures assumed. DSP assume a 30% uplift for the two large green field residential typologies tested. TM consider that a 100% uplift would be more realistic and refer to a site at Middle Barton that their clients wish to develop where the net area is 6.5 acres on site with a gross area of 21 acres – an uplift of some 220%. TM also note that for the East Witney strategic site the uplift is nearly 200%. Applying a 100% uplift to the 100 and 250 unit typologies, TM conclude that the benchmark land value for the 100 unit site would be £2,500,000 and £6,250,000 for the 250 unit site.

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<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 35 of the current NPPF (December 2024).

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Comparable figures by DSP are £1,625,000 and £4,065,000. Using the TM preferred assumptions and benchmark figures there is no CIL headroom.

35. The gross/net consideration is not straightforward. The variety of factors, including biodiversity net gain, that potentially affect the net/gross figure can vary considerably from site to site. For example, in some cases biodiversity net gain may not involve the development site itself. I consider that with considerations such as biodiversity net gain in play, it is likely that an uplift assumption of 30% could in many cases be too low. On the other hand, the 100% uplift favoured by TM may in general be unduly high. Given the variation possible with different sites there is no obvious way of reaching a definitive figure. In my judgement, a reasonable general assumption for the uplift would be between 40 and 50%.
36. The two issues identified, infrastructure costs and net/gross uplift, are likely to increase in relevance with the size of the potential development site. Bearing in mind the need to avoid undermining the delivery of housing, I consider that there is a need for a specific CIL rate for large non-strategic green field sites. How large a site should be to qualify is a matter of judgement as is the rate to be applied. In my view, it would be prudent to apply a rate of £150 to all non-strategic green field housing sites for 250 or more dwellings. I therefore recommend that the District Council should modify the draft Charging Schedule as set out in **EM1** in the Appendix to this report.
37. For strategic sites identified in the Local Plan, the VA shows convincingly that the best approach is to apply a nil rate and to use s106 to provide the necessary infrastructure.
38. There is no convincing evidence that the rates being proposed for other uses, including flatted development and residential development on previously developed land, would threaten the delivery of development.
39. There are a number of representations that deal with how the CIL will be administered and the use of the funds raised. These are matters for the Council and are not relevant to this examination. The views expressed in the representations about the CIL rates being proposed range from the rate being too low to a view that CIL is an unjustified tax. Some point to the rates applied by nearby authorities and argue that development in West Oxfordshire will be discouraged. I consider the charge setting process to CIL in West Oxfordshire strikes an appropriate balance and I can see no evidence that the proposed rates are too high in relation to other authorities. In any event, the proposals are based on the evidence of viability in West Oxfordshire (i.e. 'its area', as per Regulation 14) and what other authorities charge has little relevance.

40. The Council has put forward a series of non-material minor amendments to the draft Charging Schedule.<sup>8</sup> These deal with matters of clarification and typographical errors. The amendments do not affect my conclusions and I recommend their inclusion in **EM2** in the Appendix to this report.
41. The Council's decision to use a matrix approach is based on reasonable assumptions about development values and likely costs. In setting the CIL charging rate, the Council has had regard to detailed evidence on infrastructure planning and the economic viability evidence of the development market in West Oxfordshire. The Council has tried to be realistic in terms of achieving a reasonable level of income to address an acknowledged gap in infrastructure funding, while ensuring that the delivery of development in the area will not be undermined.

### Overall Conclusion

42. I conclude that the draft West Oxfordshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, subject to the making of the modification set out in **EM1**, satisfies the drafting requirements and I therefore recommend that the draft Charging Schedule be approved.
43. Whilst not necessary to satisfy the drafting requirements, I further recommend in **EM2** that the non-material minor amendments submitted (as itemised in a separate schedule<sup>9</sup>) should be incorporated when the draft Charging Schedule is updated.

*Keith Holland*

Examiner

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<sup>8</sup> West Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy Schedule of Non-Material Minor Amendments. View at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/xbqb4hau/cil-dcs-schedule-of-non-material-minor-amendments.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 8 above.

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## Appendix

Examiner Modifications (EM) recommended in order that the Charging Schedule may be approved.

<b>Examiner Modification (EM)</b>	<b>Page no./ other reference</b>	<b>Modification</b>
EM1	Page 6 Residential uses charging table	Revise CIL Zone wording to read:  Residential District-wide (Greenfield) up to 249 units.  Add  Residential District-wide (Greenfield) 250 units and above.  Add £150 in the £ per square m column opposite the reference to 250 units and above.
EM2	Page 8, paragraph 6.4 & the addition of a fourth Appendix (comprising a Glossary of Terms).	Incorporate amendments set out in the submitted document "West Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy Schedule of Non-Material Minor Amendments".  View at: <a href="https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/xbqb4hau/cil-dcs-schedule-of-non-material-minor-amendments.pdf">https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/xbqb4hau/cil-dcs-schedule-of-non-material-minor-amendments.pdf</a>

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**West Oxfordshire District Council**  
**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**  
**Charging Schedule**

**July 2025**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help fund supporting infrastructure. The levy only applies in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published the schedule on its website.
- 1.2 This Charging Schedule (CS) sets out the CIL rates for West Oxfordshire associated with development coming forward under the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. It also sets out a brief overview of the CIL process.
- 1.3 The draft CIL charging schedule was formally submitted for independent examination on 4 March 2025. The examination involved a virtual hearing session held on 10th June 2025 after which the appointed CIL examiner issued his report on 18th July 2025.
- 1.4 The examiner approved the Council's charging schedule, subject to one modification (EM1): a reduction in the proposed rate for larger residential developments of 250 or more homes, from £225 per square metre to £150 per square metre (excluding strategic development areas).
- 1.5 A further modification (EM2) was recommended for completeness and includes a number of minor typographical and drafting amendments which the District Council put forward when submitting the draft CIL charging schedule for examination.

## **2. About CIL – what is it and why is it needed?**

### *What is CIL?*

- 2.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy or 'CIL' is essentially a tariff or standard charge that can be placed on most forms of new development to help fund local infrastructure such as transport, flood defences, schools, green space and community and cultural facilities.
- 2.2 CIL is charged on a pounds (£) per square metre basis and can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, where necessary to support development.
- 2.3 CIL is intended to operate alongside other, more traditional developer contributions including Section 106 planning obligations and Section 278 highway agreements. Unlike those agreements which deal with site-specific infrastructure needed to make particular developments acceptable in planning terms, CIL payments go into a general funding pot and can be spent on infrastructure across the District.
- 2.4 Importantly, the CIL regulations now allow for the same item of infrastructure to be funded through CIL and other forms of developer contribution including Section 106 planning

obligations<sup>1</sup>. There are also no longer any restrictions on the number of planning obligations that may be 'pooled' together to fund the same item of infrastructure.

*Why is CIL needed?*

- 2.5 Evidence prepared in support of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan<sup>2</sup> identified the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth in the District up to 2031. Whilst some of this is already funded, or at least able to be funded through other mechanisms such as Section 106 planning obligations and central Government funding, there remains a large infrastructure 'funding gap' which CIL will contribute towards.

*What kind of development is required to pay CIL?*

- 2.6 Subject to viability considerations, CIL may be payable on any non-residential development which creates new or additional internal area, where the gross internal area (GIA) of new build is 100 square metres or more. For residential development, CIL can be charged on all new dwellings (houses, flats etc.) irrespective of size.

- 2.7 The following are not required to pay CIL:

- Development of less than 100 square metres, unless this consists of one or more dwellings/annexes and does not meet the relevant self-build criteria;
- Buildings into which people do not normally go;
- Buildings into which people go only intermittently for the purpose of inspecting or maintaining fixed plant or machinery;
- Structures which are not buildings, such as pylons and wind turbines; and
- Specified types of development which local authorities have decided should be subject to a 'zero' rate and specified as such in their charging schedules.

- 2.8 The following can also be subject to an exemption or relief where the relevant criteria are met, and the correct process is followed:

- Residential annexes and extensions;
- Self-build houses and flats;
- Social housing that meets certain specific relief criteria;
- First Homes
- Charitable development that meets certain specific relief criteria.

- 2.9 Where the levy liability is calculated to be less than £50, the chargeable amount is deemed to be zero, so no levy is due. Mezzanine floors, inserted into an existing building, are not liable for the levy unless they form part of a wider planning permission that seeks to provide other works as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to any planning obligation meeting the relevant tests set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL regulations (as amended) - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/948/regulation/122/made>

<sup>2</sup> Adopted in September 2018

### *Charging CIL*

- 2.10 Once the CIL charging schedule has been adopted, the District Council will assume the role of 'charging authority' for the purposes of CIL in West Oxfordshire. This means that the Council will calculate the chargeable amount (subject to any indexation as appropriate) and issue the relevant liability notice to the parties that are liable to pay the charge. Further information on how the chargeable amount will be calculated is set out at Appendix 1.

### *Collecting CIL*

- 2.11 The District Council will also be the collection authority for CIL in West Oxfordshire. The CIL collection process involves a number of stages as summarised at Appendix 2.

### *How is CIL calculated?*

- 2.12 In most cases, the amount of levy that is payable is calculated by multiplying the additional gross internal area (GIA) by the proposed CIL rate for that particular development type. Two very simple examples are provided below.

#### Example – One Dwelling

*Size of dwelling (GIA) – 130 m<sup>2</sup>*

*CIL rate - £100 per m<sup>2</sup>*

*Amount payable through CIL - **£13,000** (i.e. 130 m<sup>2</sup> x £100)*

#### Example – Ten Dwellings

*Total size of dwellings (GIA) – 1,300 m<sup>2</sup>*

*CIL rate - £100 per m<sup>2</sup>*

*Amount payable through CIL – **£130,000***

- 2.13 Gross Internal Area (GIA) will be calculated using the definition contained in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Code of Measuring Practice (currently in its 6th edition). The Council must also apply an index of inflation to keep the levy rate responsive to market conditions.

### **3. CIL rates in West Oxfordshire**

- 3.1 It is important that CIL rates are set at a level that does not hinder new development coming forward, striking an 'appropriate balance' between additional investment to support development and the potential effect on the viability of developments. This balance is at the centre of the charge-setting process.

- 3.2 Viability evidence was prepared<sup>3</sup> during 2023 and completed in 2024 on this basis and this informed the preparation of this charging schedule.

***Residential Uses***

- 3.3 The approved CIL charges for residential development in West Oxfordshire are set out below. These rates will be indexed for inflation annually.

CIL Zone	£ per m2	Notes
Residential District-wide of less than 250 homes (Greenfield)	£225	Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats).  On-site affordable housing on 11+ units.  Nil Affordable Housing on sites between 1-10 units.  Affordable Housing financial contributions apply on sites between 6-10 units in the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).
Residential District-wide of 250 homes or more (Greenfield)	£150	Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats).  On-site affordable housing applies in all cases.  Excludes defined Strategic Sites.
Residential District-wide (Previously developed land)	£125	Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats).  On-site affordable housing on 11+ units.  Nil Affordable Housing on sites between 1-10 units.  Affordable Housing financial contributions apply on sites between 6-10 units in the

<sup>3</sup> Dixon Searle CIL Viability Assessment – May 2024

		Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).
100% Flatted only development District-wide	£25	
Defined Strategic Sites	£0	Defined sites include: Salt Cross Garden Village, West Eynsham, North Witney, East Witney; and East Chipping Norton

3.4 In considering the CIL rates for residential uses, the following key points have been taken into consideration:

- The examiner recommended a specific CIL rate for large-scale 'non-strategic' green field sites in recognition of the fact that infrastructure costs are likely to increase with the size of the potential development site. As such a new category for larger sites of 250 homes or more on green field sites was created (£150 per m2);
- The rate for residential schemes on previously developed sites is lower (£125 per m2) than greenfield sites because of the additional costs associated with bringing such sites forward;
- 100% flatted developments have additional costs which warrant the application of a nominal CIL charge (£25 per m2);
- Strategic local plan 2031 sites (Salt Cross, West Eynsham, North Witney, East Witney and East Chipping Norton) are CIL exempt because of the significant infrastructure costs associated with bringing such developments forward, which will be secured through other mechanisms including Section 106 agreements.

#### ***Non-Residential Uses***

3.5 The approved CIL charges for non-residential development in West Oxfordshire are set out below. This charge will also be indexed for inflation annually.

CIL Zone	£ per m2	Notes
Large Format Retail e.g. Supermarkets, Foodstores, Retail Warehousing	£125	
All other non-residential development	£0	Nil rated

- 3.6 The key point to note here is that on viability grounds, the only form of 'non-residential' development which is able to support a CIL charge is large format retail such as supermarkets, foodstores and retail warehousing.

#### **4. Charging CIL - effective date**

- 4.1 The charging schedule is required to stipulate an 'effective' date i.e. the date upon which CIL will begin to be charged. In this instance, Officers are currently proposing to set an 'effective' date of 31 January 2026.
- 4.2 If this date is approved, any applications receiving planning permission on or after 31 January 2026 will need to comply with the CIL requirements and will be chargeable.

#### **5. Reliefs and exemptions**

- 5.1 The CIL Regulations make a number of provisions for charging authorities to give relief from CIL. Some types of relief are mandatory, others are offered at the charging authority's discretion.
- 5.2 The District Council will offer mandatory relief in accordance with the CIL regulations (as amended) but does not currently intend to offer any form of discretionary relief from CIL. The decision not to offer discretionary relief from CIL at the present time will be reviewed as part of any initial review of CIL.

#### **6. Payment of CIL**

- 6.1 When planning permission is granted, the District Council will issue a liability notice setting out the amount payable through CIL, and the payment procedure. Typically, CIL payments must be made within 60 days of the commencement of any chargeable development. However, recognising the importance of assisting the timely delivery and viability of new development, the District Council proposes to accept the payment of CIL by instalments in respect of larger CIL payments and will publish a separate instalments policy in accordance with the CIL Regulations (as amended).
- 6.2 Where development is permitted on the basis of specific phases of development, each phase will be considered as a separate chargeable development and will therefore be liable for payment in line with the Council's proposed instalment policy.

#### **7. Spending and reporting on CIL**

- 7.1 CIL payments can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure including transport, flood defences, schools, green space and community and cultural facilities. It can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development. It cannot be used to fund affordable housing.
- 7.2 Since December 2020, the District Council has been required to prepare an '[Infrastructure Funding Statement](#)' setting out what it intends to spend CIL revenue on as well as information on the payments received through CIL and section 106 planning obligations during the previous financial year.



- 7.3 In accordance with the CIL regulations, up to 5% of the District Council's CIL receipts may be spent on administrative expenses associated with the operation of CIL.
- 7.4 Where all or part of a chargeable development is within the area of a Parish Council, the District Council is required to pass a proportion of the CIL receipts from the development to the Parish Council. The basic amount payable is 15% which increases to 25% where an adopted Neighbourhood Plan is in place. For clarification, the 15% CIL payment passed to Parish Councils is capped at £100/dwelling plus annual indexation. This is based on the number of existing dwellings within the parish, not on the number of dwellings proposed through development.
- 7.5 The Parish Council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the Parish Council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area. Parish Councils must prepare a report for any financial year in which it receives any CIL payments.
- 8. Reviewing CIL**
- 8.1 Once adopted, the District Council will keep its charging schedule under review to ensure that levy charges remain appropriate over time. The Council may seek to review its charging schedule in whole or in part taking account of relevant considerations including changes in market conditions and infrastructure needs.
- 8.2 In particular, the charging schedule will be reviewed to take account of the policies of the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 as those reach a more advanced stage.

## Appendix 1 – Calculation of CIL chargeable amount

### Chargeable amount: standard cases

1.—(1) The chargeable amount is an amount equal to the aggregate of the amounts of CIL chargeable at each of the relevant rates.

(2) But where that amount is less than £50 the chargeable amount is deemed to be zero.

(3) The relevant rates are the rates, taken from the relevant charging schedules, at which CIL is chargeable in respect of the chargeable development.

(4) The amount of CIL chargeable at a given relevant rate (R) must be calculated by applying the following formula—

$$\frac{R \times A \times I_p}{I_c}$$

where—

- A = the deemed net area chargeable at rate R, calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (6);
- $I_p$  = the index figure for the calendar year in which planning permission was granted; and
- $I_c$  = the index figure for the calendar year in which the charging schedule containing rate R took effect.

(5) In this paragraph the index figure for a given calendar year is—

(a) in relation to any calendar year before 2020, the figure for 1st November for the preceding calendar year in the national All-in Tender Price Index published from time to time by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(b) in relation to the calendar year 2020 and any subsequent calendar year, the RICS CIL Index published in November of the preceding calendar year by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(c) if the RICS CIL index is not so published, the figure for 1st November for the preceding calendar year in the national All-in Tender Price Index published from time to time by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(d) if the national All-in Tender Price Index is not so published, the figure for 1st November for the preceding calendar year in the retail prices index.

(6) The value of A must be calculated by applying the following formula—

$$G_R - K_R - \left( \frac{G_R \times E}{G} \right)$$

where—

- G = the gross internal area of the chargeable development;
- $G_R$  = the gross internal area of the part of the chargeable development chargeable at rate R;
- $K_R$  = the aggregate of the gross internal areas of the following—

- retained parts of in-use buildings; and
- for other relevant buildings, retained parts where the intended use following completion of the chargeable development is a use that is able to be carried on lawfully and permanently without further planning permission in that part on the day before planning permission first permits the chargeable development;

E = the aggregate of the following—

- the gross internal areas of parts of in-use buildings that are to be demolished before completion of the chargeable development; and
- for the second and subsequent phases of a phased planning permission, the value  $E_x$  (as determined under sub-paragraph (7)), unless  $E_x$  is negative,

provided that no part of any building may be taken into account under both of paragraphs (i) and (ii) above.

(7) The value  $E_x$  must be calculated by applying the following formula—

$$E_P - (G_P - K_{PR})$$

where—

$E_P$  = the value of E for the previously commenced phase of the planning permission;

$G_P$  = the value of G for the previously commenced phase of the planning permission; and

$K_{PR}$  = the total of the values of  $K_R$  for the previously commenced phase of the planning permission.

(8) Where the collecting authority does not have sufficient information, or information of sufficient quality, to enable it to establish that a relevant building is an in-use building, it may deem it not to be an in-use building.

(9) Where the collecting authority does not have sufficient information, or information of sufficient quality, to enable it to establish—

- whether part of a building falls within a description in the definitions of  $K_R$  and E in sub-paragraph (6); or
- the gross internal area of any part of a building falling within such a description,

it may deem the gross internal area of the part in question to be zero.

(10) In this paragraph—

“building” does not include—

- (i) a building into which people do not normally go;
- (ii) a building into which people go only intermittently for the purpose of maintaining or inspecting machinery; or
- (iii) a building for which planning permission was granted for a limited period;

“in-use building” means a building which—

- (i) is a relevant building, and
- (ii) contains a part that has been in lawful use for a continuous period of at least six months within the period of three years ending on the day planning permission first permits the chargeable development;

“new build” means that part of the chargeable development which will comprise new buildings and enlargements to existing buildings, and in relation to a chargeable development granted planning permission under section 73 of TCPA 1990 (“the new permission”) includes any new buildings and enlargements to existing buildings which were built pursuant to a previous planning permission to which the new permission relates;

“relevant building” means a building which is situated on the relevant land on the day planning permission first permits the chargeable development;

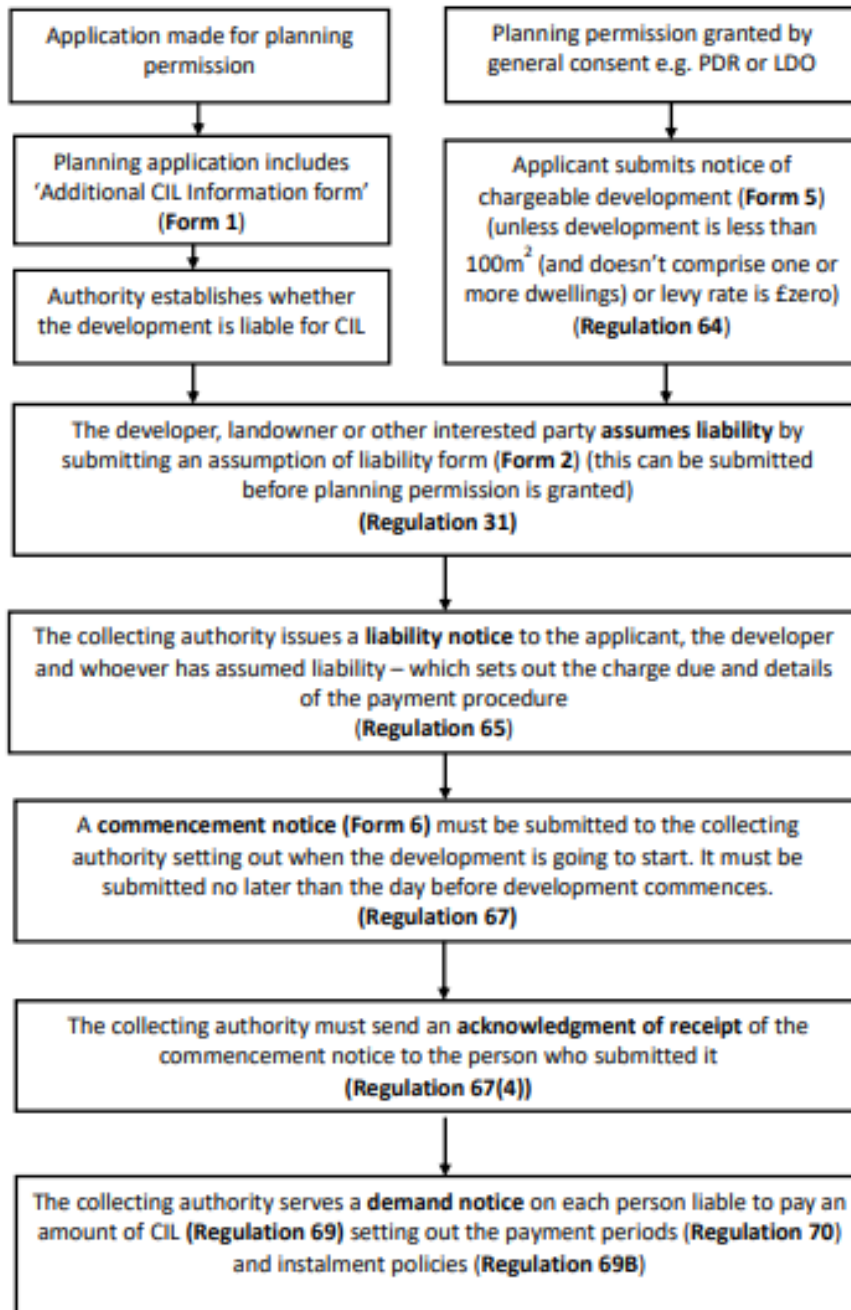
“relevant charging schedules” means the charging schedules which are in effect—

- (i) at the time planning permission first permits the chargeable development, and
- (ii) in the area in which the chargeable development will be situated;

“retained part” means part of a building which will be—

- (i) on the relevant land on completion of the chargeable development (excluding new build),
- (ii) part of the chargeable development on completion, and
- (iii) chargeable at rate R.

### Community Infrastructure Levy Collection Process



## Appendix 3 – Glossary of Terms

(In alphabetical order)

**Abatement** – The process that allows developers to claim a credit for CIL which has already been paid.

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)** – A document produced annually which assesses and reports on the performance of the Local Plan and other policies.

**Brownfield site (previously developed land)** – Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

**Charging Authority (CA)** – The District Council is the Charging Authority for CIL.

**Charging Schedule (CS)** – Sets out the fees for CIL, based on the type of use and the area of the District in which development is located.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge placed on certain developments, to be paid by developers, to provide necessary infrastructure.

**Commencement** – Generally, this is the date in which planning permission is implemented, and includes demolition or the ground being dug.

**Greenfield site** – Land which has not previously been built on.

**Infrastructure** – This is defined within the CIL Regulations. Examples include transport, education, utilities and open spaces.

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)** – A document which identifies the infrastructure required to support the Local Plan.

**Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS)** – A list of infrastructure projects which the Council has identified as being necessary to support the Local Plan.

**Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS)** – The statement will set out those infrastructure types or projects we plan to fund through CIL and report receipts and expenditure.

**Instalments Policy** – This enables a Charging Authority to decide the number of payments, the amount and to spread payments over longer periods.

**Land Charges** – Land charges are restrictions placed on the use of land and are binding on successive owners or occupiers of the land or property.

**Local Planning Authority (LPA)** – The District Council is the Local Planning Authority for an administrative area.

**Mandatory Relief** – The CIL Regulations make provision for certain types of development to be eligible for relief from CIL.

**Neighbourhood Plans** – A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area.

**Nil charge rate** – Sites which are exempt from paying CIL according to guidelines.

**NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework.** Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

**Section 106 Agreement (S106)** – Legal agreements between a developer and the Council to enable impacts of a development to be offset or to enhance the physical environment or contribute to local facilities.

**Strategic Site** – Sites which are allocated in the Local Plan as being capable of housing development and specifically identified as 'strategic allocations' (as opposed to non-strategic allocations).


**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** – A document which sets out our commitments to consulting on planning matters, including CIL.

**Viability** – The need for a charging authority to find a balance between the potential effects of CIL on the economic viability of a development with raising funds for infrastructure.

**West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (WOLP)** – The adopted development plan for West Oxfordshire, which sets out the policies governing how development is planned in the District.

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 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLANNING</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.prosser@westoxon.uk">andrew.prosser@westoxon.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager Email: <a href="mailto:hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk">hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Hannah Kenyon, Climate Change Manager Email: <a href="mailto:hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk">hannah.kenyon@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to proceed to Phase 2 of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning programme and complete a districtwide local area energy plan.
Annexes	Annex A – Stage gate acceptance criteria  Annex B – Phase 2 minimum officer resource requirement  Annex C – OxLAEP Memorandum of Understanding
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Climate Action and Nature Recovery, to approve the remaining Phase 1 key deliverables of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning project programme.</li> <li>2. Subject to the completion of phase 1, agree to proceed to phase 2 of the Oxfordshire local area energy planning project programme and the completion of a districtwide local area energy plan.</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> <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>

Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	None

## **I. BACKGROUND**

**I.1** Local area energy planning is a process which sets out the pathway on how we get from our current energy system to the energy system we need for a zero-carbon future. The Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee (formerly the Future Oxfordshire Partnership) is supporting the six Oxfordshire councils to work together to develop Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) for Oxfordshire. Further information on the Oxfordshire local area energy planning (OxLAEP) project programme is available on the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee website.

**I.2** Some of the benefits of having a LAEP are:

- Sets out a clear plan of actions and projects needed to transition an area's energy system to net zero. This can then be the basis on which further feasibility work and project delivery and investment can be prioritised, providing clarity for both local authorities and District Network Operators (DNOs).
- Aims to create a local supply chain capacity and capability for projects, and training and employment opportunities for residents.
- Phase 1 identifies where upgrades and flexibility solutions are needed to ensure homes, businesses and essential services have secure and affordable energy.
- Phase 2 translates this analysis into district-level action plans, helping councils prioritise projects like renewable generation, energy storage and infrastructure improvements.
- These phases will enable faster investment in the right areas, reducing the risk of energy shortages and lowering long-term costs for residents and businesses. They will also support growth opportunities by ensuring that new housing, commercial developments and community energy projects can connect to the grid without delays.
- This work will create a stronger and more resilient energy system that benefits households, local economies and the environment.
- Identifies solutions, such as energy flexibility and renewable generation, for areas where there will not be sufficient electricity grid capacity to meet demand.
- Improves the process to allow more targeted grid infrastructure investment by providing evidence of when and where additional grid capacity will be needed – this evidence can be used to unlock DNO, and other, investment. As well as giving the local authority a blueprint for action, they also provide all geographic stakeholders with a basis for taking forward activity and prioritising investments. DNOs are now permitted to invest ahead of need if they have sufficient high-quality evidence.
- Can save money in the long term due to planned energy infrastructure investment compared to unplanned and piecemeal delivery, despite the initial cost associated with commissioning a LAEP. This should avoid lengthy waits for grid connections.
- LAEPs help local authorities to create and monitor a project pipeline of energy projects to advance decarbonisation, economic growth, energy security and climate resilience in alignment with local strategies and policies. It will also provide greater transparency in why pipeline projects represent the best way forward to achieve local authority priorities.

- 1.3** The LAEP and West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 will be developed and implemented together. The LAEP is critical to enabling the delivery of Local Plan objectives by ensuring the right energy infrastructure is in place to support sustainable growth. The assessment of renewable energy resource potential and local electrical network constraints will feed into the Local Plan's spatial strategy and site allocations. Local Plan policies on renewable energy schemes, new housing and infrastructure will help DNOs understand projected energy consumption, alongside the Distribution Future Energy Scenarios. The LAEP will help to identify any areas of grid constraint early so that the DNO, the Council and developers can work collaboratively to find a solution which delivers the council's ambitions set out in the Local Plan.
- 1.4** Ove Arup & Partners have been appointed as experienced lead consultants in the development of the LAEPs.
- 1.5** Countywide analysis has been undertaken in Phase 1. District-wide analysis happens in Phase 2 and district-level support in Phase 3.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1** All the Oxfordshire councils are currently only committed to participating in Phase 1 of the project programme. Two stage gates have been built into the project programme to give each council the opportunity to opt out of the programme at the end of each phase or to delay participation by up to six months. This decision relates to the first of these stage gates at the end of Phase 1.
- 2.2** The decision to progress through this stage gate is based on two factors:
- 1)** West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is satisfied that the acceptance criteria have been met for key deliverables in Phase 1 (see Annex A). The criteria were developed and agreed with Oxfordshire councils and Ove Arup.
  - 2)** There is sufficient WODC officer resource available to deliver Phase 2 across the council's teams. The minimum officer requirement is included in Annex B.
- 2.3** Some of the acceptance criteria for Phase 1 has been completed, as shown in Annex A. Deliverables that have been completed include:
- Stakeholder mapping (on the proviso that councils are responsible for maintaining)
  - Engagement Plan
  - Baseline Summary Report
  - Modelling Assumptions Log
  - Stakeholder workshops and supporting materials, including the awareness raising and fact-finding workshop, baseline review assumptions workshop, and a finance and investment workshop.
- 2.4** Some critical deliverables remain outstanding and will be completed by September to a high standard before proceeding to Phase 2 of the project programme. These include:
- Policy Document Review included in scenario modelling
  - Data audit report, part of data audit and gap analysis
  - Data set library and technical note
- 2.5** Deliverables that are not critical to Phase 1 and will be completed in Phase 2 include:

- Energy literacy training
- Data Management System, part of data audit and gap analysis
- Baseline GIS Visualisations – ideally these will be completed for use in phase 2
- LAEP Data Library (GIS and Excel)

**2.6** Other Phase 2 deliverables to be completed include:

- Digital/visualisation
- Survey
- Priority inventions packages
- Capacity building on net zero financing
- Stakeholder engagement in action planning and prioritisation
- Commercialisation, investment, and route to market strategy review
- Output reports

**2.7** The wider benefits of completing a LAEP are summarised below:

- 1) Achieving Climate and Net Zero Ambitions - Provides a clear, cost-effective roadmap to help councils and communities meet their carbon neutral and net zero targets.
- 2) Safeguarding Local Energy Security - Ensures reliable energy supplies by identifying future demand and planning upgrades to grid infrastructure.
- 3) Innovative, Data-Driven Planning - Uses advanced digital modelling and shared data to develop smarter, evidence-based energy solutions.
- 4) Collaborative County-Wide Approach - Brings councils, businesses, network operators and communities together to deliver joined-up local energy planning.
- 5) Unlocking Investment and Economic Growth - Creates a pipeline of investable green projects, attracting funding, jobs, and skills development to Oxfordshire.
- 6) Empowering Communities - Integrates local priorities into energy plans, supporting neighbourhood-led projects and equitable access to affordable energy.
- 7) Supporting Sustainable Development - Aligns energy planning with housing, transport and infrastructure strategies to enable low-carbon growth.
- 8) Reducing Future Costs and Risks - Minimise long-term costs and disruptions by proactively managing energy needs and preparing for future challenges.

**2.8** The full programme (phases 1-3) is due to be completed by the end of 2026.

**2.9** A lead consultant from Ove Arup will oversee the West Oxfordshire LAEP.

**2.10** The climate team will provide the lead project officers and the most time on the project, each equating to half a day per week. Time will also be required from planning policy and development management, economic development, finance, and property officers. All teams have been consulted and have not raised concerns about the level of time required. If there are clashes with periods of heavy workload, there will be some flexibility within the project programme to accommodate this, and climate officers would be able to step in if colleagues are unable to contribute.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1** Alternative option 1 – not to progress into Phase 2. The intention has been to complete the full project programme, with stage gates built in to give each district council the opportunity to opt out if there are any serious concerns, which is not the case. Resourcing has been secured for WODC's involvement in the whole programme and would be unavailable for other energy projects if WODC decided not to progress to Phase 2 of the project programme.
- 3.2** Alternative option 2 – the stage gate process that has been established allows for each district to defer their participation in the delivery of Phase 2 of the project programme by up to six months at the stage gate. There is no need to delay has been identified and an unnecessary pause may cause the districts to lose momentum and reduce engagement levels of stakeholders.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1** It is recommended that WODC proceed to Phase 2 of the project programme and complete a districtwide LAEP.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The Oxfordshire Joint Leaders Committee has allocated a fixed production budget amount of £ 172,726.47 and a variable amount of £100,000, across all local authorities, to Phase 2 of the project programme, which is held by Oxfordshire County Council, the project managing authority. The Ove Arup contract will be funded entirely from this budget and no funding contributions are required from the district councils. This funding would not be available for other projects if WODC do not to progress to Phase 2 of the project programme.
- 5.2** WODC officer time is required, as covered in the main section of the report.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the project programme has been signed by all the participating authorities (see Annex C).

### **7. RISKS**

- 7.1** There is uncertainty around local government reorganisation (LGR); however, Phases 1 and 2 of the project will be completed by January 2026, prior to the formation of the shadow authority. The LAEP will contain valuable district level information for the new authorities. Consideration will be given as to how to mitigate LGR impacts and ensure the LAEP outputs have longevity through the reorganisation process.

### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1** None.

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

10. The aim of the project programme is to identify the most cost-effective pathway to achieve net zero. A West Oxfordshire LAEP is the roadmap to achieve reductions in district-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None.

(END)

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## Annex A Phase 1 Acceptance Criteria

	Processes	Key Deliverable	Status	Deliverable Type	Critical Pathway Analysis	Criteria to Ensure Quality
1.1 Preparation	Stakeholder Mapping	Live stakeholder tracker	Completed	Live	Process set up in phase 1, continues throughout phases 2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrates principles of fairness and inclusion</li> <li>- Ensures representation across diverse demographics and sectors</li> <li>- Attention given to marginalised, vulnerable and underrepresented groups</li> <li>- Follows ESC best practice as a minimum</li> <li>- Compliant with the six Council's guidelines on engagement and consultation</li> <li>- Participatory options must take account of Citizens Advice LAEP guidance</li> <li>- Clear roles and responsibilities and demonstrate how allocated officer time can be deployed for maximum benefit</li> </ul>
	Defining Engagement Activities	Document: engagement plan	Completed	Live	Version 1 created phase 1 and updated quarterly throughout phases 2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Process established for tracking stakeholder engagement that is agile</li> <li>- Clear demonstration of who and how mapped out with engagement methods and activities defined</li> <li>- Clear demonstration of how engagement activities will be coordinated</li> <li>- Clear process for feedback loop for stakeholders to understand how their feedback has been considered and incorporated</li> </ul>
	Energy Literacy Training	Energy literacy training session	Pending	Activity	Can take place in any phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OxlAEP key stakeholders have the opportunity to build a foundational understanding of energy systems and planning principles</li> </ul>
	Policy and Document Review	N/A	Pending	Activity	Required completion in phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusion in scenario modelling deliverables</li> </ul>
	Data Audit and Gap Analysis	Document: data audit report	Ongoing	Static	Required completion in phase 1 Once process set up, continues throughout phases 2 and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summary of meta-data including licensing conditions and traffic light assessment of dataset quality/validity</li> <li>- Inventory of additional data requirements: Gap analysis covering all essential and optional emissions sectors</li> </ul>
		Data management system	Pending	Live		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation mechanism for each emissions sector, allowing for progress monitoring against various emissions pathways for reporting purposes</li> </ul>
1.2 Baselining	Baseline Summary Report	Document: energy baseline summary report	Completed	Static	Required completion in phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include all essential and optional emissions sectors</li> <li>- Validated with stakeholders</li> </ul>
	Baseline GIS Visualisations	Data: GIS	Pending	Static	Can be provided in any phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Granular representation of data</li> </ul>
1.3 Modelling	Scenario modelling and LAEP Data Library	Document: modelling assumptions log	Completed	Static	Required completion in phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most efficient pathways to Net Zero identified</li> <li>- Data provided by local authorities incorporated into modelling</li> </ul>
		Data: GIS	Pending	Static	Can be provided in any phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider all essential and contracted optional emissions sectors holistically, to determine most efficient pathway</li> </ul>
		Data: Excel	Pending	Static	Can be provided in any phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comply with ESC LAEP stages 1-4 as a baseline</li> <li>- Model two pathways: BAU/Do nothing and Oxfordshire Leading the Way</li> <li>- Allow for flexible 'nesting', to enable District LAEPs to comply with District Net Zero targets</li> </ul>
		Document: dataset library & technical note	Ongoing	Static	Required completion in phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow for monitoring against PaZCO/ONZRMAR, District Net Zero targets, Tyndall Carbon Budgets and National Carbon Budgets</li> <li>- Improve the ability of the Councils to respond to our local DNOs in the DFES process</li> <li>- Incorporate existing and emerging neighbourhood-level LAEPs, such as ZCOP ID and Eynsham Community Action Plan for Net Zero (CAPzero - a form of hyper local LAEP) into scenario modelling and action planning</li> <li>- Data formatted to allow aggregation with different boundaries such as primary substation, parish, census output area etc</li> <li>- Relevant new and emerging national policy has been considered</li> <li>- GIS and data outputs to be formatted and packaged in line with industry best practice</li> <li>- Data meets ISO19139 metadata standards and supports GIS analysis</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Engagement	Phase One Stakeholder Engagement Activities	Workshop 1: awareness and factfinding	Completed	Activity	Required completion in phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two workshops delivered</li> <li>- Opportunity for stakeholders to interrogate assumptions and proposed modelling</li> </ul>
		Workshop 2: Baseline review and scenario assumptions	Completed	Activity	Required completion in phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All relevant stakeholders that are engaging in the process following contact from client are aware of OxlAEP programme and have the opportunity to feed in data and feedback through an accessible process</li> </ul>
		Other engagement materials: - Supporting materials for workshops and consultations	Completed	Static	Required completion in phase 1 for phase 1 activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plain English is used to deliver information and communications in a timely manner</li> </ul>
		Workshop 3: Investment planning for LAEP delivery	Completed	Activity	Not required for completion of phase 1 and bought forward from phase 3 at the suggestion of Arup to introduce councils to investment options for LAEP delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback loop post-workshops is provided with the sharing of clear and jargon-free outcomes to client for distributing to stakeholders</li> </ul>

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## Annex B Phase 2 Minimum Officer Resource Requirement

Activity	Role	Period	Time (hours)
Mobilisation	Climate manager	Sep-25	1.5
	Climate officer	Sep-25	1.5
Review and comment on digital / visualisation	Climate manager	Mar-26	2.5
	Climate officer	Mar-26	2.5
Survey question development and agreement	Climate manager	Oct-25	2
	Climate officer	Oct-25	2
Priority interventions packages (discussion & agreement)	Climate manager	Oct-25	1.5
	Climate officer	Oct-25	2.5
Capacity building (Energy literacy)	Climate manager	Nov-25	1.5
	Climate officer	Nov-25	1.5
Progress meetings (fortnightly)	Climate manager	Sept-25 - May-26	18
	Climate officer	Sept-25 - May-26	18
Capacity building (net zero financing)	Climate manager	Nov-25	1.5
	Climate officer	Nov-25	1.5
Stakeholder engagement D (action planning)	Climate manager	Nov-25	2.5
- includes preparation			
	Climate officer	Nov-25	4.5
	Planning policy team	Nov-25	1.5
	Development management team	Nov-25	1.5
	Strategic developments team	Nov-25	1.5
	Economic development team	Nov-25	1.5
	Property team	Nov-25	1.5

Stakeholder engagement E (action prioritisation)	Climate manager	Nov-25	1.5
	Climate officer	Nov-25	2.5
Commercialisation, investment, and route to market strategy review	Climate manager	TBC	1.5
	Climate officer	TBC	3.5
	Finance team	TBC	3
Review and comment on draft county/district output report(s)	Climate manager	Feb-26	2.5
	Climate officer	Feb-26	3.5
	Development management team	Feb-26	1.5
	Economic development team	Feb-26	1.5
	Planning policy team	Feb-26	1.5
	Property team	Feb-26	1.5
	Strategic developments team	Feb-26	1.5
Review and comment on FINAL County/District output report(s)	Climate manager	Mar-26	1.5
	Climate officer	Mar-26	3.5
Monitoring and evaluation tool - handover session	Climate manager	Apr-26	1.5
	Climate officer	Apr-26	1.5
Ad hoc input / contact	Climate manager	Sep-25 - May-26	1.5
	Climate officer	Sep-25 - May-26	3.5
	<b>Total hours</b>		
Climate manager	41		
Climate officer	52		
Development management team	3		
Economic development team	3		
Finance team	3		
Planning policy team	3		
Property team	3		

Strategic developments team	3		
	<b>111</b>		

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# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (“MOU”)

RELATED TO

## OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL AREA ENERGY PROGRAMME (“OxLAEP”)

Memorandum of Understanding dated: 5 August 2025

BETWEEN:

- (1) Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
- (2) Oxford City Council (OCiC)
- (3) Cherwell District Council (CDC)
- (4) South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)
- (5) Vale of the White Horse District Council (VOWHDC)
- (6) West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Each known as “**Party**” and together as “**Parties**”. OCiC, CDC, SODC, VOWHDC and WODC are the “**Districts**”.

Not party of this MOU, but will assist in the delivery of the OxLAEP Programme:

- a. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
- b. UK Power Networks
- c. National Grid Electricity Distribution
- d. Low Carbon Hub
- e. Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- f. Greater Southeast Net Zero Hub
- g. Southern Gas Network
- h. National Energy System Operator
- i. National Grid Electricity Transmission
- j. Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee (OLJC)
- k. And such other persons or bodies as the Parties may ask to assist in the delivery of the OxLAEP Programme

### 1. KEY DEFINITIONS:

**CAPZero:** Community Action Plan for Zero Carbon Energy. It is a project that collaborates with local communities to implement specific, highly localised energy system interventions and develop action plans.

**Consultant:** the successful OxLAEP consultant: Ove Arup & Partners Ltd.

**Contract:** the consultancy contract dated 22 April 2025 with the Consultant.

**DFES:** Distribution Future Energy Scenarios. (A key component of the strategic planning process for distribution system operators.

**DNO:** Distribution Network Operator. Companies licensed by Ofgem that own and operate the network of cables, transformers and towers that bring electricity from the national transmission network to businesses and homes.

**DSO:** Distribution System Operator. Part of the DNO structure, DSOs are responsible for managing the flow of electricity across their region, making sure supply meets demand.

**EPWG:** Energy Planning Working Group (see Appendix 5: Membership of ESB and EPWG).

**ESB:** Executive Steering Board (see Appendix 5: Membership of ESB and EPWG).

**ESC:** Energy Systems Catapult. An independent research and technology organisation, launched by Innovate UK, to accelerate net zero energy innovation. Developed the concept and process of local area energy plans.

**Governance and Programme Structure:** Refer to Appendix 6 for further details.

**Green Finance Strategy:** In the context of the LAEP programme, this strategy is referred to as the Green Investment Prospectus. It represents a countywide green investment pipeline and prospectus developed by Enterprise Oxfordshire to showcase green investment opportunities within the county.

**Hyper Local LAEPs:** A stakeholder coordinated spatial local area energy plan that models specific, highly local energy system interventions against the local energy system.

**IDNO:** Independent Distribution Network Operator. The same as a DNO, but they do not have a specific geographical area.

**Internal Advisors:** local government officers from departments identified in Appendix 1: OxLAEP Business Case – page 37 (Section 5.5: Use of Specialist Advisers).

**LAEP:** Local Area Energy Plan. A data and stakeholder driven, spatial plan that sets out the route to net zero across the energy vectors.

**LAEP+:** AITL (Advanced Infrastructure Technologies Limited) digital underpinning of the YLNZH (Your local Net Zero Hub) and LENZA (Local Energy Net Zero Accelerator) platforms, which are geospatial tools to create and maintain digital LAEPs.

**LAs:** Local Authority(ies)

**OxLAEP Programme/Programme:** the scope of this is included in appendix 2. It has three distinct phases (Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3 as defined in this clause at Figure 2).

**Oxon LAs:** Local Authorities in Oxfordshire

**Partners:** The Parties, the Consultant and the Energy Planning Working Group (EPWG) and Energy Planning Executive Steering Board (ESB)

**RESP:** Regional Energy Strategic Planning

**SSEs:** Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks

**Stage Gate:** the Stage Gate separates the Phases of the OxLAEP Programme.

**WS1:** Work Stream One – LAEP Plans. The production of the Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP) by the Consultant as summarised in Figure 1 below and set out in section 3 below.

**WS2:** Work Stream Two – LAEP Function. The establishment of dedicated capability within the Parties to deliver LAEPs long term as summarised in Figure 1 below and set out in section 3 below.



FIGURE 1

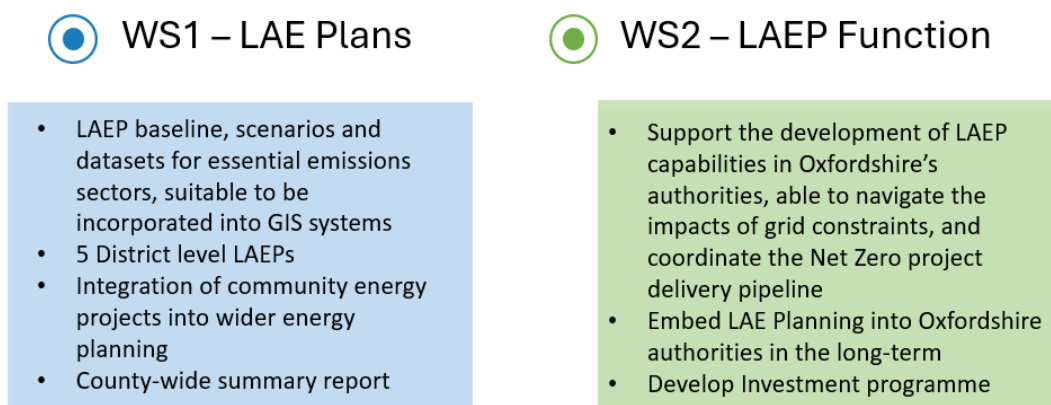
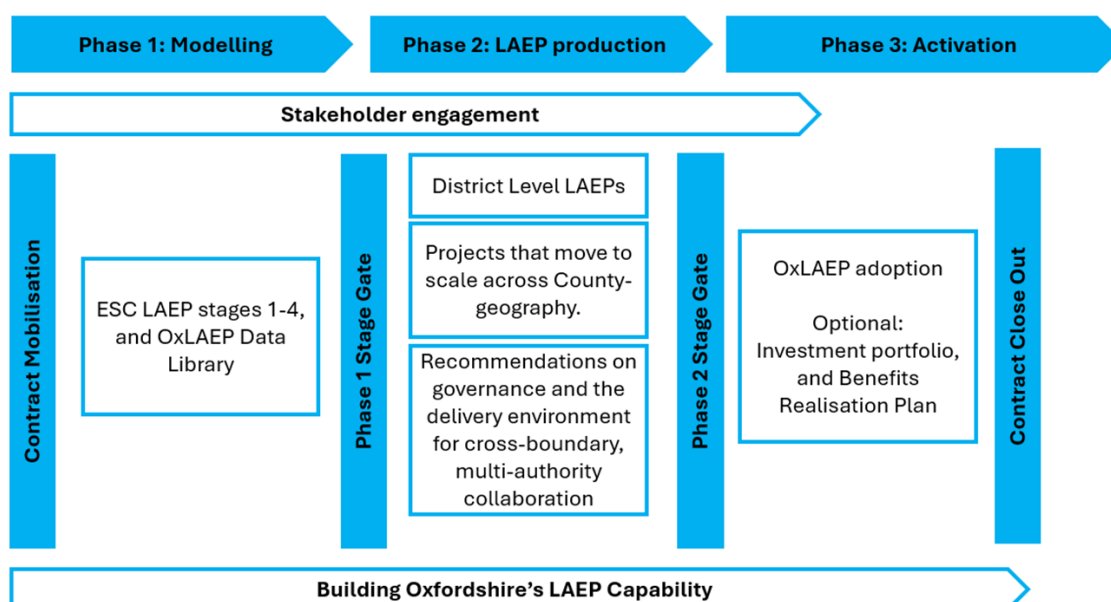


FIGURE 2



## 2. MOU SCOPE:

2.1 The Parties wish to collaborate with each other on the OxLAEP and record the basis on which they intend to collaborate. This ‘MoU’ sets out:

2.1.1 The nature and key objectives of the WS1(LAE Plans) and WS2 (LAEP Function) as set out at section 3 of this MOU;

2.1.2 The principles of collaboration and governance structures the Parties will put in place;

2.1.3 The respective roles and responsibilities that Parties will have during the OxLAEP Programme.

2.2 This MOU is not legally binding, and it is not intended to be legally binding between the Parties, and no liabilities will be incurred by entering into this MOU.

### 3. NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF OXLAEP PROGRAMME

3.1. Oxfordshire's net zero, climate adaptation, community wellbeing and economic growth ambitions are increasingly at risk from lack of local electric network capacity, and investment and skills are poorly aligned with local need. To improve this situation, the OJLC has committed to deliver the 24 months' OxLAEP Programme, across three Programme Phases, to deliver the following benefits:

SMART Objectives – how we will measure the success of the Programme			
No.		Target(s) within project window (24 months)	Project Outcome(s)
1	<p><b>Realise NetZero in the most effective way:</b> Oxfordshire LAs and local stakeholders have a clear, spatially specific pathway (action plan and project pipeline) to achieve their locally mandated decarbonisation targets, and the capability and tools to review and adjust this pipeline as needed and engage stakeholders appropriately.</p>	<p>OxLAEP has identified projects that are spatially specific, and have the potential to achieve full decarbonization, at a pace that is aligned with local net zero and Local Plan Targets.</p> <p>The OxLAEP business-as-usual function has been defined and approved, with clear roles and responsibilities for all OxLAEP partners, underpinned by a sustainable business case.</p>	<p>Carbon budgets are achieved and LAs are on the correct pathway to next zero in line with local mandates.</p> <p>LAs know where and when to target decarbonization projects across a range of relevant emissions sectors, including smart flex.</p> <p>LAs have tools available to deliver LAEPs in business-as-usual activities and engage stakeholders, the in-house skills to use the tools, and are clear about costs of the work and options available to them to fund this work.</p>
2	<p><b>Reduction of Grid Constraints:</b> DNOs have sufficient visibility of local decarbonization pathways and local development plans and can evidence how this data is used to improve the provision of capacity through grid infrastructure upgrades and flexibility solutions.</p> <p>LAs responded to DFES process is consistent, and workload for authorities from response requirement is reduced.</p> <p>Project submission through DSO digital platforms can contribute meaningful demand data into the DFES process.</p> <p>Capacity constraints and constraint forecasts are visible through readily available data tools, enabling strategic positioning of development projects in areas where capacity is available.</p>	<p>All Oxon LAs respond to 2024 and 2025 DFES process;</p> <p>DFES response takes no more than 2 officer days per district to complete;</p> <p>DFES scenario applied to Oxfordshire is aligned with local net zero mandate.</p> <p>DFES process is transparent on how LA responses have been considered in 2024 and 2025 network development planning decisions.</p>	<p>Number of connection requests that cannot secure the requested capacity within 2 years are reduced by X% over Y years (metrics to be determined as part of the OxLAEP delivery/evaluation and monitoring).</p> <p>DNOs are provided with demand data through the DFES process and LAEP platforms and can evidence how responses have informed infrastructure investment decisions.</p>

	<p>The role of transmission network level and independent DNO and private wire connections is clear to all parties, and national grid, iDNOs and private wire providers are fully integrated into the OxLAEP process.</p>	<p>Tools providing capacity constraint insights and forecasts are available throughout the full 24-month project window, and a long-term plan and business case to enable access to 2030 is delivered as part of the LAEP function.</p>	<p>iDNO and private wire demand and constraint impacts are visible within digital LAEP tools.</p> <p>Authorities are equipped to respond to DFES timely and accurately.</p> <p>DFES scenario applied to Oxfordshire reflects local political mandates. LAs and key stakeholders have long-term visibility of constraints and constraint forecasts.</p>
3	<p><b>Planning opportunities:</b></p> <p>Local plans and neighbourhood Plans are more effective and more likely to be realised. Planning officers are confident in navigating energy capacity as a design consideration in their daily work, without having to default to a reduction in net zero solutions.</p> <p>LAEP Action Plans are making use of planning tools such as neighbourhood plans, infrastructure development plans or local development orders, to support delivery of the LAEP and local plan project pipelines.</p>	<p>70% of planning officers are confident in considering energy capacity in their daily work.</p> <p>Each authority has <math>\geq 2</math> planning officers that are fully trained in the use of all digital local LAEP platforms.</p> <p>100% of LAEP action plans and 100% of LAEP projects are considering planning constraints and opportunities as part of the viability assessment.</p>	<p>Planning officers are clear on how LAEP can inform local plans and neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>LAEP action plans and pipeline projects are integrated into strategic planning tools.</p> <p>Planning officers know if and how energy capacity can be a material consideration and are confident to implement and apply this.</p>
4	<p><b>Equitable LAEPs:</b></p> <p>LAEPs enable active balancing of Council priorities in line with political mandates. For example, ensuring that climate mitigation projects protecting those most vulnerable to climate change are identified and added to the project pipeline.</p>	<p>Census deprivation and fuel poverty data is available as a data layer for 100% of LAEP platforms.</p> <p>100% of LAEP action plans and 100% of LAEP projects include an equality impact assessment, drawing on the above datasets, and considering climate vulnerability.</p> <p>Training for digital LAEP tools and energy capacity literacy training is being offered to all data analysts employed by Oxon LAs, and <math>\geq 1</math> officer in any department that delivers projects or policy with an energy footprint.</p>	<p>Each authority will nominate a LAEP data lead officer, to offer support and capacity literacy training within their organization.</p> <p>Project boards include capacity and equitable energy access in their project appraisals.</p> <p>Climate vulnerability is a standard dataset in the OxLAEP, or a clear pathway to include this data has been determined and committed.</p>

		A minimum of 4 out of 6 authorities implement capacity and equitable energy access as a consideration in their project approval processes.	
5	OxLAEP will enable increased investment into local and regional projects and better investment coverage of harder-to-fund projects through portfolio bundling	The production of an investment prospectus for OxLAEP projects. Training on net zero project financing for 1 officer in each Oxfordshire LA. The Executive Steering Board (ESB) terms of reference are amended to cover investment.	LAEP projects have a clear delivery pathway via link with emerging Green Finance Strategy for the county. Project financing expertise available to all Oxon LAs.
6	Regional Energy System Planning (RESP) is more responsive to local needs, interests, and opportunities, better reflects local political mandates.	RESP representative is a member of the EPWG and ESP and business-as-usual iterations of these boards, or OxLAEP is represented in RESP governance.	OxLAEP partners have a clear understanding on how RESP and LAEPs interface and support each other. Local Mandates are not undermined through RESP. Active working forums exist, or a clear pathway to set up such forums is in place. RESP has an up to date and clear view of local demands and a test process to ensure these are incorporate into SSENs strategic planning.
7	Supporting hyper-local LAEPs and local stewardship	District-level energy plans incorporate hyper-local LAEPs (e.g. neighbourhood or primary substation scale), co-developed with local stakeholders and aligned to community needs.	Hyper-local LAEPs, where they exist, are embedded within district-level energy planning through participatory processes, ensuring alignment with the wider OxLAEP and local community needs. Local stewardship is strengthened through inclusive engagement, and tools like LENZA support hyper-local modelling and scenario exploration.

3.2 All Parties shall commit to fully participate in Phase 1 of the Programme. At either Stage Gate the Districts can choose to reassess and reduce, defer or terminate their involvement for the subsequent Phase,

if so wished (see Figure 2).

3.3. The Parties shall endeavor to achieve the objectives set out in 3.1 above.

3.4 This MOU will be reviewed at each Stage Gate. If the Parties agree to a change that impacts this MOU during the Programme, this change will be reflected by amendment to the MOU. Any changes will need to be agreed by all Parties.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION WHICH ALL PARTIES SHALL ENDEAVOR TO FOLLOW:

4.1	Collaborate and co-operate	Adhere to the governance and Programme structure set out in this MOU to ensure that activities are delivered and actions taken as required.
4.2	Be respectful	Respect the political autonomy of each Party. Acknowledge that full agreement may not always be achievable but support each other to navigate disagreements professionally through risk and issue management, making use of the scope change procedures outlined in the full business case if required.
4.3	Act in good faith	To support achievement of the Programme and compliance with this MOU.
4.4	Deploy appropriate resources	Ensure sufficient and appropriately qualified resources are available and authorized to try and deliver the outcomes set out in this MOU.
4.5	Be accountable	Take on, manage, and account to each other for performance of the respective roles and responsibilities set out in this MOU
4.6	Act in a timely manner	Recognise the time-critical nature of the Programme and respond accordingly to requests for support.
4.7	Engage stakeholders effectively	Ensure that the Programme is presented coherently and effectively to stakeholders.
4.8	Adhere to statutory requirements and best practice	Comply with applicable laws and standards including procurement rules, data protection, freedom of information legislation, and statutory codes of practice.
4.9	Be open and positive	Communicate openly about major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the Programme. Behave in a positive and proactive manner.
4.10	Learn, develop, and seek to achieve full potential	Share information, experience, material and skills to learn from each other and develop effective working practices, work collaboratively to identify solutions, eliminate duplication of effort, mitigate risk and reduce cost.

#### 5. PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE

5.1 The Programme is governed by OxLAEP governance, as established under OLJC, to provide the strategic direction and operational resource necessary to agree and then deliver the OxLAEP Programme. The governance structure comprises a strategic level Executive Steering Board (“ESB”) and an operational

level Energy Planning Working Group ("EPWG") (see Appendix 6: Governance and Programme Structure).

- 5.2 Programme scope change and escalation route will be through EPWG that issues the recommendations and then, a decision is taken by ESB. Partners endeavor to ensure that ESB board members are empowered to take the decisions within the Programme scope and OLJC funding. It is the responsibility of each Party to ensure that appropriate delegated authorities and approvals, if required, are in place. (See Appendix 1: OxLAEP Business Case.)
- 5.3 Where the scope change requires a Contract change, the Contract change process set out in the Contract will be followed.
- 5.4 All Parties will endeavor to support the Consultant in the delivery of the Contract to the best of their ability within the constraints of the scope and business case, and the terms of the Contract.

## 6. FUNDING

- 6.1 OLJC has allocated £600,000 (the OxLAEP Budget) for the delivery of the OxLAEP Programme. The Parties agreed that will be spent in line with the OxLAEP business case (see Appendix 1 – OxLAEP business case). £576,738.24 will be allocated to the Consultant for the delivery under the Contract.
- 6.2 The OxLAEP Budget will be held and administered by OCC and can be deployed only in accordance with the agreed scope and business case. Any divergence from the scope and business case will require a decision by the ESB, in line with the project change procedure. See Appendix 1: OxLAEP Business Case and Appendix 6: Governance and Programme Structure.
- 6.3 OCC is solely responsible for administration and auditing of the OxLAEP Budget.
- 6.4 £50,000 of the OxLAEP Budget has been collectively allocated to the Districts for capability purposes. This amount is included within the total contract value of £576,738.24. The Councils have agreed that from this £50,000 is to be used to secure external "on call" LAEP expertise. This resource will be shared equally between the Districts, with time allocated equally. The procurement has been finalised, and it contains the required support fund for the districts as set out in the specification in the Contract (contained at Appendix 4).
- 6.5 £23,261 of the OxLAEP Budget will be held in contingency up until Phase 3 of the Programme unless otherwise agreed by the Parties. If not required, this contingency may be expended to deliver LAEP+ tool integration in line with the approved outline business case option.
- 6.6 Process of budgeting for subject matter expert time:
  - 6.6.1 Every District has 22.4 hours each to expend over the full 24-month duration of the OxLAEP programme;
  - 6.6.2 Underspend is reviewed at each stage gate;
  - 6.6.3 Time expenditure will be reviewed at the fortnightly project meeting;
  - 6.6.4 The Consultant is to control hours to ensure expenditure does not exceed £18,541 without additional approval from the Parties.
- 6.7 Process of budgeting for itemised additional engagement activities (as set out in the specification of the Contract):
  - 6.7.1 The Parties will collectively determine whether additional engagement activities may be needed to successfully deliver Phase 1;
  - 6.7.2 Any additional engagement activities that have not been utilised will be allocated to collective activities for Phase 2.

- 6.8 Districts can decide to terminate their participation with the OxLAEP at either of the Stage Gates after Phase 1 or after Phase 2. Exiting at the Stage Gate after Phase 1 will end the participation of the affected District in Phase 2 but will not exclude the affected District from participating in Phase 3.
- 6.9 Districts can decide to defer their participation in the delivery of Phase 2 of the OxLAEP Programme by up to six months at the Phase 1 Stage Gate.
- 6.10 Where deliverables have been itemised in Appendix 1, such as the number of engagement events, these will be allocated evenly to all Parties, unless otherwise agreed by all Parties in writing. No Party should exceed the number of allocated deliverables. Where any Party accidentally or knowingly exceeds their allocated share, any additional costs deriving from such an action will be covered by the Party responsible for incurring such cost.

To mitigate the risk of unintentional overspend, OCC will work with the Consultant to maintain a clear and accessible record of the Consultant's time across each district. This record should be shared regularly with Parties to enable oversight. Where any District approaches its allocated threshold, OCC will seek timely updates from the Consultant to support informed decisions regarding the authorisation of additional work or funding. While not contractually binding, this reflects OCC's expectations for delivery oversights and budget transparency.

- 6.11 Should all Districts terminate their participation at Stage Gate 1 (after Phase 1), prior to District Level LAEP Action Plans being produced, the Parties will agree how unspent OxLAEP Budget could be deployed within the OxLAEP Programme (see Appendix 1 – OxLAEP business case and Appendix 2 – OxLAEP Scope) to achieve the most beneficial outcome and make a corresponding recommendation to OJIC. OCC deliverables will be unaffected. Where one or more districts terminate their participation at Stage Gate 1 (after Phase 1), prior to District Level LAEP Action Plans being produced, OCC reserves the right, subject any consent required from OJIC, to allocate a maximum of £20,000.00 to each such district from the OxLAEP Budget for suitable projects and actions for county-wide delivery under Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire "PaZCO" and Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan "ONZRMAP".

## 7. MEETING SCHEDULE

- 7.1 The Parties I intend to collaborate and participate in:

7.1.1 Fortnightly project monitoring meetings with the Consultant.

7.1.2 EPWG meetings at decision points, up to six per year.

7.1.3 Quarterly ESB meetings, at decision points. Meetings outside of the quarterly schedule may be called if urgent decisions that exceed the agreed scope tolerances in EPWGs remit are required.

7.1.4 Two Stage Gate review meetings after Phase 1 and Phase 2.

7.1.5 Two lessons learned meetings with all Partners, the first at the Stage Gate 2, the second at the Stage Gate 3. Any Party that has terminated their participation at any Stage Gate will be invited and encouraged to contribute to the lessons learned meetings.

- 7.2 Additional meetings can be arranged on an ad-hoc basis if agreed by the affected Partners (including the Parties and the Consultant); the Parties shall endeavor to support such meetings, if within resourcing capacity.

7.2.1 Phase 1 only: OCC to conduct short weekly agile delivery meetings with the Consultant. The Districts may join these meetings.

7.2.2 Phase 2 only: participating Districts will conduct delivery meetings with the Consultant as required to deliver the committed outcomes.

## 8. DATA SHARING:

- 8.1 The Parties will endeavor to share data within scope of the OxLAEP Programme with OCC and the Consultant within 4 weeks of request, taking heed of regulatory and commercial constraints, including all relevant data protection legislation
- 8.2 Data shared under the Programme will be viewable by all Parties, within regulatory and commercial constraints, unless explicitly agreed otherwise for specific datasets.
- 8.3 The Parties will endeavour to enter into a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) to support the objectives of this Programme. Under such a DSA, OCC will be the data processor and will share all data compiled from the Parties of this MoU with the Consultant. (see Appendix 7: Data Sharing Agreement).
- 8.4 Data shared under the Programme is anticipated to be used within Distribution Network Operator energy project planning tools such as Local Area Net Zero Accelerator “LENZA”, Planning GIS and other digital tools utilised under the OxLAEP Programme.
- 8.5 The Parties have the right to withhold any categories of data that is reasonably deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive. This data should be marked as sensitive.
- 8.6 It is the responsibility of the Party providing the data to declare any such constraints explicitly, and in writing, and ensure that constraints are recorded in the meta data.

## 9. COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

- 9.1 A full communications plan (the “Action Plan”) will be developed for Programme by the Parties, convened by OCC, but mutually agreed.
- 9.2 No Party will be obliged to take part in any communication event.
- 9.3 No Party will be obliged to publish their LAEP Action Plan
- 9.4 All Parties should be mindful of communication risks affecting any Party, and to consider such risks before releasing communications.
- 9.5 Any press engagement or press releases to be coordinated with all Parties and Partners. Press engagement lead by OCC during Phase 1 and Phase 3 of the Project and the Districts during Phase 2.
- 9.6 The Parties shall seek to promote the engagement events via their own available channels to maximise involvement.

## SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

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## 10. SPECIFIC ROLE OF OCC

- 10.1 To convene and coordinate Programme activities in collaboration with the Parties and Partners and monitor Programme KPIs.
- 10.2 To contract manage and monitor the Contract, ensure Consultants report timely and appropriately on Project progress, follow contractual procedures, and deliver on their KPIs.
- 10.3 To chair and administer the fortnightly Project meetings, ensuring EPWG is invited to partake in the meeting every two months.



- 10.4 To administer the ESB meetings.
- 10.5 To administer and audit the OxLAEP funds, being accountable to OLJC as the funder, under supervision of the OCC commercial board, and within the delegated authority secured for the OxLAEP Programme for the director for Economy and Place.
- 10.6 Where OCC hosts in person engagement events, OCC to support the Consultant with securing a venue and covering venue cost, including catering costs and technical support if so agreed.
- 10.7 Accept that during Phase 2, Districts may diverge from each other in their approaches to achieve Phase 2 outcomes.
- 10.8 Support and coordinate collective Phase 2 delivery of some actions with all or some of the parties, if so agreed.
- 10.9 To conduct themselves in line with the principles set out in section 4 of this document.

## 11. SPECIFIC ROLE OF ALL DISTRICTS

Districts will endeavor:

- 11.1 To participate and contribute to Programme activities in collaboration with the Parties and Partners, within the scope of the OxLAEP Programme.
- 11.2 To chair and administer the respective Phase 2 Project delivery meetings, ensuring that the Consultant is supported with securing appropriate engagement from the respective internal stakeholders.
- 11.3 To support the Consultant in identifying and engaging the relevant external stakeholders, in line with the engagement programme agreed under the Contract at contract award.
- 11.4 Where a District hosts in-person engagement events, the respective District is to support the Consultant with securing a venue, and covering venue cost, including catering costs and technical support -- if agreed and subject to available budget. Alternative cost-sharing arrangements may be considered by mutual agreement.

## 12. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF OCIC:

- 12.1 To support the Consultant with incorporating the outputs of the ZCOP Industrial Decarbonisation Study (ZCOP ID) into OxLAEP under Phase 1, and, if pursued, Phase 2.

## 13. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF CDC:

- 13.1 To support the Consultant with incorporating the outputs of the North-West Bicester Energy Study, if progressed, into OxLAEP under Phase 1, and, if pursued, Phase 2.

## 14. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF WODC:

- 14.1 To support the Consultant with incorporating the outputs of Eynsham CAPzero into OxLAEP under Phase 1, and, if pursued, Phase 2.

## 15. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF SODC:

- 15.1 To support the Consultant with incorporating the outputs of a Hyper-local LAEP, if identified, into OxLAEP under Phase 1, and, if pursued, Phase 2.

## **16. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOWHDC:**

- 16.1 To support the Consultant with incorporating the outputs of a Hyper-local LAEP, if identified, into OxLAEP under Phase 1, and, if pursued, Phase 2.

## **17. SPECIFIC ROLES OF OFFICERS IDENTIFIED AS INTERNAL ADVISERS BY EACH AUTHORITY:**

17.1 To support the Parties in the execution of their input in the context of the OxLAEP Programme, particularly to:

17.1.1 Partake in workshops and focus group within agreed resourcing constraints, be open to learning and provide insights to the best of their ability, sharing learnings with their wider teams and engaging them as required. (see Appendix 3: Mobilisation Report – page 49 to 54).

17.1.2 Partake in capability building events, such as capacity literacy webinars.

17.1.3 Provide data requested by OxLAEP lead officers within four weeks from request date, data requested by the Consultant within four weeks from request date.

17.2 Support the development of the full business case of the long-term LAEP function, including defining the parameters of a benefits realisation plan.

## **PLANNING OFFICERS ONLY WILL ENDEAVOR TO:**

17.3 Engage with and support the spatial district LAEP development process, including by representing the district planning teams at EPWG meetings and participating in energy capacity training opportunities that arise through the OxLAEP Programme.

17.4 Support the Consultant in integrating OxLAEP datasets into GIS planning tools, if agreed.

17.5 Provide data on new developments annually, as requested under the DFES process.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS ONLY WILL ENDEAVOR TO:**

17.6 Support the Consultant in the delivery of the risk and opportunity assessments under this MOU, providing data and locally specific insights on how actions may impact local communities.

17.7 Support the development of investment related work under this Programme, such as an investment portfolio or prospectus, or community grant scheme.

## **COMMUNITIES, ENGAGEMENT, AND EQUALITY OFFICERS ONLY WILL ENDEAVOR TO:**

17.8 Support the Consultant in identifying impacts of LAEP policies on vulnerable groups, and with the delivery of equality impact assessments for action plans and the benefits realisation plan, if pursued.

17.9 Support OxLAEP lead officers and the Consultant in the delivery of an engagement strategy and engagement events.

## COUNTERPARTS

17.10 This Contract may be executed in any number of counterparts and this shall have the same effect as if the signatures and, where applicable, seals on the counterparts were on a single copy of this Contract.

## SIGNATURES

(1) Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Signed:

Name:

Position:

(2) Oxford City Council (OCiC)

Signed:

Name:

Position:

(3) Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Signed:

Name:

Position:

(4) Cherwell District Council (CDC)

Signed:

Name:

Position:

(5) South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)

Signed:

Name:

Position:

(6) Vale of the White Horse District Council (VOWHDC)

Signed:

Name:

Position:

(7) West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Signed: H Kenyon

Name: Hannah Kenyon

Position: Climate Change Manager

## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX 1: OXLAEP FULL BUSINESS CASE



SENSITIVE OxLAEP  
FOP FULL Business Case

### APPENDIX 2: OXLAEP SCOPE



Oxfordshire LAEP  
Scope - Final.docx

### APPENDIX 3: MOBILISATION REPORT



SENSITIVE DRAFT  
Project Mobilisation R

### APPENDIX 4 THE OXLAEP CONSULTANCY CONTRACT



OxLAEP Consultancy  
Contract CLEAN 27.01

### APPENDIX 5 MEMBERSHIP OF ESB AND EPWG

The following list is up-to-date and included in the MoU as the current membership of ESB and EPWG, or such other representatives as notified from time to time to ESB/EPWG.



ESB Membership  
May 2025.docx



EPWG Membership  
May 2025.xlsx

### APPENDIX 6 GOVERNANCE AND PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The following content is captured from the Full Business Case.

#### **Management and Governance - Overview**

##### **OxLAEP governance:**

OxLAEP Governance was established under the OLIIC Infrastructure Advisory Group to provide the strategic direction and operational resource necessary to agree and then deliver a LAEP programme (LAEPs and LAEP function for the County). The governance structure comprises a strategic level Executive Steering Board (ESB) and an operational level Energy Planning Working Group (EPWG). Voting rights are restricted to the six Local Authorities on these boards, however EPWG and ESB endeavour to make decisions by consensus with all board members.

**Escalation route and tolerances:**

The escalation route on programme scope change outside of tolerances are via EPWG, ESB, OLJC, within tolerances:

**ESB decision tolerances:**

- Decisions over expenditure of unallocated OxLAEP contingency budget or of any funding allocated to OxLAEP from outside the OLJC budget, such as grant funding, where this supports delivery of the Programme within the agreed scope.
- The removal of Outputs or Deliverables, if all OxLAEP objectives agreed by OLJC can still be secured.
- An extension of the programme to beyond 24 months, by up to twelve months.
- Any contract changes (in alignment with Oxfordshire's contract change procedure as contracting authority), within OxLAEP scope.

**OLJC decision tolerances:**

- Any addition or removal of programme objectives.
- Any decision on termination of the contract.
- Expenditure of OxLAEP funding for purposes outside the scope of the OxLAEP programme or exceeding the OxLAEP budget.
- Where a scope change requires a supplier contract change, the contract change process set out in the Ove Arup contract will be followed. A scope change may not be possible, where a contract change cannot be secured from the successful supplier.

Partner authorities may want to assess standing delegations for Executive officers represented at the ESB and consider putting additional delegations in place to enable effective escalation and decision making.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):**

- A non-binding MOU has been drawn up by all six participating authorities, setting out terms of reference to provide clarity to programme partners and the successful supplier. MOU signing is a requirement for a local authority to move into Phase 2 - Action Planning).

**Funding administration:**

- OLJC monies will be held and administered by OCC as the Convening Authority/Lead. Expenditure decision within scope, such as paying Ove Arup invoices, will not require OxLAEP governance approval.

**Contracting authority:**

- OCC is the contracting authority. As such the standard Oxfordshire consultancy contract variation process will be followed where variation is required. If such contract change requires a corresponding scope change, scope change approval will need to be secured through OxLAEP governance prior to a contract change being approved. If this is not successful, then a contract change may not be approved. The judgement whether a change is within or outside of OLJC scope will be taken by ESB, who may refer to OLJC if there is uncertainty.

**Programme roles:**

**Client project managers** are responsible to ensure that programme progress monitoring and risk management are executed appropriately by the supplier project manager, and that the supplier is given sufficient support to deliver the programme. Ongoing Client Project Management will be delivered by OCC/Energy Systems Lead. During Phase 2 of the programme, Client Project Management will be provided by the participating Districts for the delivery of their respective Action Plans working with their respective supplier project leads.

**The programme sponsor** (OLJC ESB chair) acts as an escalation point to support and unblock programme progress.

Oversight ESB level:

- **Senior responsible owner:** Robin Rogers (Oxfordshire Director for Economy and Place).
- **ESB quorum:** Cherwell DC, Oxford CC, South Oxon, DC, West Oxon DC, Vale of White Horse DC.

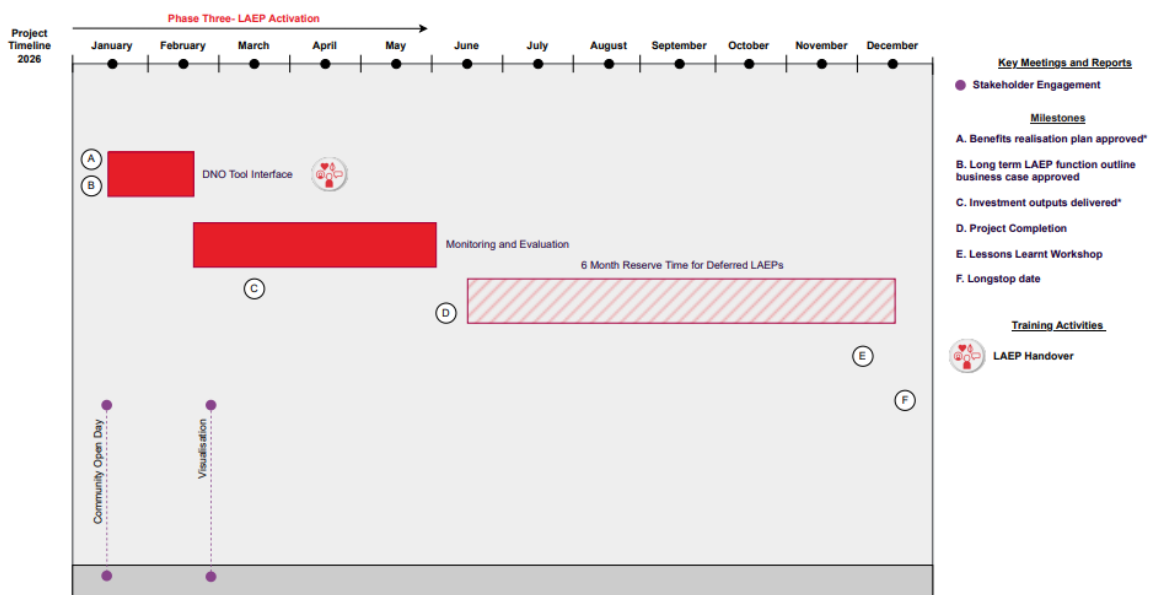
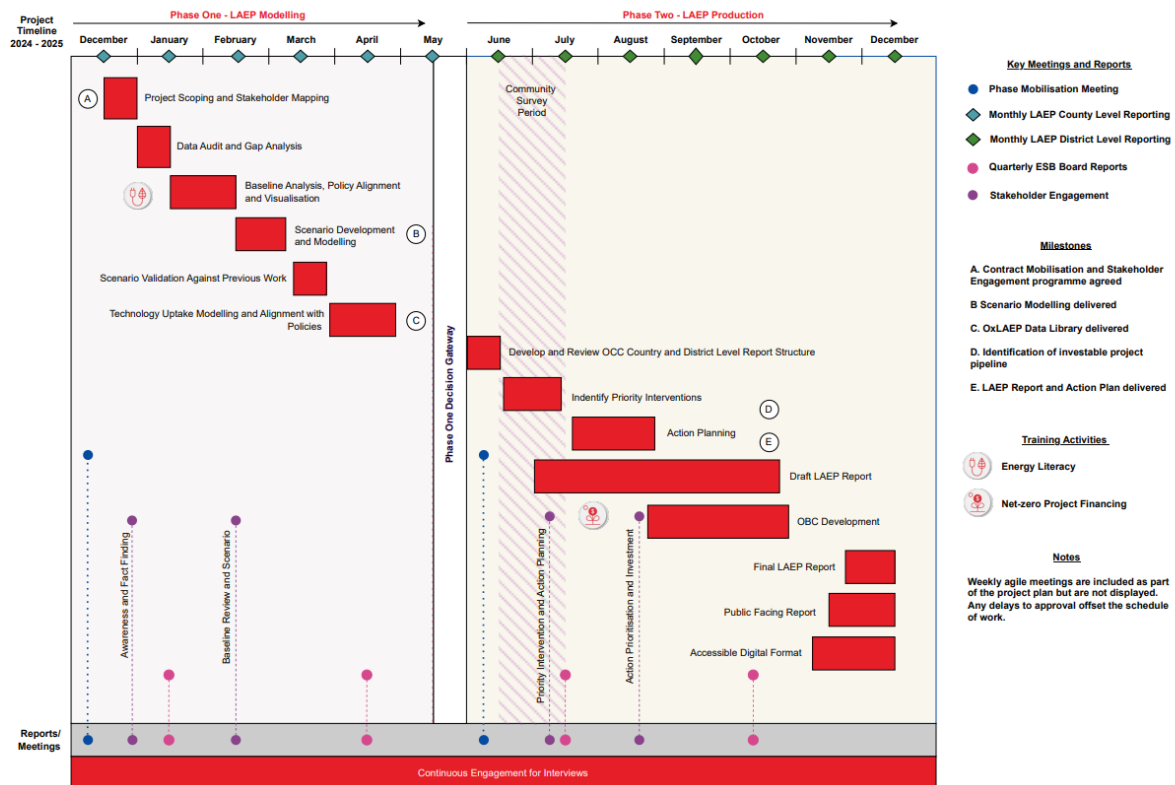
Oversight EPWG level:

- **Senior responsible customer Phase 1 and Phase 3:** EPWG chair: Oxfordshire Energy Systems and Investment Manager.
- **Senior responsible customer Phase 2:** EPWG. Quorum: Cherwell DC, Oxford CC, South Oxon, DC, West Oxon DC, Vale of White Horse DC
- **Senior responsible supplier:** Ove Arup Project Director.

**Contract Management** will be delivered by OCC/Energy Systems Lead.

### **Programme Schedule for Delivery**






## APPENDIX 7 DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

This MOU is to be read alongside the signed DSA between the Parties. This exists as a separate agreement to be signed separately.

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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>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Andrew Prosser, Executive Member for Climate Change and Nature Recovery Email: <a href="mailto:Andrew.Prosser@westoxon.gov.uk">Andrew.Prosser@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves, Head of Planning Email: <a href="mailto:Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">Chris.Hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report authors</p>	<p>Melanie Dodd, Principal Ecologist (Nature Recovery Lead) Email: <a href="mailto:Melanie.Dodd@westoxon.gov.uk">Melanie.Dodd@westoxon.gov.uk</a>; and Tatiana Bell, Nature Recovery Officer Email: <a href="mailto:Tatiana.Bell@westoxon.gov.uk">Tatiana.Bell@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To consider the endorsement of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy for publication.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A: Description of the Strategy Area – circulated separately Annex B: Statement of Biodiversity Priorities – circulated separately Annex C: Species Priority List – circulated separately Annex D: Interactive Local Habitat Map (link in section 11)</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Endorse the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy for publication by Oxfordshire County Council.</li> </ol>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> <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>

Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Extensive consultation was carried out by Oxfordshire County Council as part of the preparation of the LNRS including Phase 1 consultation (February to March 2024) Phase 2 consultation (May – June 2024) and Phase 3 (October to December 2024).

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- I.1** This report outlines the purpose and scope of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the decision to be made by West Oxfordshire District Council, as a “supporting authority” to endorse the publication of the LNRS by Oxfordshire County Council (the “responsible authority”) [OCC].
- I.2** Members will be aware of the LNRS as a previous report was presented at Informal Executive on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 prior to the last public consultation.
- I.3** The main purpose of the LNRS is to identify locations where the creation and/or enhancement of certain habitats would provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment, including reconnecting habitats as part of an ecological network.
- I.4** However, this does not mean that landowners and managers will be required to implement these measures. Instead, the Government is encouraging the delivery of targeted actions for nature recovery as opportunities for funding and investment arise and as part of other projects and plans. The LNRS itself does not preclude or prevent any other type of land use or development, but it is part of a wider policy framework that helps plan development in a way that protects and improves the natural environment. Councils have a legal duty to consider the LNRS when creating or updating their local plans, which guide where and how building and development happen.
- I.5** The LNRS is comprised of 4 key elements:
  - a) Description of the Strategy Area
  - b) Statement of Biodiversity Priorities
  - c) Species Priority List
  - d) Local Habitat Map
- I.6** The key steps taken in the process are summarised in Figure I overleaf.
- I.7** WODC officers has had an integral role in the creation of the Oxfordshire LNRS through the steering group, technical sub-groups and through the public consultation process.
- I.8** As a minimum, supporting authorities are required to confirm that they “raise no objection” to the publication of the LNRS. However, OCC is asking supporting authorities to go further than this, to endorse the LNRS for publication and in doing so, to demonstrate their support for its subsequent implementation.

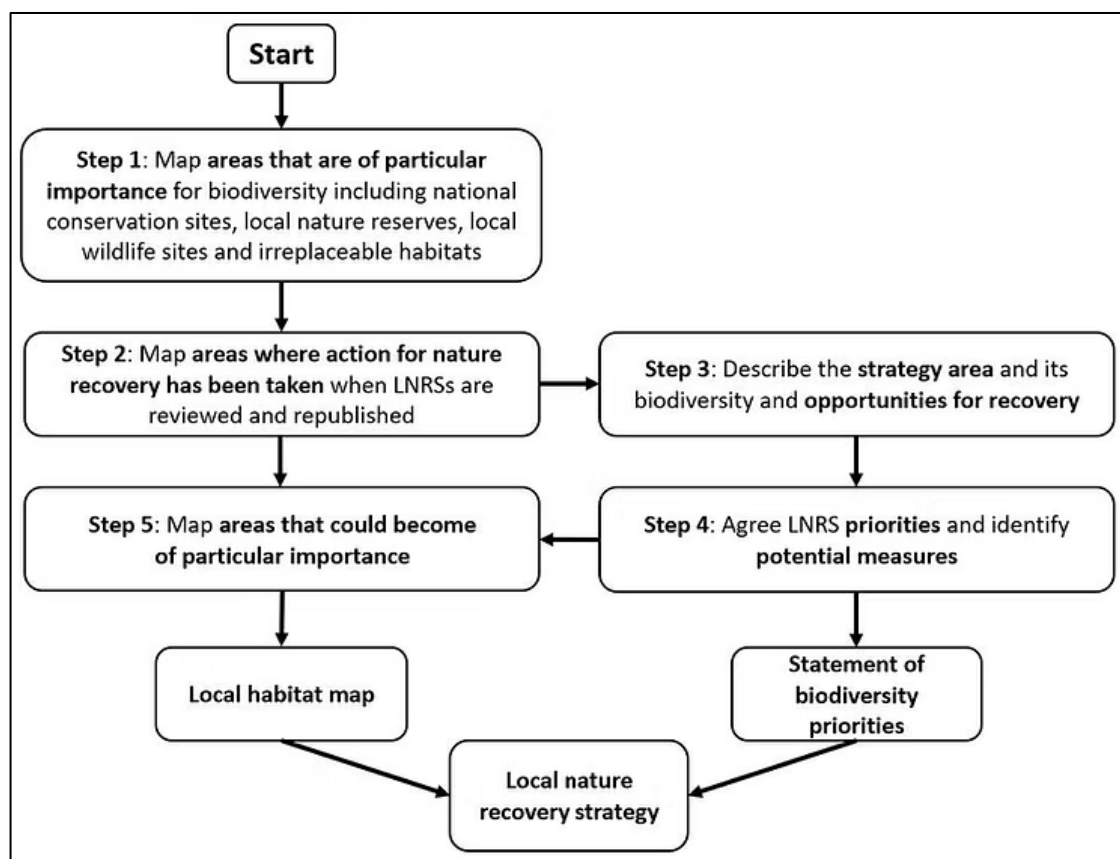


Figure 1: Image taken from the 'Description of the Strategy Area' document (page 15).

- 1.9 OCC intends to publish the final LNRS on its website in early November 2025, therefore, all of the supporting authorities are taking it through their internal decision-making processes between July and October 2025.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 LNRS' are England-wide strategies as stipulated in sections 104 to 108 of the Environment Act 2021 to deliver the Lawton Review principles of 'More, Bigger, Better and Joined' ecological networks<sup>1</sup>. The LNRS' were developed to address the depletion of nature within England and to target landscape-scale nature recovery.
- 2.2 OCC was appointed as one of 48 'Responsible Authorities' by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2023.
- 2.3 WODC, along with the other Districts, Oxford City Council and Natural England are involved as 'Supporting Authorities'.

1

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402170324/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

- 2.4 As a supporting authority, Officers represent WODC on the LNRS Steering Group, the supporting authority group, and the communications and engagement and the species prioritisation groups. Officers from various departments have also attended other specific meetings, including one on planning policy considerations.
- 2.5 The LNRS will assist with the implementation of the statutory biodiversity duty placed on public bodies (Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 which was strengthened in the Environment Act 2021), support local plans and become the strategy that is used to define Biodiversity Net Gain 'Strategic Significance' as part of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tools.
- 2.6 The LNRS sets out how and where people and organisations in Oxfordshire could work together to create a more resilient ecological network with great benefits for both people and wildlife. Additionally, the strategy offers recommended actions to be taken in the wider countryside to improve the natural environment across the county.
- 2.7 The publicly available version of the earlier draft LNRS documents and map are still hosted online<sup>2</sup>. A hard copy is available in the Members Room (G16) at the Woodgreen office.
- 2.8 Supporting authorities are required to confirm in writing that they agree to proceed to publication within 28 days of the Responsible Authority providing them with the final publication draft of the LNRS. The Council has worked closely with OCC throughout the preparation of the LNRS and it was agreed that supporting authorities would be given time to take it through their full democratic process. As a result, the final LNRS was received by the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 and OCC has asked for responses before 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

### 3. THE OXFORDSHIRE LNRS – AN OVERVIEW

- 3.1 In line with the statutory requirements, the Oxfordshire LNRS is made up of four elements:
  - a) The **Description of the Strategy Area** summarises Oxfordshire's biodiversity, habitats and areas of particular importance, as well as the river catchments and underlying geology. It also outlines the opportunities, pressures and a summary of what needs to be done to enhance biodiversity.
  - b) The **Statement of Biodiversity Priorities** has a list of the most important outcomes (priorities) and a list of actions (potential measures) to achieve the recovery of nature in Oxfordshire. There are 40 priorities and 85 priority measures, 40 of which have been mapped on the Local Habitat Map.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy>

- The potential measures would also deliver multiple benefits, for example, using nature-based solutions to help with water quality regulation, flood protection and shading and cooling.
  - Specific actions have also been included that aim to deliver nature recovery in **urban** areas. These actions would help to increase biodiversity and natural green spaces in villages, towns, and cities in Oxfordshire and could be referenced by local communities in funding applications for nature recovery projects. Recommended actions include increasing street trees, creating green roofs, wildlife-friendly gardens and parks, or installing bird boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog homes.
- c) The **Species Priorities List** is a list of species that require specific additional actions that goes beyond the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities. In Oxfordshire, this includes 63 bespoke species actions, which target 105 species.
- Over 800 threatened and near threatened species are expected to benefit through large-scale habitat improvements contained within the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.
  - Current and historical distribution maps across Oxfordshire are also displayed in this document for some species and some distribution maps have been added onto the Local Habitat Map.
- d) The **Local Habitat Map** - an online and interactive map tool that shows:
- Existing areas of Oxfordshire that are important for biodiversity;
  - Areas that could become particularly important for biodiversity – these are priority locations for creating a nature recovery network in Oxfordshire, and mapped with a range of habitat creation and enhancement priorities, as well as some species-specific actions to deliver in these;
  - The social and wider environmental co-benefits of the potential measures, such as flood protection
  - Connectivity across the county and linking areas of particular importance for biodiversity, such as Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); and
  - Incorporates existing Conservation Target Areas (see pages 64-66 in the ‘Description of the Strategy Area’).

It should be noted that not all the measures needed to implement the LNRS are included (e.g. where they are wider than a discrete location or are not part of the strategic habitat network) and not all possible components of the network are shown (only the priority linkages).

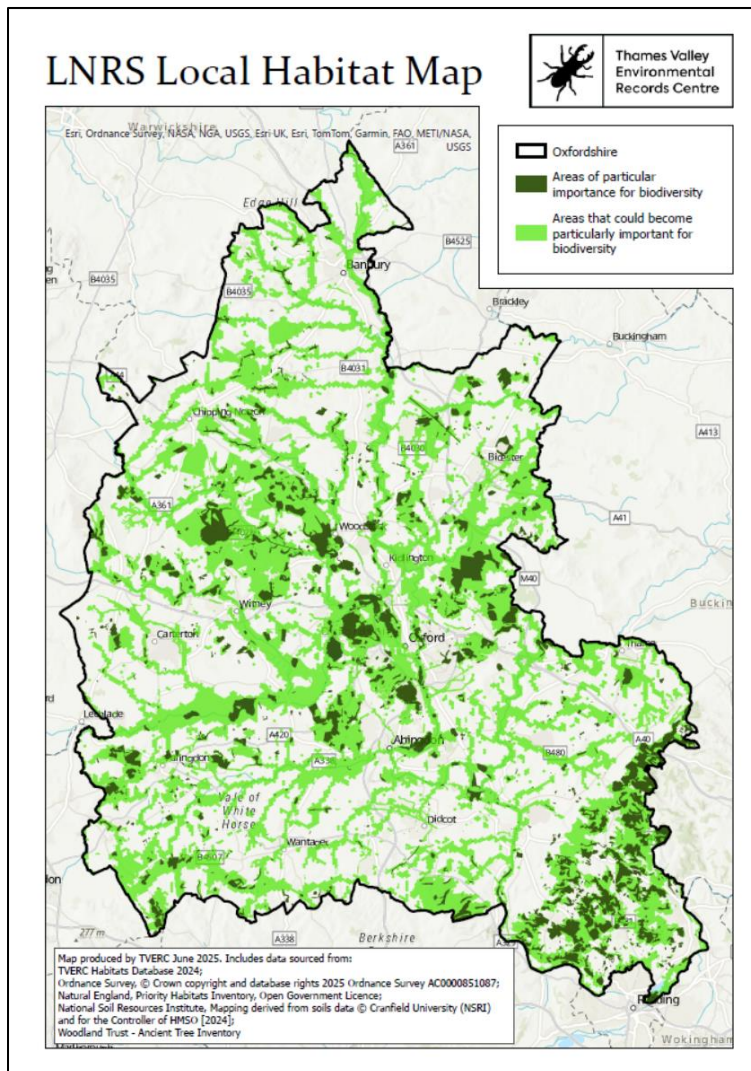


Users of the LNRS's interactive 'Local Habitat Map' tool will be able to see which nature recovery actions (e.g. woodland creation, fen restoration, pond creation or any of the other mapped actions for habitats or species) have been recommended for specific location(s), to help them to consider the options for a variety of projects.

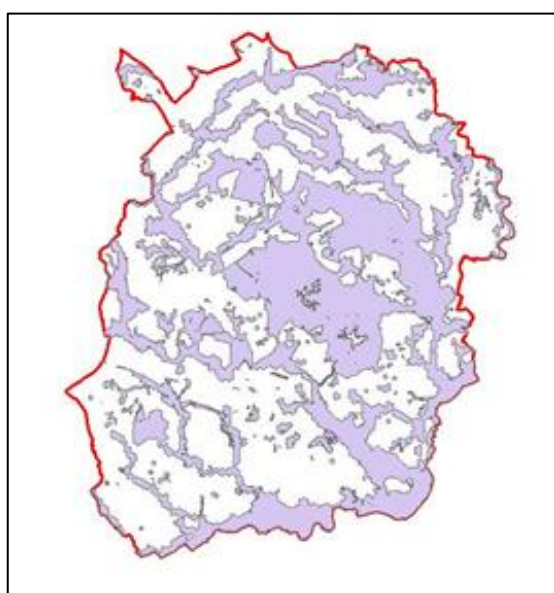
- 3.2 The LNRS is expected to help people and organisations across the county to coordinate effort and funding opportunities towards the delivery of a network for nature at all scales.
- 3.3 The LNRS identifies just over 40% of Oxfordshire as part of the priority nature recovery network, exceeding the global target for 30% of land to be protected for nature by 2030 (UK Biodiversity Summit, COP15 held in 2022), which Central Government committed to in their Environmental Improvement Plan 2023<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.4 The '**Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity**' in Oxfordshire currently make up around 6.5% of the land mass and account for 5.6% of West Oxfordshire.
- 3.5 The figures for the area within the whole nature recovery network (both the areas of existing importance for biodiversity and those that could become important) are around 40% in both Oxfordshire and for West Oxfordshire, as depicted in Figures 2 and 3 respectively.
- 3.6 The Oxfordshire LNRS was consulted on publicly in draft form from 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024. This generated around 2,130 responses indicating strong local interest and support for delivering nature recovery in Oxfordshire. This feedback included suggestions for additional biodiversity priorities, actions to take and mapped locations for related projects.
- 3.7 WODC submitted a formal response to the public consultation in October 2024, including comments on Council-owned sites to ensure they were accurately represented, as well as feeding through comments from specialist officers, including Ecology, Flooding, Planning, Climate Change, Nature Recovery and Economic Development.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criteria-for-30by30-on-land-in-england/30by30-on-land-in-england-confirmed-criteria-and-next-steps>



*Figure 2: Extent of the priority nature recovery network in Oxfordshire – map taken from the ‘Description of the Strategy Area’ document (page 59).*



*Figure 3: The nature recovery network in West Oxfordshire (GIS map layer).*

**3.8** The LNRS public consultation was advertised via several Council social media channels, shared on the Climate Action Bulletin, emailed to all Parish Meetings and Town and Parish Councils, as well as schools within the district.

**3.9** WODC Officers' consultation comments and responses from OCC are summarised below:

- a) *Comment:* Description of Strategy Area – raised the importance of nature-rich green areas in and around urban areas to enhance the appeal of a place and make it more attractive to residents, workers, visitors and businesses, whilst also boosting the local economy.

*Response:* A page has been added to the Description of Strategy Area to describe the benefits of nature for people. References to “people and nature” bring more attention to the inter-relationship and benefits for people and nature, explaining how urban areas can contribute towards nature recovery through the LNRS.

- b) *Comment:* Statement of Biodiversity Priorities – under priority 37, reference could be made to the creation of sustainable drainage systems in improving biodiversity with the wider benefit of flood reduction, for example, rain gardens, mini ponds, orchards, wetlands as well as large balancing ponds.

*Response:* SUDS and other innovative methods to manage water have been specifically added and encouraged within the priority to enhance biodiversity in villages, towns, cities and greenspaces. Additionally, other measures were added to this section to encourage the delivery of wider benefits near to where people live.

- c) *Comment:* Species Prioritisation List – to make the document more accessible, the species could be grouped into taxonomic groups, for example birds, mammals, reptiles, invertebrates, plants, fungi and lichen.

*Response:* This was taken to the LNRS Communications and Engagement Working Group who supported this change and the species was separated into high level groupings such as amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles.

- d) *Comment:* Request for the wider benefits of the LNRS in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities to be added to the Local Habitat Map.

*Response:* Natural Capital data from Oxford University and the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery will be shared alongside the LNRS data on the final map viewer to enable people to build projects that target biodiversity enhancement as well as achieving wider benefits in priority areas. This means that the separate “wider benefits” data can be added and amended as and when necessary, rather than waiting for the formal LNRS

review. On the list of biodiversity priorities there are also indications of which ecosystem services, or wider benefits, could be best delivered through each priority and the relevant actions.

- e) *Comment:* Request for additional areas of WODC-owned and managed land to be included on the local habitat map.

*Response:* Sites have been incorporated that align with the LNRS task to prioritise locations. Not all of the additional areas requested by supporting authorities, local partners or local people could be added as the mapped locations would not represent a prioritised network of nature in Oxfordshire. However, any unmapped areas should not be interpreted as ignorance of what is happening there, as they are still important spaces for nature recovery work. The LNRS does not intend to prevent work happening in unmapped locations and actions listed in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities can still be delivered anywhere in the county.

- 3.10** OCC and the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery analysed the comments and published a consultation response report, and are currently working on a “You Said, We Did” document, which will be published alongside the LNRS.
- 3.11** The Council’s Nature Recovery Plan contains actions that are relevant to the LNRS, including feeding into its publication, supporting its delivery and transferring relevant policies from the LNRS into the upcoming Local Plan. Progress on the delivery of the Nature Recovery Plan was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- 3.12** With regard to the relationship between the LNRS and local planning policy, the Government’s statutory guidance<sup>4</sup> confirms that LNRS’ are important tools for helping local councils plan development in a way that protects and improves the natural environment. Councils have a legal duty to consider these strategies when creating or updating their local plans, which guide where and how building and development happen.
- 3.13** When deciding on planning policies or development proposals, councils should use this information in the LNRS to guide decisions, for example, by protecting key areas, directing development away from sensitive sites and securing the implementation of potential measures within developments. By aligning local plans with the LNRS, councils can make better-informed decisions that balance development needs with nature recovery, ensuring the best areas for habitat improvement are safeguarded and enhanced.
- 3.14** LNRS can also play a critical role in supporting Biodiversity Net Gain, particularly offsite gains to ensure that they are delivered in a way that maximises their biodiversity and

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<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1146160/Local\\_nature\\_recovery\\_strategy\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1146160/Local_nature_recovery_strategy_statutory_guidance.pdf)

located where the habitat creation and enhancement will have most benefit (“strategic significance” multiplier in the biodiversity metric calculation tool).

- 3.15** In recognition of this, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 Preferred Policy Options Consultation Paper contained around 32 no. references to the LNRS, including within the core objectives and the core, place-based and development management policies. The aim is to ensure that developers are contributing effectively and meaningfully to local nature recovery, particularly the implementation of the opportunities in the LNRS.
- 3.16** WODC will have further opportunity to consider how the LNRS can influence the policies and strategy of the Local Plan as it continues to take shape.

#### **4. ENDORSING THE LNRS**

- 4.1** Helping to deliver the outcomes and targets in the LNRS is an important part of WODC’s commitment to nature recovery, including the implementation of the Council’s own Nature Recovery Plan<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.2** As a minimum, in accordance with the legislation, WODC is asked to confirm that it “raises no objection” to the publication of the LNRS. However, having reviewed the LNRS and been involved in its preparation, Officers believe that the final LNRS is a comprehensive, well thought through and innovative strategy that will help to drive the recovery of nature in Oxfordshire. Officers are therefore recommending to Members that the strategy should be formally endorsed for publication, as requested by OCC.
- 4.3** Endorsement would demonstrate the Council’s commitment to the LNRS and its use to inform decisions, plans, strategies and projects. It would act as a clear message to local residents, communities and partners that the Council fully supports the aims and objectives of the LNRS and would like to see it being used and implemented locally by as many people and organisations as possible. This would help to ensure that all plans and projects are based on up-to-date information and take account of the opportunities for nature recovery identified in the LNRS.
- 4.4** Endorsing the publication of the LNRS would align with Council’s commitment to deliver its Nature Recovery Plan, including the following three key aims and objectives:
- a) Facilitating communities and partnerships for landscape-scale nature recovery;
  - b) Protecting and enhancing biodiversity on sites owned and managed by the Council;  
and
  - c) Safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity through policies and development.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/nvtbk0ob/nature-recovery-plan-2024-to-2030.pdf>

## 5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 The Council could choose to raise an objection to the publication of the LNRS. There is a specific legal process for this, and the Council would have to issue a 'Publication Advisory Notice' to the Responsible Authority and the Secretary of State stating why the publication cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation and explaining why the LNRS is materially deficient. Considering our findings so far, this would be a difficult position to support and demonstrate.
- 5.2 The Council could choose not to endorse the LNRS for publication. However, this would contradict three of the priorities in the Council Plan 2023-2027:
- a) *Priority 2: Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All* – including the provision of green to improve physical and mental well-being;
  - b) *Priority 3: Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife* – fulfilling the council's statutory biodiversity duty, enhancing biodiversity, supporting nature recovery and contributing towards the production of the LNRS; and
  - c) *Priority 4: Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency* – including encouraging the use of nature-based solutions.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report raises no direct financial implications for the Council. Any financial implications arising from the subsequent delivery phase of the LNRS would be taken through the usual democratic processes and the financial implications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.2 DEFRA have committed to providing funding to Responsible Authorities for the transition to delivery of the LNRS, with details to follow later this financial year.
- 6.3 Partnership working amplifies outcomes and presents excellent value for money, so external funding would need to be sourced to enable the implementation of LNRS projects.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report raises no direct legal implications, other than having a bearing on the Council's statutory biodiversity duty, i.e. the Council's Nature Recovery Plan, and the implementation of wider nature recovery and climate-related projects.

- 7.2 The Environment Act 2021<sup>6</sup> requires Responsible Authorities in England to prepare and publish Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and the Environment (LNRS) (Procedure) Regulations 2023<sup>7</sup> make provision in relation to the preparation of the LNRS, particularly the procedure to be followed in their preparation and publication, and review and re-publication, which the council will follow.

## 8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 This report presents no significant risks. WODC are already implementing actions within the LNRS through their Nature Recovery Plan and encouraging others to do so. WODC will continue to work collaboratively with the other local authorities in Oxfordshire into the delivery phase to ensure continuity through Local Government Reorganisation.

## 9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1 This report raises no issues in terms of the Equalities Act 2010 or the Public Sector Equality Duty. The report has been screened using the Council's Equality Impact Assessment and no implications have been identified. The report is not recommending the introduction or adoption of, or change to, a WODC service, policy, strategy, practice, plan or team structure at this stage.
- 9.2 The decision to be made by Executive is purely about whether WODC should endorse the publication of a strategy that will support people to make informed choices about the implementation of nature recovery projects in the future. It does not require any action and will not have a significant impact on any staff or members of the community.
- 9.3 However, a key aim of the LNRS is to be as inclusive as possible. In order to realise the potential for nature recovery in the county, it is aimed at all potential users and delivery partners. The final published version of the LNRS will be designed with accessibility in mind and will be supported by several targeted user guides for different groups; including individuals (e.g. residents), farmers and landowners, town and parish councils and parish meetings, schools, community groups and businesses, as well as planning officers, to provide guidance about how it can be used.

## 10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Oxfordshire LNRS sets a strategic vision and framework that will be used to drive forward nature recovery in Oxfordshire with recognition of the role that nature-based solutions play in providing multiple benefits for people and climate resilience.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2023/341/made>


- 10.2** Use of the Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool is not appropriate for the high-level strategy set out in this report. The climate and ecological impacts of actions that the Council may take to deliver the LNRS will be assessed using the Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool as they come forward.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** Annex A, B and C should be viewed in conjunction with the interactive LNRS Local Habitat Map available to view here: (please copy and paste into your browser)  
[https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3362a5d771624e3abe54c4e9a9b1d77c?views=View#data\\_s=id%3A944edc60bf854ea4b269f1c1cfa072ef-197e3fba635-layer-3-3%3A22165](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3362a5d771624e3abe54c4e9a9b1d77c?views=View#data_s=id%3A944edc60bf854ea4b269f1c1cfa072ef-197e3fba635-layer-3-3%3A22165)
- 11.2** Please note that the documents contained in Annexes A, B and C are still draft and are subject to final minor amendments by the OCC design team for publication (e.g. minor errors to be corrected and links added).

(END)



 <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>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26 QUARTER ONE</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Alaric Smith Executive Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk">alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk">madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance Email: <a href="mailto:georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk">georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Detailed Revenue Budget Comparison Annex B – Capital Spend against Budget</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter One 2025-2026</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:  I. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter One 2025-2026</p>
<p>Corporate Priority</p>	<p>Working Together for West Oxfordshire</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Consultees</p>	<p>None</p>

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the financial performance of the council's activities for the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year from 1 April 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
- 1.2. The report considers the significant variances in revenue income and expenditure against the approved revenue budget set by Full Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 which anticipated a contribution of £91,280 to General Fund reserves.
- 1.3. The report also includes progress in delivering the approved Capital Programme and an updated MTFS in light of the Fairer Funding Review proposals. This is just an indication at this stage, the final proposals and impact will not be published by MHCLG until the end of October.
- 1.4. At this stage of the year a year-end forecast is not included. It will be part of subsequent quarterly budget monitoring reports as data becomes easier to extrapolate.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

### **Financial Performance Revenue Budget Monitoring - Summary**

- 2.1. At quarter 1 (Q1) there is an overall underspend **£260,745** against the profiled budget for the period. The key factors driving this revenue position are additional income from Trade Waste, the Leisure Contract, vacant posts and a better than expected performance in respect of the materials recycling contract.
- 2.2. The performance of fee earning services has been mixed in Q1, with Garden waste income showing signs of pressure at £30,000 behind target, Development Management on budget and Building Control £13,000 above target.
- 2.3. There are no significant overspends to report for Q1, an indication that a prudent revenue budget was set for 2025/26. It is however, early in the financial year and this very positive revenue position is likely to change as the year progresses.
- 2.4. The table below sets out the summary revenue monitoring position for the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 against profiled budget by service area.

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - Budget Monitoring

### Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/26 - Quarter 1, 1st April to 30th June 2025

Service Area	Quarter 1			
	Original Budget 2025/26	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£	£
Democratic and Committee Services	1,412,297	574,829	575,135	306
Environmental & Regulatory Services	784,557	177,559	162,891	(14,668)
Environmental Services	8,285,567	521,286	415,591	(105,695)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,062,851	536,828	534,236	(2,592)
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,230,097	1,489,556	1,491,290	1,734
Land, Legal & Property	841,492	206,082	167,256	(38,825)
Leisure & Communities	555,410	222,130	188,161	(33,969)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,383,153	266,976	200,359	(66,617)
Revenues & Housing Support	1,592,014	(372,661)	(365,313)	7,347
Investment Property and Retained Services	682,434	392,381	386,639	(5,741)
<b>Total cost of services</b>	<b>18,829,872</b>	<b>4,014,965</b>	<b>3,756,245</b>	<b>(258,720)</b>
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(1,156,228)	(289,057)	(291,082)	(2,025)
<b>Cost of services before financing:</b>	<b>17,673,644</b>	<b>3,725,908</b>	<b>3,465,163</b>	<b>(260,745)</b>

### Significant Variances

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

#### Environmental Services

##### Recycling

- 2.6. The recycling contract that commenced in September 2024 is performing better than expected from the original business case. Between September 2024 and March 2025 the contract saved the Council an average of £60,000 per month. Budget setting for 2025/26 reduced the base budget by £300,000 and in Q1 the contract is £25,000 underspent against this budget.

##### Green Waste

- 2.7. Historically, 95% of Green Waste licences are sold in the first quarter of the financial year. At the end of Q1 Green Waste has achieved income of £1.612m which is forecast to rise to £1.655m by year end or 96% of the budget. After costs, net income is £1.2m, which directly supports the provision of the Waste Service, the cost of which for 2025/26 is £8.6m.

## Trade Waste

- 2.8. Trade Waste is invoiced in April & September with payment taken by Direct Debit. In Q1, which covers Q1 & Q2 (April to September), income is £164,000 above target. This is partially offset by expenditure of £27,000 on bins and boxes, but a realistic estimate for the year end position is £260,000 underspent. The budget for 2026/27 will be adjusted to take into account the positive performance of the Trade Waste service.

## Land, Legal & Property

### Legal

- 2.9. The Legal shared service operates over Cotswold, West Oxfordshire and the Forest of Dean. Due to there being two vacancies in the service during Q1, Legal Services is showing an underspend of £27,918. Recruitment for the vacant posts has been successful, with postholders starting in Q2.

## Planning & Strategic Housing

### Development Management Appeals

- 2.10. The appeals budget is £24,975 underspent at Q1 indicating the difficulty in forecasting this budget as it is dependent on the actions of third parties and therefore outside of the Council's control. In setting the budget for 2025/26 it was considered prudent to preserve the expenditure budget from the previous year. This assumption will be challenged in the budget setting cycle for 2026/27, based on the number of appeals lodged this year.

### Conservation

- 2.11. There were two vacant posts in this service area throughout Q1, resulting in an underspend in employee costs of £24,458. These posts have now been recruited to with the postholders commencing employment during Q2. The current underspend in employee costs will therefore be carried through to year end.

### Leisure

- 2.12. The leisure contract is £41,000 ahead of budget, due to the inflationary uplift equal to CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation included in the contract. Unlike in previous years there is no income contingency against the contract sum, this will be reviewed as part of the budget setting process for 2026/27.

## Fairer Funding Review & Business Rates Reset

- 2.13. The Government's proposals for the reform to local government funding is out for consultation until 12 August. Following on from the results of this consultation, final proposals are expected from MHCLG by the end of October.
- 2.14. The government is proposing service-specific formulas (e.g., adult social care, children's services, highways) and a general "Foundation Formula" for other services.

- 2.15. There will be a phased approach to the formula element of the change i.e. in year one our settlement will be based on 2/3 the old formula and 1/3 the new formula. In year two it will be 1/3 the old formula and 2/3 the new formula etc.
- 2.16. There will be no phasing for the Business Rates reset which will be in effect for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 and it has been confirmed that New Homes Bonus will not be payable after 2025/26.
- 2.17. For most Councils there will be a 0% minimum funding floor to guarantee that funding does not fall in cash terms over the Spending Review period. However, West Oxfordshire is one of the circa 40 Councils who will not receive this guarantee and instead will be subject to a cash cut of between 5% & 7% in year one i.e. 2026/27. The confirmed percentage impact is expected to be released by MHCLG in October.
- 2.18. In light of the Fairer Funding Review, the MTFs has been updated in advance of the budget setting cycle for 2026/27. We have known for years that the Business Rates reset and Fairer Funding Review were coming and over the last four years have been moving our additional retained Business Rates income (growth over baseline), the surplus remitted from the Business Rates pool and any General Fund surplus into earmarked reserves to fund any gap in the revenue budget over the life of the MTFs.
- 2.19. The modelling based on the provisional funding formula changes indicates a £943,000 loss of income over the three year period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This is a better result than we have been planning for, but it is not confirmed and so the actual picture could be better than current modelling or a lot worse. The MTFs will be updated when MHCLG publish their final proposals.
- 2.20. The biggest identified pressure on the revenue budget is the end of the leisure contract in 2027. The impact is estimated as high as £2.4m growth in net cost of services, which combined with general inflation, increases our net budget from £18.7m to £21.4m between 2026 and 2027.
- 2.21. Clarity is needed on the preferred procurement approach for the leisure contract from 2027 onwards in order to understand the ongoing revenue impact. A comprehensive leisure building maintenance programme is being brought to Executive in September which will directly impact the amount of income that the new contract will generate for the Council.
- 2.22. Contract income is calculated by the leisure contractor based on a number of factors, a significant factor being the condition of the leisure centres and an estimated cost for the replacement or repair of any plant and equipment during the contract period. The higher the cost, the less income that is remitted to the Council. By committing to a comprehensive program of capital repairs to the District's leisure centres, the Council is, as far as it is able, de-risking the new contract, optimising income and reducing pressure on the revenue budget to reduce the £2.4m impact that is currently in the MTFs.
- 2.23. From a budgeting point of view It is more advantageous to the Council to incur capital expenditure, the cost of which is spread out over a number of years, rather than to lose a significant amount of income that will be taken out of the base budget in one year and not replaced.
- 2.24. As illustrated in the MTFs below, the Council will be relying on the use of the General Fund, which is forecast to reduce from the current level of £12.25m to £3m and the depletion of earmarked reserves in order to set a balanced budget up to 2029/30 which is after the LGR timeframe of 2028. The MTFs will be further updated during the budget setting cycle for 2026/27 which will start in September.

2.25. As a note of caution, it is not yet clear what it will cost to bring in the new Unitary Authorities in Oxfordshire and our reserves can only be spent once. The level of reserves we hold can realistically fund the impact of the Fairer Funding Review and Business Rates reset and potentially the costs associated with LGR along with the major capital projects that are already in train. Any new major capital expenditure will require external borrowing as our internal resources will be exhausted.

2.26. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have issued guidance for financial decisions made in advance of Local Government Reform. It states,

*“it is essential that decisions regarding ongoing service delivery and the medium term financial strategy of existing councils do not compromise the future sustainability of new councils. It is essential that all involved are cognisant that decisions taken now by existing councils could fetter the future decisions of new councils and act accordingly.*

*Examples of those decisions include but are not limited to the sale and purchase of significant assets, transfer of local assets, entering into new contracts for service delivery including IT procurement, major organisational restructures and changes to staff terms and conditions, establishing companies, undertaking job evaluation, permanent appointments to senior positions, changes to unplanned borrowing and the spending of reserves.*

*The expectation is that councils continue to operate in accordance with their agreed medium term financial plans and planned actions for the period and defer the implementation of any significant changes to service delivery other than where this would cause a gap or cessation of a key service. Decisions that are necessary to ensure service delivery should not be delayed.”*

In short, the Council remains responsible for making decisions on service delivery in the best interests of the residents of West Oxfordshire until Structural Changes Orders have been made. It is likely that these will follow the precedents previously set, namely that written consent from the successor council will be required for land disposals worth more than £100,000, entering contracts of more than £1,000,000 for capital and entering contracts of more than £100,000 for non-capital (whole life costs).

## Medium Term Financial Strategy – Revised July 2025

- 2.27. The MTFs has been revised in light of the available details regarding the Fairer Funding Review and is fully compliant with the guidance published by MHCLG on LGR as detailed in paragraph 2.26.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
<b>Target Budget (NOE)</b>	<b>18,231,214</b>	<b>18,717,222</b>	<b>21,474,133</b>	<b>21,756,741</b>	<b>21,946,933</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>					
Revenue Support Grant	(257,281)	(6,293,000)	(5,043,000)	(3,788,000)	(3,828,000)
Business Rates Share	(6,684,384)	(2,360,000)	(2,385,024)	(2,414,024)	(2,443,024)
Renewables	(302,976)	(302,976)	(302,976)	(302,976)	(302,976)
New Homes Bonus	(506,346)	0	0	0	0
Extended Producer Responsibility (Waste)	(2,338,000)	0	0	0	0
Funding Floor/Dampening	(1,964,639)	0	0	0	0
<b>Government Grants &amp; Business Rates</b>	<b>(12,053,626)</b>	<b>(8,955,976)</b>	<b>(7,731,000)</b>	<b>(6,505,000)</b>	<b>(6,574,000)</b>
Investment Income - Pooled Funds	(1,156,227)	(1,040,604)	(936,544)	(889,717)	(845,231)
Contribution to/(from) earmarked reserves	1,327,558	(1,950,000)	(5,550,000)	(2,750,000)	(1,750,000)
Collection Fund	(133,916)	(125,000)	(120,000)	(115,000)	(110,000)
Council Tax	(6,306,283)	(6,654,794)	(6,999,039)	(7,344,368)	(7,693,693)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(18,322,494)</b>	<b>(18,726,375)</b>	<b>(21,336,583)</b>	<b>(17,604,085)</b>	<b>(16,972,924)</b>
<b>Use of GF reserves</b>	<b>(91,280)</b>	<b>(9,153)</b>	<b>137,550</b>	<b>4,152,657</b>	<b>4,974,009</b>
TaxBase	48,742	49,522	50,216	50,868	51,504
Band D	129.38	134.38	139.38	144.38	149.38
<b>Tax increase</b>	<b>4.02%</b>	<b>3.86%</b>	<b>3.72%</b>	<b>3.59%</b>	<b>3.46%</b>
General fund balance	12,357,907	12,365,060	12,223,900	8,068,131	3,091,519

## Capital Programme

- 2.28. At the end of Q1 capital expenditure is £643,834 against an approved Capital Programme for the year of £16.165m, which includes slippage from 2024/25 of £4.9m related to the decarbonisation of Witney Leisure Centre, Waste Vehicle replacement and repairs to our buildings.
- 2.29. The Witney PSDS project was approved to move to the construction phase by the Executive in July. Discussions are currently underway with GLL to mitigate the operational issues caused by the construction works, with contractors expected to be on site from September. The Council has received grant funding of £1.649m towards the cost of this project, with an estimated contribution from the Council of £565,549.
- 2.30. The Council contribution includes a contingency against any additional costs that may come up during the construction phase that were not anticipated as part of the Investment Grade Proposal. The project must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 or under the terms of the funding, the grant will be forfeited and the Council will have to fund the entire £2.2m cost of the project.

- 2.31. The Waste Transformation Programme is due to report to Executive in Q3 with a full waste vehicle strategy. This strategy will look to maximise the efficiencies attainable through partnership working across the County, that the Council could never achieve through unilateral action.
- 2.32. Due diligence work is underway regarding a number of properties suitable for temporary emergency accommodation for both single people and families.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1. Whilst it is early in the financial year there are some key areas of optimism at the end of Q1 and these have been highlighted in the body of this report. There are no significant overspends to report in Q1, a good indication that a prudent budget was set for 2025/26, however there is no guarantee that the revenue position will remain as positive throughout the rest of the year.
- 3.2. All areas will be closely monitored and reported on in future quarterly Financial Performance Reports.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

These are set out within section 2 of the paper.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this paper.

### **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. Officers will continue to monitor budgets closely throughout the year to identify mitigating actions which will enable the overall budgetary position to be brought back in line with budget where possible.

### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

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

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

None arising from this report.



## Annex A - Comparison of Q1 Budget Monitoring

	Q1 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Democratic Services</b>			
DRM001-Democratic Representation	153,093	150,130	(2,963)
DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies	128,754	125,246	(3,508)
ELE001-Registration of Electors	57,465	55,163	(2,302)
ELE002-District Elections	1,500	3,422	1,922
SUP001-Administration	36,801	35,674	(1,127)
<b>Total - Democratic Services</b>	<b>574,829</b>	<b>575,135</b>	<b>306</b>

	Q1 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Environmental &amp; Regulatory Services</b>			
BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work	27,611	11,612	(15,999)
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning Work	912	897	(15)
EMP001-Emergency Planning	7,322	4,928	(2,395)
ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt & Supp Serv	27,878	27,426	(453)
PSH002-Private Sector Housing-Condition of Dwellings	750	0	(750)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	0	0
REG002-Licensing	(21,426)	(27,681)	(6,255)
REG009-Environmental Protection	60,189	67,418	7,229
REG011-Authorised Process	(3,000)	(1,705)	1,295
REG013-Pollution Control	32,563	32,108	(455)
REG016-Food Safety	39,034	37,827	(1,207)
REG021-Statutory Burials	1,250	1,695	445
STC011 - Abandoned Vehicles	0	(500)	(500)
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	4,475	8,867	4,392
<b>Total - Environmental &amp; Regulatory Services</b>	<b>177,559</b>	<b>162,891</b>	<b>(14,668)</b>

BUC001 - fee income is £13,000 ahead of budget

**Finance, Human Resources & Procurement**

	Q1 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
SUP003-Human Resources	54,146	57,385	3,238
HLD319 - New Initiatives	0	0	0
SUP009-Accountancy	95,227	89,581	(5,646)
SUP010-Internal Audit	151,293	157,241	5,948
SUP011-Creditors	11,888	10,266	(1,622)
SUP012-Debtors	16,511	14,150	(2,361)
SUP013-Payroll	15,955	14,390	(1,565)
SUP019-Health & Safety	9,334	9,265	(68)
SUP020-Training & Development	8,109	7,978	(132)
SUP033-Central Purchasing	10,619	10,446	(172)
SUP035-Insurances	2,723	2,679	(44)

**Total - Finance, Human Resources & Procurement**

<b>536,828</b>	<b>534,236</b>	<b>(2,592)</b>
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**ICT, Change & Customer Services**

	Q1 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research	938	0	(938)
SUP005-ICT	487,252	489,423	2,171
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	164,053	161,169	(2,884)
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(4,313)	(929)	3,384

**Total - ICT, Change & Customer Services**

<b>1,489,556</b>	<b>1,491,290</b>	<b>1,734</b>
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Q1 position		
Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

#### Land, Legal & Property

ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	12,398	8,479	(3,918)
ADB302-Guildhall	2,689	(1,310)	(3,999)
ADB303-Woodgreen	152,665	149,741	(2,925)
ADB304-Elmfield	(30,000)	(29,909)	91
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	176,727	185,918	9,191
ADB306-Depot	23,831	24,281	451
FIE346-Marriotts	(192,718)	(199,453)	(6,735)
LLC001-Local Land Charges	(9,438)	(5,036)	4,402
SUP004-Legal	87,762	59,844	(27,918)
TAC303-Swain Court & Newman Court Ind Est Witney	(17,834)	(25,298)	(7,464)

#### Total - Land, Legal & Property

206,082	167,256	(38,825)
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SUP004 - employee costs for the shared service are underspent due to 2 vacancies recruited to in Q2

Q1 position		
Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

#### Leisure & Communities

CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	102,821	97,436	(5,385)
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	(1,775)	(231)	1,544
CCR301 - Communities Revenue Grant	105,000	105,010	10
CCT001-CCTV	(3,370)	(294)	3,075
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	23,874	22,429	(1,445)
CUL001-Arts Development	(12,580)	(14,887)	(2,306)
ECD001-Economic Development	36,968	40,056	3,088
ECD010 – SPF Community and Place	394,299	394,299	0
REC001-Sports Development	4,748	9,815	5,067
REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	15,087	21,939	6,852
REC003-Play	21,340	21,658	318
REC301-Village Halls	4,039	3,974	(66)
REC302-Contract Management	(514,844)	(558,542)	(43,698)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	30,204	29,714	(490)
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	1,319	785	(534)

#### Total - Leisure & Communities

207,130	173,161	(33,969)
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REC302 - contract income is £41,000 ahead of budget, a variance that is likely to remain for the remainder of the financial year

Q1 position		
Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

#### Environmental Services

CCC001-Climate Change	35,673	43,242	7,569
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	4,468	4,395	(73)
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	143,898	146,540	3,552
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	156,192	164,117	7,925
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	20,289	23,289	3,000
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage	41,869	39,065	(2,804)
REG004-Dog Warden	12,500	9,053	(3,447)
REG018-Pest Control	0	0	0
REG019-Public Conveniences	26,564	33,111	6,547
REG023-Environmental Strategy	22,194	21,509	(685)
RYC001-Recycling	595,797	573,693	(22,104)
RYC002-Green Waste	(1,294,518)	(1,264,076)	30,442
RYC003-Food Waste	269,168	267,243	(1,926)
STC001-Street Cleansing	0	0	0
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	236,752	239,171	2,419
TRW001-Trade Waste	(328,782)	(465,247)	(136,464)
TRW002-Clinical Waste	(125)	0	125
WST001-Household Waste	526,847	531,396	4,549
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	4,562	(248)	(4,810)
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney	47,938	48,425	488

#### Total - Environmental Services

521,286	414,681	(105,695)
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RYC001 - the dry mixed recycling contract is performing better than budgeted, with an underspend of £25,000 at the end of Q1

RYC002 - Green Waste licence income is £33,000 behind budget at the end of Q1. It is likely that this income will be behind target for the remainder of the year as 95% of licences are purchased in Q1.

TRW001 - Trade Waste is £164,000 ahead of target for the first half of the year, partially offset by £27,000 of expenditure on replacement bins, but the initial forecast for the end of the year is an underspend of £250,000 in this cost centre.

	Q1 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
<b>Planning &amp; Strategic Housing</b>			
DEV001-Development Control - Applications	(84,352)	(74,538)	9,814
DEV002-Development Control - Appeals	55,680	30,705	(24,975)
DEV003-Development Control - Enforcement	0	0	0
ENA001-Housing Enabling	37,496	36,406	(1,090)
ENI301-Landscape Initiatives	16,272	15,143	(1,130)
HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning)	(61,181)	(63,267)	(2,086)
PLP001-Planning Policy	171,707	157,327	(14,380)
PLP003-Implementation	0	0	0
PLP004-Conservation	99,047	74,589	(24,458)
PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv	32,307	23,995	(8,312)
<b>Total - Planning &amp; Strategic Housing</b>	<b>266,976</b>	<b>200,359</b>	<b>(66,617)</b>

DEV002 - it is difficult to predict when planning appeals will be lodged or to forecast whether the full budget will be exhausted by the end of the year. The budget for 2026/27 will be reviewed based on the information available at the time

PLP001 - the underspend relates to a vacant post which has been vacant since the beginning of the financial year.

PLP004 - the underspend relates to two vacant posts which have now been recruited to.

Q1 position		
Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

#### Retained Services

COR002-Chief Executive	132,629	124,529	(8,100)
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	20,176	19,659	(517)
COR004-Public Relations	89,965	96,167	6,203
COR005-Corporate Finance	148,579	154,337	5,757
COR006-Treasury Management	6,675	6,300	(375)
COR007-External Audit Fees	0	0	0
COR008-Bank Charges	19,625	19,899	274
COR012 - Publica Review	9,192	9,151	(41)
COR302-Publica Group	186,685	184,595	(2,090)
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(101,743)	(104,092)	(2,349)
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	85,390	75,396	(9,994)
FIE343-Talisman	(292,987)	(300,175)	(7,188)
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(107,873)	(112,883)	(5,010)
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	0	5,415	5,415
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	204,000	208,693	4,693
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(42,855)	(39,785)	3,070
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	32,983	41,110	8,127
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(436)	(1,676)	(1,240)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	2,375	0	(2,375)

#### Total - Retained Services

392,381	386,639	(5,741)
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### Revenues & Housing Support

	Q1 position		
	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
HBP001-Rent Allowances	89,593	95,404	5,811
HBP003-Local Housing Allowance	0	0	0
HBP005-Benefit Fraud Investigation	1,597	0	(1,597)
HOM001-Homelessness	(475,545)	(470,414)	5,131
HOM004-Refugees	0	0	0
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accomodation	(998)	(2,215)	(1,218)
HOM006 - The Old Court	12,687	21,102	8,414
HOM007-Afghan Resettlement Programme	(209,190)	(209,190)	(0)
HOM008-Homes for Ukraine	9,157	9,157	0
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	123,872	119,412	(4,460)
LTC002-Council Tax Support Administration	1,934	0	(1,934)
LTC011-NNDR Collection	37,680	38,660	980
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	13,826	14,077	251
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	22,724	18,983	(3,741)

### Total - Revenues & Housing Support

(372,661)	(365,313)	7,347
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## Annex B

### Capital Programme 2025/26

Scheme	Funded By	2025/26 Total Budget	Q1 Actual	
Asset Repairs	Borrowing	1,500,000		
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	Borrowing	4,721,266	15,564	a
Replacement Sweepers	Borrowing	850,000		
In Cab Technology	Borrowing	100,000		
Witney ATP Refurbishment	Revenue Contribution	200,000		
Purchase of Temporary Accommodation	Capital Receipts	3,000,000		b
CCTV - Upgrading	Capital Receipts	255,635		
Improvement Grants (DFG)	Grant	880,000	251,857	
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	Grant	0	33,378	
Witney Leisure Centre PSDS	Grant/Borrowing	1,584,841		c
Chipping Norton Leisure Centre PSDS	Grant/Borrowing	2,643,926		
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	Revenue Contribution	100,000		
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	Revenue Contribution	250,000	175,941	d
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	Revenue Contribution	40,000	1,923	
Chipping Norton Creative	S106	0	21,805	
Windrust Place Public Art	S106		2,750	
Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106)	S106	39,500	0	
Developer Capital Contributions	S106	0	140,616	
		<b>16,165,168</b>	<b>643,834</b>	

- a. A full waste vehicle strategy will be coming forward from the Waste Transformation Programme for Member consideration in Q3. This strategy will look to maximise the efficiencies attainable through partnership working across the County, that the Council could never achieve through unilateral action.
- b. Negotiations are currently underway on a number of properties suitable for temporary emergency accommodation, both for single people and families.
- c. Executive approved the Witney PSDS decarbonisation project to move to the construction phase at their meeting in July. Discussions are ongoing with GLL around the mitigation of any operational issues the construction will cause, with contractors expected to start on site in September.
- d. Expenditure relates to the new roof and guttering at The Old Court house, due to be completed at the end of August.

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
<b>Name and Date of Committee</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025-26 QUARTER ONE</b>
<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Accountable Member</b>	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report author</b>	Alison Borrett – Senior Performance Analyst. Email: <a href="mailto:alison.borrett@westoxon.gov.uk">alison.borrett@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
<b>Purpose</b>	To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2025-26 Quarter One (Q1).
<b>Annex</b>	Annex A - Council Priorities report Annex B - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex C - Performance indicator report
<b>Recommendation.</b>	That the Executive Resolves to: I. Note the 2025/26 Q1 service performance report.
<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	<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>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Exempt</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Consultees/ Consultation</b>	Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.

## **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. This includes 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 Q1 include:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) examination hearing session took place on 10 June, and the examiner's report has now been received for fact-checking. The Council intends to present the charging schedule for formal adoption by the Executive and Full Council in September and October, with an effective commencement date to follow for qualifying developments.
- A strategic meeting was held with Enterprise Oxfordshire (formerly the LEP) to explore green investment opportunities across key development areas, with a focus on aligning economic growth with sustainability goals through initiatives such as the Carterton Masterplan and the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor.
- The Local Plan Preferred Policy Options consultation launched on 26 June and ran until 8 August 2025. It included a range of proposals related to infrastructure and green infrastructure, with further consultation on development locations scheduled for October.
- The Outline Business Case for the Woodford Way development was presented to the Executive on 9 July. The report outlines a balanced approach to delivering affordable housing and car parking, along with a proposed delivery model aligned with Council priorities.
- A new commercial operator has been appointed to manage the Charter Markets in Witney and Chipping Norton following a revised tender process. This appointment is expected to bring renewed energy and innovation to the markets, with operations commencing on 1 August.
- A hearing session for the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) was held on 30 June 2025. The Council is now awaiting the Inspector's post-hearing note, which will guide the next steps toward adoption of the AAP and enable determination of the outline planning application.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) continue to be actively delivered and managed. Three new grant schemes have been launched to

support local business resilience and growth: the Shop Front Improvement Grant, the Rural Enterprise Growth Grant, and the Visitor Economy Grant Scheme.

- 2.2 The Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex A with an overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan is attached at Annex B.

### 3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Overall, the Council's performance has remained broadly positive, building on the strong foundations laid in the previous quarter. Continued improvements were seen in key areas such as Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates collection, planning determination times, and customer satisfaction. Leisure centre visits and gym memberships also remained high, reflecting sustained public engagement with health and wellbeing services. Notably, the number of affordable homes delivered in Q1 exceeded the quarterly target. However, some challenges persist. Processing times for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit change events remained above target, largely due to operational adjustments linked to Universal Credit automation. Additionally, the percentage of household waste recycled continued to decline, impacted by seasonal factors and broader national trends.

#### 3.1 Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (33.04% against a target of 33%)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected (36.34% against a target of 33%)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims (18.57 days against a target of 20 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.08% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (98.21% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (100% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (90% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (98.46% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (98.87% against a target of 90%)
- Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (89 against a target of 69)
- Percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales day (100% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of high-risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 95%)
- Residual Household Waste per Household (kg) (90.56 against a target of 93)
- Missed bins per 100,000 (61 against a target of 110)
- (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (5,554 memberships against a target of 4,947 memberships)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (243,112 visits against a target of 206,370)

#### 3.2 Service Performance near target:

- Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days (89.1% against a target of 90%)

### 3.3 Service Performance below target:

#### **Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (14.49 days against a target of 5 days) and Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (8.85 days against a target of 4 days)**

The Council experienced an increase in processing times for both Council Tax Support change of events and Housing Benefit changes of circumstances, exceeding the respective targets of 5 and 4 days. Council Tax Support changes averaged 14.49 days, while Housing Benefit changes averaged 8.85 days. This rise was primarily driven by a planned one-month pause in uploading Universal Credit (UC) applications, which allowed the team to focus on clearing a backlog of manual applications and to collaborate with partners on improving automation processes. The pause also provided an opportunity to accommodate changes introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who had updated the UC data feed to include additional items.

Prior to the pause, UC automation rates typically ranged between 60% and 70%. Since resuming uploads, batch automation rates have consistently exceeded 90% and daily processing has stabilised. Notably, processing times for CTS change of events have significantly improved, with the average for July falling to just 3.14 days. Processing times are expected to improve steadily over the coming months, but given the cumulative nature of the metric, they are unlikely to return to within target until Quarter 3.

The ongoing managed migration from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit has also introduced greater complexity into the remaining caseload, with many cases involving exceptional or nuanced circumstances. As the volume of Housing Benefit change of circumstances continues to decline, any delays now have a more pronounced impact on average processing times. The service continues to explore targeted initiatives, including the use of the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) tool, to help residents access unclaimed benefits and improve financial resilience.

#### **Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (50% against a target of 30%)**

Between 1 April 2025 and 30 June 2025, eight appeals were decided, with four supported, resulting in an allowance rate of 50%. Of these, four were Upland applications, with two supported, resulting in a 50% allowance rate. The remaining four were Lowlands applications, with two supported, equating to a 50% allowance rate.

Of the eight appeal decisions, one related to an application refused by the Uplands Planning Committee, which was subsequently dismissed at appeal. The other seven appeals stemmed from delegated officer decisions, with four of these resulting in allowed appeals.

As this metric is cumulative, the allowance rate may fluctuate throughout the year depending on the number and outcome of appeal decisions received.

While the general target is for no more than 30% of appeals to be allowed, the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 introduced a formal system for assessing the performance of local planning authorities. Under the designation criteria, an authority may be identified as underperforming if 10% or more of its total planning decisions are overturned at appeal.

This measure of decision quality is assessed over a rolling two-year period and is applied separately to major and non-major development categories. It's important to note that the 10% threshold is based on the total number of decisions made, not just those that are appealed.

Authorities exceeding this threshold in either category may be designated, allowing applicants to submit certain types of applications directly to the Secretary of State.

### **Percentage of household waste recycled (57.2% against a target of 62%)**

During Q1, the Council recorded a slight decline in its household recycling rate compared to the same quarter last year. This mirrors a broader national trend, where recycling rates have been under pressure due to seasonal and structural factors.

Despite this dip, West Oxfordshire continues to perform strongly. For the 2023/24 financial year, the district ranked among the top 20 councils in England for household waste recycling and remains within the top quartile of all English local authorities. This reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability and effective waste management.

However, recycling rates across the country are facing challenges. The district experienced unusually dry weather conditions, leading to a 25% reduction in garden waste tonnages compared to the same period last year. As garden waste makes up a substantial portion of the recycling stream, this seasonal drop is expected to impact overall recycling performance.

Looking ahead, national policy changes may further influence local recycling figures. The UK-wide Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), scheduled to launch in October 2027, will introduce a refundable deposit on single-use drinks containers made from PET plastic, aluminium and steel. While this initiative is designed to reduce litter and improve material quality, it is anticipated that many of these containers will be diverted away from household kerbside collections. As a result, councils may see a measurable decline in kerbside recycling rates, even as national recycling infrastructure improves.

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

**3.5** 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.

## **4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4.1** This report will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 September 2025. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to the 10 September 2025 Executive meeting.

## **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  
**April – June 2025**

# 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

In early 2022, West Oxfordshire District Council conducted its first Youth Needs Assessment, engaging nearly 4,000 young people aged 11 to 25 through paper surveys and focus groups, alongside feedback from 177 parents. The assessment revealed significant challenges faced by young residents, including the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, social lives, and access to essential services. Following a review of the findings at the Executive meeting on 11 October 2023, the Council committed to strengthening youth engagement and instructed officers to work with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to develop a proposal for a dedicated youth specialist role. This role would lead on youth-related matters and implement the assessment's recommendations. At its meeting in February 2024, the Executive approved the recruitment of a full-time Youth Development Officer for a two-year period. This senior role is designed to build local capacity, influence external partners, and address barriers such as access, affordability, isolation, and limited service availability. The officer will collaborate with local providers, engage directly with young people, support internal youth engagement—including Local Plan consultation and communications—and work closely with OCC to ensure joined-up delivery. In addition, the Council allocated £20,000 from its COMF budget to support youth-led initiatives through Westhive, enabling test-and-learn opportunities that tackle the barriers identified in the assessment.

To further empower young voices, the Council launched a community crowdfunding platform via Westhive, encouraging youth-led projects and pledging up to £12,000 toward ideas that matter most to young people. This initiative ensures that young residents are actively involved in shaping the future of their communities and are recognised in key strategic decisions, including climate action and the Council Plan.

The Council's commitment to youth and housing is also reflected in the 'Our House' Project, launched in 2018 in partnership with Cottsway Housing and Aspire Oxfordshire. This innovative initiative provides shared accommodation and tailored support for single individuals under 35 who are on out-of-work benefits and at risk of homelessness. With capacity for up to 12 young people across three shared houses, the project continues to offer stability and opportunity. In July 2024, the Executive approved funding to extend the programme until October 2026.

In parallel with these initiatives, the Council is actively engaged in shaping the future of local government through the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process. The government plans to replace the current two-tier system of district and county councils with new unitary authorities, and has encouraged councils to collaborate on proposals that meet national criteria. In response, five councils—including West Oxfordshire—have joined forces to propose the creation of two new unitary authorities: Oxford and Shires Council and Ridgeway Council.

Under this proposal:

- Oxford and Shires Council would include Cherwell, Oxford City, and West Oxfordshire.
- Ridgeway Council would encompass West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire, and the Vale of White Horse.

The aim is to create financially stable, locally accountable councils that deliver high-quality services while maintaining strong community connections. Existing social care services from OCC and West Berkshire would continue under the new arrangements, avoiding costly disaggregation. The proposal also focuses on economic development, infrastructure improvements, environmental protection, and addressing local priorities such as housing and flooding.

A public engagement exercise ran from 4 June to 16 July 2025, inviting residents to share their views via [twocouncils.org](https://twocouncils.org) and attend local events. Council leaders have emphasised the importance of community input in shaping the final proposal, which represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redesign local government around the needs and identities of the people it serves.

# Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All



## Actions we are taking

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), introduced by the Government in 2008, ensures that new developments contribute fairly and transparently to vital infrastructure such as schools, roads, and community facilities. In March 2023, the Council's Executive commissioned new viability evidence to support an updated CIL charging schedule. Following an eight-week public consultation in August and September 2024, the draft schedule was formally submitted for independent examination in March 2025. A public hearing was held on 10 June 2025, and the independent examiner has now approved the Council's Draft Charging Schedule, subject to one modification: a reduction in the proposed rate for larger residential developments (250+ homes) from £225 to £150 per square metre, excluding strategic development areas. CIL will apply as a fixed charge on certain types of new development, including new homes and extensions, calculated based on floor area. It will operate alongside existing Section 106 (S106) planning obligations to help fund essential infrastructure across the district. With the examiner's final report received, the Council will now move to formally adopt the schedule, with implementation to follow. Once in place, CIL will enhance the Council's ability to secure and deliver the infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth across West Oxfordshire.

The Salt Cross Garden Village continues to progress as a flagship sustainable development for West Oxfordshire. Designed to include schools, community facilities, employment opportunities, and 2,200 homes, the development is guided by the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP). A key component of the AAP is the Council's Net Zero Carbon Development policy, which aims to ensure that Salt Cross is net zero in operation. The original version of this policy was rejected in 2022, but following a successful High Court challenge by Rights Community Action in 2023, the Council was permitted to resubmit a revised version. The updated policy is both ambitious and deliverable, supported by strong technical and financial evidence. A public hearing to examine the revised policy was held virtually on Monday 30 June 2025, led by Planning Inspector Helen Hockenhull, with a reserve session scheduled for 4 July. The hearing was live-streamed on the Council's website and forms part of the formal examination of the AAP. It assessed whether the revised Net Zero policy can now be formally included in the plan. A short report outlining the Inspector's findings is expected later in the summer. Depending on the outcome, the next steps may include further public consultation if changes are recommended, or the policy may be approved or rejected as submitted. The Council will provide a formal update once the Inspector's findings are received. In the meantime, the Council remains committed to delivering a truly sustainable and future-ready community at Salt Cross.

To support thriving towns and villages, the Council has prioritised market town regeneration through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). A new commercial operator has been appointed to manage the Charter Markets in Witney and Chipping Norton, with operations beginning 1 August 2025. Specialist markets will continue at Marriotts Walk, and a Christmas market and other themed events are planned for 2025. In response to earlier feedback, the tender brief was revised to better reflect local needs.

Complementing this, wayfinding improvements are underway, including the installation of new information boards in Chipping Norton town centre. The Council is also supporting Oxfordshire Art Weeks, linking cultural activity with local retailers to boost footfall and support independent businesses. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to enhance public realm spaces and promote economic vitality across the district.

The Council is actively exploring opportunities for green investment in strategic development areas, particularly through the Carterton Masterplan. In collaboration with Enterprise Oxfordshire and the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor, the Council is identifying ways to align local economic growth with sustainability goals. This includes mapping nature-based solutions, engaging with the Low Carbon Hub, and seeking funding streams to support innovation and infrastructure. The Carterton Strategic Study has been completed and is now under review, with next steps to be shaped through stakeholder engagement and Executive discussion.

Improving access to sustainable transport remains a key priority. The Council is working with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) across the district. In Q1 2025, public consultation for the Carterton LCWIP closed, and the plan is now being revised based on feedback, with formal approval expected in October. Drafting of the Eynsham LCWIP is also underway, with consultation planned for September. These plans aim to reduce car dependency, improve health outcomes, and support the Council's climate goals.

# Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife



## Actions we are taking

West Oxfordshire District Council has launched its latest public consultation on its emerging Local Plan, inviting residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders to help shape the policies that will guide how the district grows and develops up to 2041. The Local Plan is the Council's key strategic document for managing development. It will influence how and where new homes, jobs, services, and infrastructure come forward in the years ahead, and how the district responds to major challenges including the climate emergency, housing affordability and nature recovery.

This consultation, known as the 'Preferred Policy Options' stage, sets out the Council's proposed direction, including a new vision for West Oxfordshire in 2041, updated objectives, and preferred policy approaches on housing, transport, the economy, climate, infrastructure, health and wellbeing, and more. This stage of the consultation does not include details of specific individual development sites. Instead, it focuses on the overall strategy and direction of the plan – the preferred policy options. A further consultation specifically focused on potential future development locations will follow later in the year. The consultation will run from 26 June to 8 August and can be accessed online at: <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/folders/your-plan-for-the-future>. The consultation platform provides a breakdown of each chapter of the Preferred Policy Options paper, with a chance to leave feedback throughout the document. Hard copies of the consultation paper will be made available at Council offices. Public drop-in events will also be held in towns and villages across the district, as well as online sessions, giving residents the chance to speak with planning officers, ask questions and share their views.

Alongside this, the Council continues to develop the evidence base for the plan. The site assessment process is underway, evaluating key factors such as flood risk and foul water capacity to inform potential site allocations. The Local Plan will also incorporate an integrated approach to water management, building on the work completed with the Environment Agency's 'Spheres of Influence' project, in which the Council participated as one of three national pilot areas. The Council has commissioned the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Phase 1 Water Cycle Study to support this work.

The Preferred Options paper is being discussed with Members through the Local Plan Working Group, with the intention to report to the Executive in mid-May. The evidence base is continually being developed, with draft reports from consultants now being received, and further evidence likely to be commissioned during the next stage of plan preparation leading to Regulation 19 publication. The Council has successfully secured additional central government funding to assist with the Regulation 18 stage, ensuring the timely allocation of funding for key projects. Infrastructure challenges, including transport, sewage systems, and community services, are being addressed to support sustainable growth. The Council is also actively securing developer contributions through the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) to ensure all new developments are supported by the necessary infrastructure for both current and future needs.

The Council is actively supporting the government's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy, which requires developers to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity. A flagship initiative is the creation of a habitat bank at Pudlicote Farm near Chipping Norton, where low-productivity farmland is being transformed into wildflower meadows, wetlands, and native woodlands. This project will generate biodiversity units that developers can purchase to meet their BNG obligations, while also supporting local farmers and contributing to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The Pudlicote Farm project exemplifies a successful partnership between the Council, local landowners, and environmental charities such as the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, and aligns with the national '30-by-30' biodiversity target. The Council is also working to streamline the process for future habitat banks to expand this model across the district.

The Council continues to support grassroots environmental action through initiatives such as the Coronation Community Orchard Scheme, which commemorates the coronation of King Charles III. With £50,000 secured from DEFRA's Coronation Living Heritage Fund, the Council has funded 17 community orchards to date, with grants covering both planting and long-term maintenance. The scheme has been extended to March 2026, and applications remain open to encourage further community participation.

Another successful project is the Deer Park South Access Project, which has delivered significant improvements to public access and environmental education. Enhancements include new bridges, upgraded footpaths, and a nature trail co-designed with local schoolchildren and a local artist. Interpretation panels and brass rubbing posts have been installed to enrich the visitor experience, while a habitat survey and land management review are underway to guide future stewardship of the site.

The Council is also collaborating with the Wychwood Forest Trust, Oxfordshire County Council, and Witney Town Council on the Windrush in Witney project. This landscape-scale initiative aims to restore the Witney floodplains through grazing, floral enhancement, willow pollarding, and community engagement. A funding bid is being prepared for submission in August 2025, with plans to establish a new volunteer group and deliver rural skills training events.



# Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency

## Actions we are taking

West Oxfordshire District Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in June 2019, committing to become a carbon-neutral council by 2030. This was followed by the publication of the Climate Action for West Oxfordshire report in January 2020, which laid the foundation for the Council's Carbon Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy. Since then, the Council has made significant progress in reducing emissions from its operations and supporting district-wide decarbonisation.

A major focus has been the decarbonisation of Council-owned buildings, with several projects now underway or completed. Funding from the Local Carbon Skills Fund supported the development of heat decarbonisation plans for Elmfield Council Offices, Welch Way, and the Old Court House, all of which were finalised in March 2024. The installation of solar PV panels at Elmfield has been successfully completed, enabling tenants to benefit from renewable energy while allowing the Council to recover its investment through recharges or power purchase agreements.

The Windrush Leisure Centre has received £1.6 million from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3c (PSDS 3c). Council approval was granted in March 2024, and work began on 1 April. A detailed decarbonisation scheme, including cost analysis, has been completed, with a formal request to progress to the construction phase presented at the June Executive meeting. In parallel, PSDS 4 funding has been secured for the Chipping Norton Leisure Centre, with procurement of a design and build contract now underway. Additional funding from the Swimming Pool Support Fund will enable the installation of solar PV panels and shower flow restrictors at Windrush Leisure Centre, and solar PV and heat recovery systems at Chipping Norton Lido.

To support the transition to low-carbon transport, the Council has expanded its electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The Woolgate car park now features 12 charging bays, including 7.4kW Type 2 and 75kW rapid chargers. Across the district, Council-owned car parks now host 42 charging units across 74 bays, helping to reduce emissions and support residents without access to off-street parking.

The Council is also a key partner in the Community Action Plan for Zero-Carbon Energy (CAPZero), developed by Low Carbon Hub and GreenTEA (Transition Eynsham Area). CAPZero is the first plan of its kind in the UK, focusing on the Eynsham Primary Substation Area, which includes eight parishes. It translates county-wide net zero targets into local actions, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, zero-carbon housing, electric transport, and environmental restoration. To support CAPZero's implementation, the Council has entered into a three-year Service Level Agreement and continues to work closely with the project team. Consultants have been appointed to conduct preliminary retrofit research, and work is now underway to accelerate both domestic and commercial retrofitting.

To embed climate considerations into everyday decision-making, the Council has introduced a Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool (SIAT), which became mandatory for all Executive reports from June 2025. Staff and members have received training, and the tool is now being used to ensure that climate and nature impacts are considered across all projects and policies.

The Council's Greenlight online hub continues to support community-led climate action and nature recovery. Recent updates include a retrofit competition, new funding information, and a library of community resources. The platform is helping to build local capacity and awareness around sustainability.

In the private housing sector, the Council is preparing to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for privately rented homes, once government requirements are confirmed. A report was submitted to the Executive in April 2025 to secure funding for an Asset Management Strategy that will include carbon efficiency assessments of tenanted buildings.

The Council also continues to support low-income households through the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2). In Year 1, 15 homes in West Oxfordshire received funding to improve energy efficiency and reduce bills. The Council supported targeted outreach through Council Tax data and communications, helping ensure that support reached those most in need.

In recognition of its leadership on climate action, West Oxfordshire has been named the top-performing rural district in the UK in the 2025 national Council Climate Action Scorecards. This independent assessment, conducted between July 2024 and March 2025, evaluated councils across seven key areas, including buildings and heating, planning and land use, and waste reduction and food. Developed in consultation with over 90 organisations and individuals, the scorecard featured up to 93 questions showcasing best practice and local authority influence on emissions reduction. West Oxfordshire's success reflects not only strong strategic planning but also deep community involvement. Key initiatives contributing to this achievement include the Better Housing Better Health programme, retrofitting council-owned buildings, and the Coronation Community Orchard Scheme. The Council also continues to deliver carbon literacy training for staff and members and has introduced a Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool to embed climate considerations into decision-making. This national recognition underscores the district's commitment to building a greener, more resilient future.



# Working Together for West Oxfordshire

## Actions we are taking

As West Oxfordshire District Council enters the final year of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) funding, its priority is to ensure a seamless transition and avoid a sudden drop-off in support for local communities and businesses. To sustain momentum, the Council is working to extend key projects into the 2025/26 funding year. New grant agreements are being carefully tailored to the specific needs of each intervention, aligning with long-term strategic goals. At the same time, final project reports are being completed to confirm delivery of agreed outcomes and outputs, reinforcing transparency and accountability.

A flagship initiative in this effort is the Westhive programme, which launched Round 4 with a 31 March deadline and will allocate an additional £48,000 in unspent UKSPF funding by March 2025. A recent review presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was well received, reaffirming the programme's value. Westhive continues to support local businesses, entrepreneurs, and communities, with the introduction of a Youth Development role already inspiring more youth-led projects. Complementing this, a new small grants fund will launch in summer 2025 to support grassroots initiatives and smaller-scale community projects that may not meet traditional funding criteria.

The Council has committed £114,388 to community-driven projects through Westhive, which has now distributed over £423,000 since its launch in 2023—reflecting the district's strong culture of public participation and local pride. Recent supported initiatives include Let's Roll! Wheelchair Dancing for All, Carterton Family Centre, and Community Floodplain Restoration West Oxfordshire.

To further strengthen community development, the Council has established three-year Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for 2024–2027. These grants, totalling £188,500 for 2024/25, are structured around three thematic priorities: improving access to nature and wellbeing, addressing the climate and ecological emergency, and enhancing community resilience. Funded organisations submit biannual progress reports, and the Council continues to work closely with delivery partners to ensure projects are inclusive, impactful, and strategically aligned.

In addition to Westhive and SLAs, the Council has launched three new business support grants using capital funding from UKSPF and REPF. Developed in partnership with Cotswold Tourism, these schemes aim to boost local enterprise, enhance the visitor economy, and support rural innovation:

- Shop Front Improvement Grants – up to £1,000 to revitalise town centres and improve accessibility.
- Visitor Economy Grants – up to £10,000 for tourism-related sustainability improvements.
- Rural Enterprise Growth Grants – up to £20,000 to help rural and agricultural businesses diversify and grow.

Applications opened on 20 June and closed on 18 July 2025.

An additional £60,000 has been invested in the Westhive Community Infrastructure Fund, supporting community-led initiatives focused on inclusion, mental health, and youth engagement. Applicants are encouraged to prepare early to ensure deliverability by February 2026 and meet any match funding requirements.

The Council has also introduced the Carbon Action Fund to support local SMEs in reducing their carbon footprint. Despite tight deadlines, the fund has performed strongly and has been submitted for consideration for an LGC Award. Meanwhile, the Tools for Tomorrow initiative has been launched to support councillor priorities and address gaps in local construction trade provision.

Engagement with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) remains a priority, with ongoing collaboration through forums and the West Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Alliance. In 2024/25, £273,682 in UKSPF funding has been distributed to VCS groups via Westhive. The Council is also supporting cultural programmes in Carterton and Chipping Norton and delivering mental health support through COMF and OCC funding.

Looking ahead, a Community Insight report due in January 2025 will help shape future investment in local projects. Additionally, a Local Area Coordination pilot has been launched in Chipping Norton, funded by OCC, to support residents with complex needs and improve access to local services.

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## Corporate Strategy Action Tracker

Green	On target
Amber	Off target but action being taken to ensure delivery (where this results in a reviewed target date, this is made clear in the table)
Red	Off target and no action has yet been agreed to resolve the situation
In Progress	Work on the action is underway, though a fixed timeline has not yet been set.
Complete	Action completed
Not Scheduled to Start	The action/project has either a future start date or is still in its early stages, with no start date established yet.

		Our Focus	Actions	Quarter 1 Update	Start Date	Date Due	Status	Executive Member	Link Officer	Updates Provided by
11	Putting Residents First	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.				On Target	Rachel Crouch	Enmy-Lou Bossard / Heather McCulloch	Heather McCulloch
			Customer Experience Improvement Programme	Completed	01/07/2020	01/01/2024	Complete	Andy Graham	Giles Hughes	Michelle Clifford
12	Putting Residents, Young and Old, at the Heart of What We Do	The Council will act with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability, with high standards of governance and trustworthiness.	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.	Completed	01/05/2021	31/12/2023	Complete	Andy Graham	Giles Hughes	Andrew Brown
13		The Council will actively manage Council budgets, delivering good levels of service through the wise and efficient use of funds available as well as enabling those budgets to grow so that the Council can take action towards the priorities of this Council Plan.	Procurement: Publica-wide project to embed climate, ecological and social value considerations in procurement processes to maximise the use of sustainable suppliers and support local businesses.	Officers continue to implement the changes introduced by the Procurement Act 2023, with a strong focus on transparency and statutory compliance. Alongside this, the Cabinet Office released the new National Procurement Policy Statement on 14 February, which took effect with the Act on 24 February. The Procurement Team has finalised updates to the Contract Procedure Rules, embedding climate, ecological, and social value considerations to support sustainable suppliers and local businesses. Toolkits to support procurement across all spend thresholds are in development, with training planned for Autumn 2025.			In Progress	Alicia Smith	Ciaran O'Kane / Paul Moran	Ciaran O'Kane
			Adopt and implement CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy).	The CIL examination hearing session took place on 10 June. Examiners report now received for fact-checking. The intention is to report the charging schedule for formal adoption through the Executive and Full Council in September and October respectively. The charging schedule will set an effective date of commencement (i.e. the date upon which qualifying developments in West Oxfordshire will become CIL liable).	01/11/2019	31/08/2024	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Hugo Ashton	Giles Hughes / Chris Hargreaves	Chris Hargreaves

## Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All

21	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.	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.	Completed	01/09/2023	20/11/2024	Complete	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.	Met with Nigel Tipple from Enterprise Oxfordshire (formerly the LEP) to discuss potential avenues for green investment across key strategic development areas. The conversation focused on aligning local economic growth with sustainability goals, particularly through initiatives such as the Carterton Masterplan and the new Oxford - Cambridge Growth Corridor. Regional collaboration could be leveraged to attract larger-scale investment and innovation funding. Next steps include identifying further green initiatives via Low Carbon Hub, exploring funding streams and mapping nature-based solutions once work commences on the Carterton Masterplan.	01/01/2023	31/08/2025	On Target	Tim Sumner, Andrew Prosser	Sam Seronach	Sam Seronach
		Explore how the Local Plan can address the issue of securing long term maintenance of green infrastructure on large SDAs.	Local Plan Preferred Policy Options consultation taking place from 26 June - 8 August 2025. Includes a number of relevant policy options including in relation to infrastructure provision in general as well as more specifically in relation to green infrastructure. Further focused consultation on potential development locations to follow in October 2025 with a view to the final draft plan being published in spring 2026.	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?	Local Plan Preferred Policy Options consultation taking place from 26 June - 8 August 2025. Includes a number of relevant policy options including in relation to infrastructure provision including maintenance arrangements. Further focused consultation on potential development locations to follow in October 2025 with a view to the final draft plan being published in spring 2026.	31/08/2022	31/08/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Chris Hargraves	Chris Hargraves
22	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.	Carterton and the surrounding area LCWIP - public consultation of the draft closed at the end of June. The document is currently be revised based on feedback. Formal approval of the LCWIP will be sought at OCC's Cabinet Member Decision (CMD) meeting in October 25. Eynsham and the surrounding area LCWIP - we are currently drafting the LCWIP. There will be a public consultation of the draft in late September with a view to have the LCWIP formally approved in December 25. Woodstock LCWIP and Chipping Norton LCWIP were approved at OCC's CMD meeting in april	Carterton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure (LCWIP) is underway.	10/09/2021		In Progress	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
		Strategic Housing Project: Internal management and modelling – proposals to be presented to Executive in paper compiled by Publica Assistant Director Planning and Sustainability to November Executive.	Completed	01/04/2023	15/11/2023	Complete	Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	
		Strategic Housing Project: Assessing scope for investment and modelling.	Initial assessment shows that partnership working with an RP offers the potential to leverage funding and Homes England grant, whilst de-risking financial exposure for the Council. Live example at Woodford Way currently being progressed.	01/04/2023		On Target	Alaric Smith, Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Michael David
		Strategic Housing Project: Overview of modelling options and delivery. Proposed approach to the November Executive.	Completed	01/04/2023	15/11/2023	Complete	Tim Sumner, Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	

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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.

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.

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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.

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).	Routes to direct Council Intervention have been explored and a Council Owned company has been discounted. Alternative routes such as Joint Venture, Land trading, Profit share and commissioning models are more favourable. These options give the Council the desired control to achieve objectives with less exposure to resource and financial risk.	01/04/2023		On Target	Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Michael David
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.	The Outline Business Case for Woodford Way has been set out in the 9th July Executive Report. This report demonstrates an initial view of Project Viability, the balance between delivering affordable housing and car parking as well as a proposed model to achieve Council priorities.	01/04/2023		On Target	Geoff Saul	Michael David	Michael David
Further exploration of modular building – how, where and with whom including visits manufacturers. To understand options for delivery.	Modular Building companies have been researched (including Timber frame SIPs and container homes) however appropriate sites have not yet been identified.	01/04/2023		On Target	Geoff Saul	Giles Hughes	Michael David
Emergency accommodation – Acquisition of - consider the balance – single/couple and family accommodation).	8 bedspaces currently being acquired, Valuations of 15 further bedspaces being sought via Cottsway housing association. This demonstrates 23 bedspaces in the pipeline against a target of 30. Focussed on Single People as this is the overarching need.			On Target	Geoff Saul	Jon Dearing	Michael David
Completion of housing development at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton.	Longstop date for development partner to complete land transfer extended to 1st December 2025, due to funding issues in a changing difficult market. Officers to look at other options, including disposal, in case the new deadline is not met.	01/10/2021	31/07/2023	Off Target but Migration in Place	Geoff Saul	Jasmine McWilliams	Jasmine McWilliams
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.		01/04/2023	31/09/2024	On Target	Geoff Saul	Jon Dearing	Jon Dearing
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.	Further consideration being given as to how this is most appropriately taken forward by the Director of Place in discussion with Members. Further discussion to take place as part of the Executive Meeting to be held on 10 September 2025.			In Progress	Duncan Enright	Chris Hargreaves	
Strategy and plan for reinvigorating the District's Charter Markets	Following productive engagement and constructive dialogue with potential commercial operators, we collaborated to develop a revised market tender brief that better reflects the needs and expectations of all parties involved. As a result of this improved approach, we have successfully appointed a new commercial operator to manage the Charter Markets in both Witney and Chipping Norton. The new operator is set to commence operations from 1st August, bringing fresh energy and a renewed focus to the delivery and development of these important local markets. Specialist Markets will continue at Marriotts Walk this year. The Market Operators to feed into the design of the Public Realm improvements to ensure markets can work with new improvements.			On Target	Duncan Enright	Sam Stronach	Sam Stronach
Take an active role as member of Cotswolds Plus Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) and engagement with neighbouring LVEP's.				On Target	Duncan Enright	Chris Jackson	Chris Jackson

			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.	Continue to prioritise the long-term viability of our Market Towns through improvements such as a potential wayfinding, signage project for Wintey, supporting public realm enhancements at Marriotts Walk, and continued ongoing support for independent retailers. Through UKSPF, we are also delivering a Shop Front Improvement Grant, a Rural Enterprise Growth Grant, and working with the Tourism Team on a Visitor Economy Grant Scheme. In parallel, we maintain strong engagement with town partnerships, the Witney Chamber of Commerce, and independent retailers across our market towns. This ongoing dialogue helps us respond to local needs whether related to business support, premises, or operational queries and ensures our initiatives are aligned with the challenges and opportunities facing our high streets.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Duncan Enright	Sam Seronach	Sam Seronach
			Oxfordshire County Council improvements to Witney Town Centre linked to Marriotts Walk redevelopment where appropriate.	Construction was initially scheduled for summer 2025; however, this timeline may be subject to delay. A follow-up meeting with Oxfordshire County Council has been arranged for the end of July 2025 to review progress and next steps.			Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Duncan Enright	Sam Seronach	Sam Seronach
			Guide the future delivery of Salt Cross new garden village and associated infrastructure to enable delivery of Salt Cross Science Park.	AAP hearing session held on 30 June 2025. Inspector's post-hearing note now awaited. This will dictate how the Council then proceeds towards adoption of the AAP. Adoption of the AAP will enable the Council to then determine an outline planning application for the scheme.	01/01/2018	31/12/2034	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Duncan Enright	Andrea Clenton	Andrea Clenton
			Marriotts Walk – implementation of CBRE recommendations inc. securing new tenants, public realm improvements & making enhanced use of the square.	Work ongoing with CBRE to manage void units in a challenging market. Unit 4 lease completed and fitout in progress. Unit 6 Agreement for Lease completed and planning application being submitted. Terms agreed with prospective tenant for Unit 12. Public Realm designs and costings in train.			On Target	Duncan Enright	Jasmine McWilliams	Jasmine McWilliams
			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.	Following a recent meeting with Nigel Tipple, CEO of Enterprise Oxfordshire, there was a productive discussion around the regeneration of Carterton and the need to engage strategic partners such as Homes England, to help drive this forward. As part of this renewed focus, an Executive Member for Carterton has now been appointed, and a dedicated role is being created to support the town's regeneration efforts.	01/02/2022	31/05/2025	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Albion Smith, Hugo Ashon, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner	Sam Seronach	Sam Seronach
31	Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife	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.		01/04/2025	01/03/2026		Lidia Arciszewska	Si Pococke-Clidey	
			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.	Habitat surveys have been completed and reports produced in early autumn. The land management plans will be reviewed over the winter. New road verge nature reserves have been proposed. The Waste Environmental Services Programme businesscase is progressing. Areas that are currently being managed for wildflowers have also been added onto the Grass Cutting and Maintenance webpage.	01/02/2022	01/03/2026	On Target	Lidia Arciszewska	Si Pococke-Clidey / Hannah Kanyon	Hannah Kanyon
			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.	The Local Plan preferred policy options consultation paper currently out for consultation includes a number of geographically specific 'place-based' policies including in relation to the Windrush Valley. Further consideration to be given to the Evenlode catchment as the plan moves through its next stages of preparation.			In Progress	Lidia Arciszewska	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. Linked to 3.5.	Wychwood Forest Trust intend to submit the bid in August 2025.	01/05/2022	01/03/2025	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kanyon	Hannah Kanyon

			Coronation Community Orchard Scheme	The comms officers have been asked to prepare a communications plan to accelerate grant awards. 2 further orchards have been approved and are due to plant their orchard in the autumn.	01/11/2023	21/03/2025	On Target	Andrew Prosser, Lidia Ariszewska	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
32		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.	Continued to explore potential investment in farmer-led woodland planting schemes for carbon sequestration.			In Progress	Lidia Ariszewska, Andrew Prosser	Chris Jackson / Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
33		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.	Completed	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	Complete	Duncan Enright	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			Tackling inequalities in nature	The project has continued to develop with Chipping Norton, Carterton and Witney being identified as areas of focus. The Nature Recovery and Community Wellbeing team are continuing to work with local individuals, charities and councils and have drafted proposals aiming to meet varied needs of each community.			On Target	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon / Heather McCulloch	Hannah Kenyon / Heather McCulloch
34	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.	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.		01/07/2022	01/07/2025	On Target	Lidia Ariszewska, Duncan Enright	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			Explore the potential for the Council to acquire land for Biodiversity Net Gain and nature-based carbon sequestration.		8/12/2024	31/03/2026	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Frank Wilson / Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
35		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).	The Nature Recovery officer continues to attend both the Evenlode Catchment Partnership and Windrush Catchment Partnership quarterly and steering group meetings.			On Target	Lidia Ariszewska, Andy Graham	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			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.	Local Plan preferred policy options consultation paper out for consultation until 8 August 2025 includes a new core strategic policy on the water environment. Further focused consultation on potential development locations to follow in October 2025 with a view to full draft plan being published in spring 2026.	01/06/2022	31/12/2024	On Target	Hugo Ashton	Chris Hargreaves / Hannah Kenyon	Chris Hargreaves
			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.	PSDS 3c Windrush Leisure Centre (off target with mitigation) - Approval to progress to construction has been delayed due to further cost analysis related to the building condition and maintenance, and will be sought at Executive on 9 July. The design and build contractor can start on-site in July. The planning application is being considered at Lowlands Planning Committee on 14 July. PSDS 4 Chipping Norton Leisure Centre (off target) - Accepted the Salix grant funding for the decarbonisation scheme. Project paused until SLT have decided how to proceed with the project. Further delays risk project viability.			Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Andrew Prosser, Dan Levy, Alaric Smith	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon

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.	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.	(CL) Solar PV installation funded by SPSF is now complete with roof repairs due for completion by the end of July. Awaiting connection date from the DNO but overall progress is good. Agreement to extend completion beyond the 31st May. (HK) Following the government Spending Review, there will be no additional funding for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.	31/10/22	31/03/25	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Andrew Prosser, Tim Sumner	Claire Locke	Hannah Kenyon
			Waste Vehicle Strategy - Supporting the Waste team on the development of the strategy to reduce emissions from the Council's waste vehicle fleet.	Waste Environmental Services Programme underway and will consider electric fleet and charging points.			On Target	Lidia Arciszewska	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.	Seeking approval for the new Climate Change Strategy at July Executive.	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.	SIAT workshop held for report writers held. WODC SIAT portal page updated with training videos and guidance. Sustainability assessments to be mandatory for Council decisions from September.	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.	Approval to install energy efficiency measures at 3 Welch Way in parallel with repair works. Funding for low carbon heating and solar PV to be included in the 26/27 budget.	01/08/2022	01/12/2023	On Target	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
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.	Nature recovery actions with the highest impact are being prioritised.	01/03/2023		In Progress	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
4.3	The Council will be a community leader in responding to the challenges of climate change, including rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing the District and its communities for the impacts of climate change to ensure a fair transition for all to a future that will be defined by climate change.	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.	Continued to work with the CAPZero project team on accelerating domestic and commercial retrofit. Arup have produced a preliminary retrofit report.			In Progress	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
			Greenlight – nature and online hub to facilitate community action for a greener future.	Social media and climate bulletin considered more effective. Engagement being considered as part of the Climate Change Strategy.			In Progress	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.	MEES requirements not yet confirmed by Government. (HK) Reported breaches of MEES for privately rented homes will be investigated and enforced.	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.	Completed	01/06/2023	01/03/2025	Complete	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
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.	Countywide energy baseline and modelling progressing. Decision gateway to move to district Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) in September Executive.			In Progress	Andrew Prosser	Giles Hughes / Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon

45		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.		26/05/2023	01/01/2025	Off Target but Mitigation in Place	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
51	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.	The UKSPF and REPF continue to be actively delivered and managed, providing vital support to local enterprises. In addition, three new grant opportunities have been developed to further strengthen business resilience and growth: the Shop Front Improvement Grant, the Rural Enterprise Growth Grant, and the Visitor Economy Grant Scheme. These programmes are being managed in-house to ensure close and ongoing dialogue with local businesses. We have also continued to support Westhive through the Communities Team and have renewed and strengthened partnerships with key providers, including FarmAbility, Enterprise Oxfordshire, and the North North East Cotswolds Farming Cluster. Furthermore, a new initiative—Tools for Tomorrow—has been launched to support councillor priorities and address gaps in local construction trade provision.			On Target	Duncan Enright	Sam Stronach	Sam Stronach
			Successful implementation of new Grant Scheme: a) Crowdfunding, b) Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements and c) Youth initiatives.	We have also continued to support Westhive through the Communities Team and have renewed and strengthened partnerships with key providers, including FarmAbility, Enterprise Oxfordshire, and the North North East Cotswolds Farming Cluster. Furthermore, a new initiative—Tools for Tomorrow—has been launched to support councillor priorities and address gaps in local construction trade provision.	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Alaric Smith with Rachel Crouch, Andrew Prosser and Lidia Arciszewsk	Heather McCulloch	Heather McCulloch
53		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.	Completed	01/12/2022	31/05/2025	Complete	Andrew Prosser	Hannah Kenyon	Hannah Kenyon
54		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		01/12/2022	31/05/2025	On Target	Rachel Crouch	Heather McCulloch	Heather McCulloch
55		Make a dedicated effort to further understand and meet the needs of our young people and support their mental health, including children, teenagers and young adults leaving school, entering the world of work and/or seeking to set up home in the District.	Focussed programme of engagement with young people, and other groups, on mental and physical health, local facilities and spaces for young people, to ensure future leisure, sport, culture and arts provision in the District best provides for these.				In Progress	Rachel Crouch, Tim Sumner	Heather McCulloch	Heather McCulloch
			Have Your Say Events – focussed topic event for young people.				In Progress	Rachel Crouch	Heather McCulloch	Heather McCulloch

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:

**April - June 2025**

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## 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 ranking against other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire County Council. The Councils included are Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

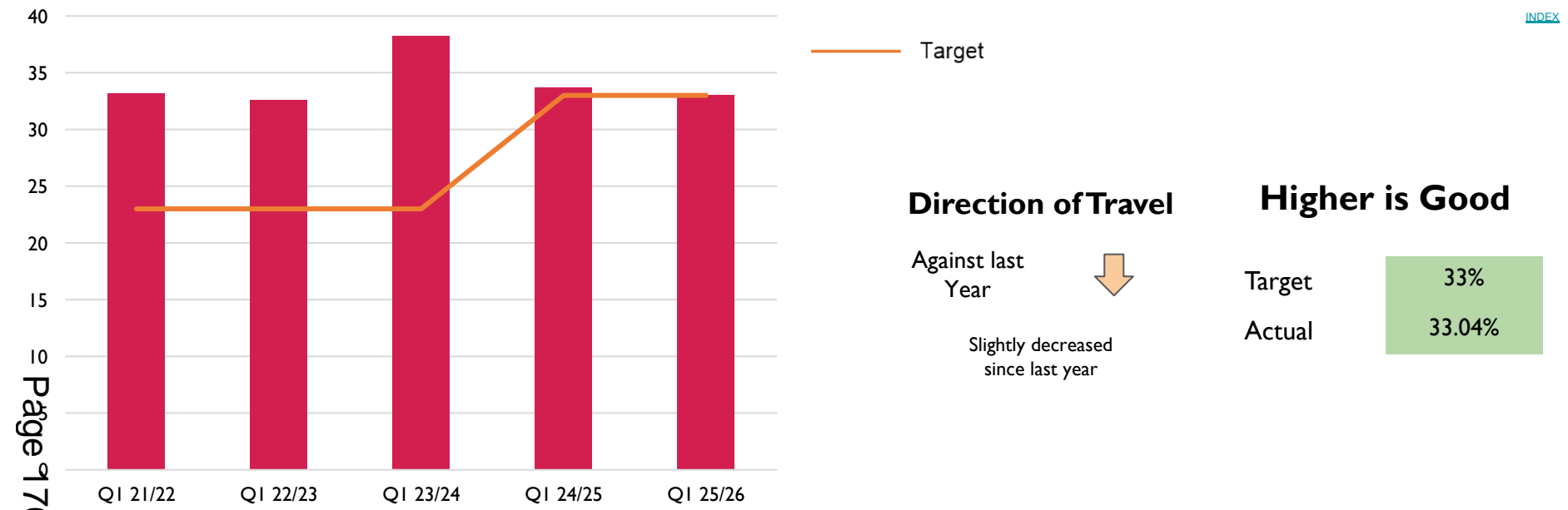
A RAG (red, amber, green) status has been applied to each KPI to provide a quick visual summary of the status of that KPI for the quarter. Additionally, RAG status has been added to the direction of travel for each metric to show how the performance against last quarter and the same quarter compared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

# Overall Performance

Overall, the Council's performance has remained broadly positive, building on the strong foundations laid in the previous quarter. Continued improvements were seen in key areas such as Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates collection, planning determination times, and customer satisfaction. Leisure centre visits and gym memberships also remained high, reflecting sustained public engagement with health and wellbeing services. Notably, the number of affordable homes delivered in Q1 exceeded the quarterly target. However, some challenges persist. Processing times for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit change events remained above target, largely due to operational adjustments linked to Universal Credit automation. Additionally, the percentage of household waste recycled continued to decline, impacted by seasonal factors and broader national trends.

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Moving forward, the Council remains committed to further enhancing its performance and service delivery. A key focus is on the development and implementation of automation and self-service options, aimed at providing customers with accessible and efficient self-help tools. By enabling customers to independently address their queries and concerns, the Council anticipates a reduction in the need for repeated interactions, streamlining services and improving overall efficiency. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of these improvement programs, assessing their effectiveness in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational processes to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to the community.

# Percentage of Council Tax Collected



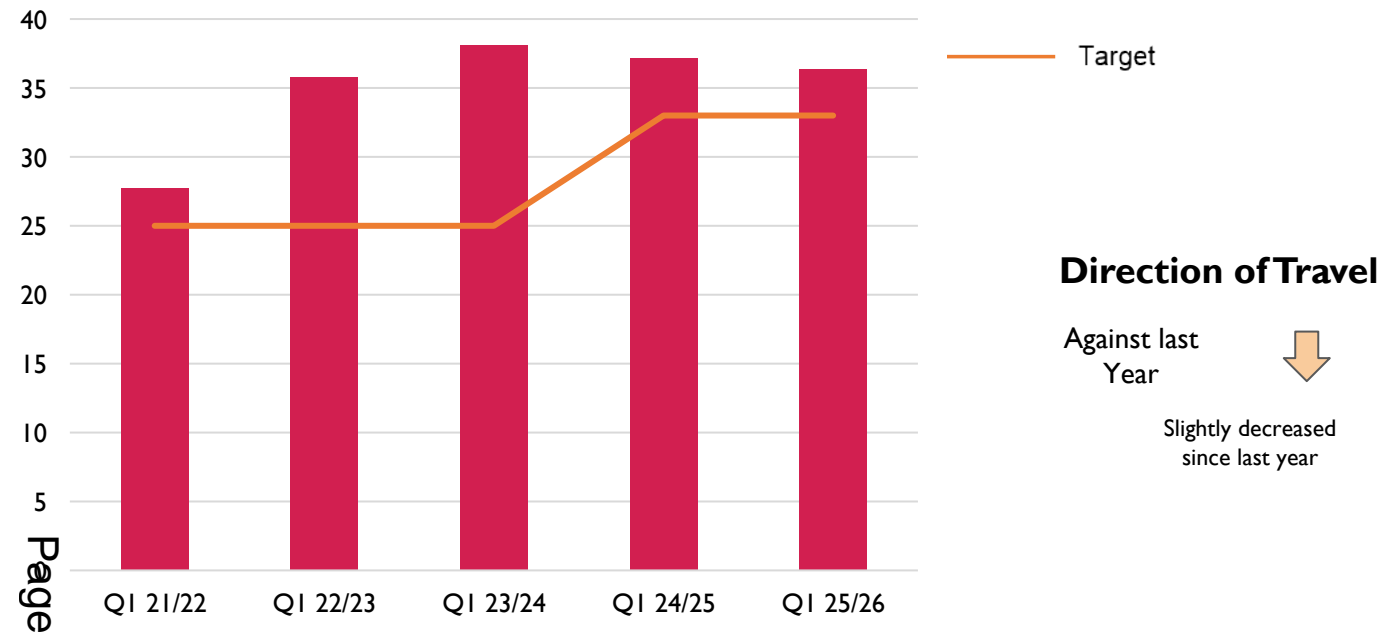
## How do we compare?

Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire - Current Dataset is up to March '25 (2024-2025)

2024-2025 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	98.06	1/5	Top
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>98.02</b>	<b>2/5</b>	<b>Top</b>
South Oxfordshire	97.94	3/5	Second
Vale of White Horse	97.91	4/5	Third
Oxford	96.49	5/5	Bottom

By the end of Q1, the Council met its 33% collection target and exceeded pre-pandemic performance levels with a 2.6% increase, although the growing shift toward 12-month payment plans is contributing to a gradual decline in early-year collection rates.

# Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



## Higher is Good

Target	33%
Actual	36.34%

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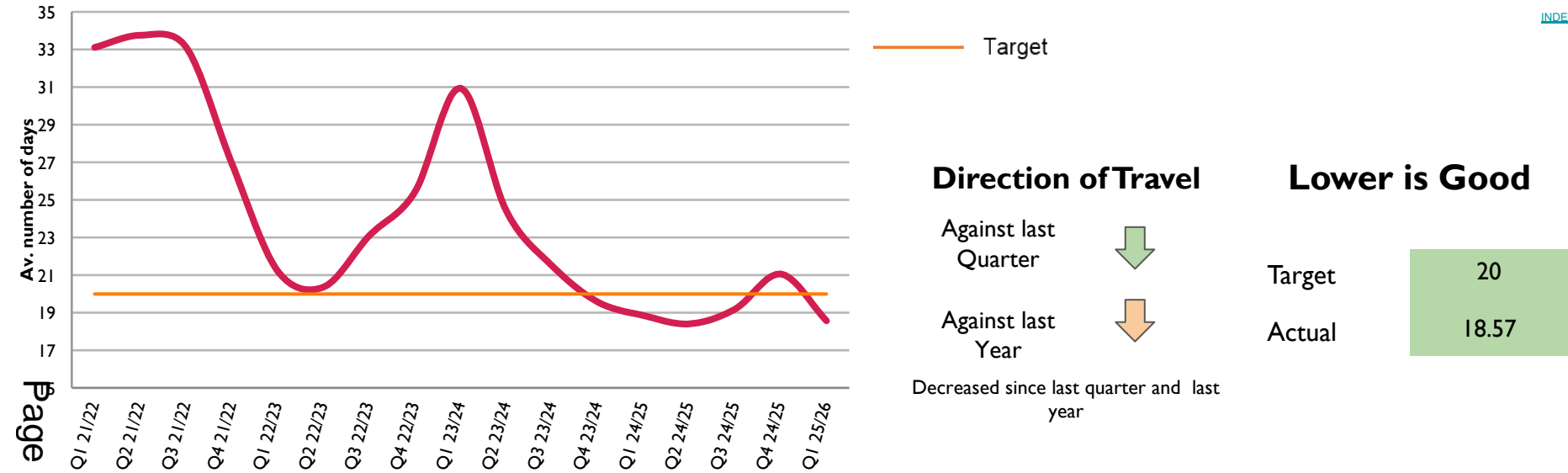
## How do we compare?

Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire - Current Dataset is up to March '25 (2024-2025)

2024-2025 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	98.83	1/5	Top
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>97.66</b>	<b>2/5</b>	<b>Top</b>
Oxford	97.21	3/5	Second
Vale of White Horse	97.08	4/5	Third
South Oxfordshire	96.64	5/5	Bottom

By the end of Q1, West collected 36.34%, surpassing its 33% target, though this was largely driven by a small number of businesses paying in full early, as overall Rates collection has seen a modest decline compared to last year.

# Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



Page 17

## How do we compare?

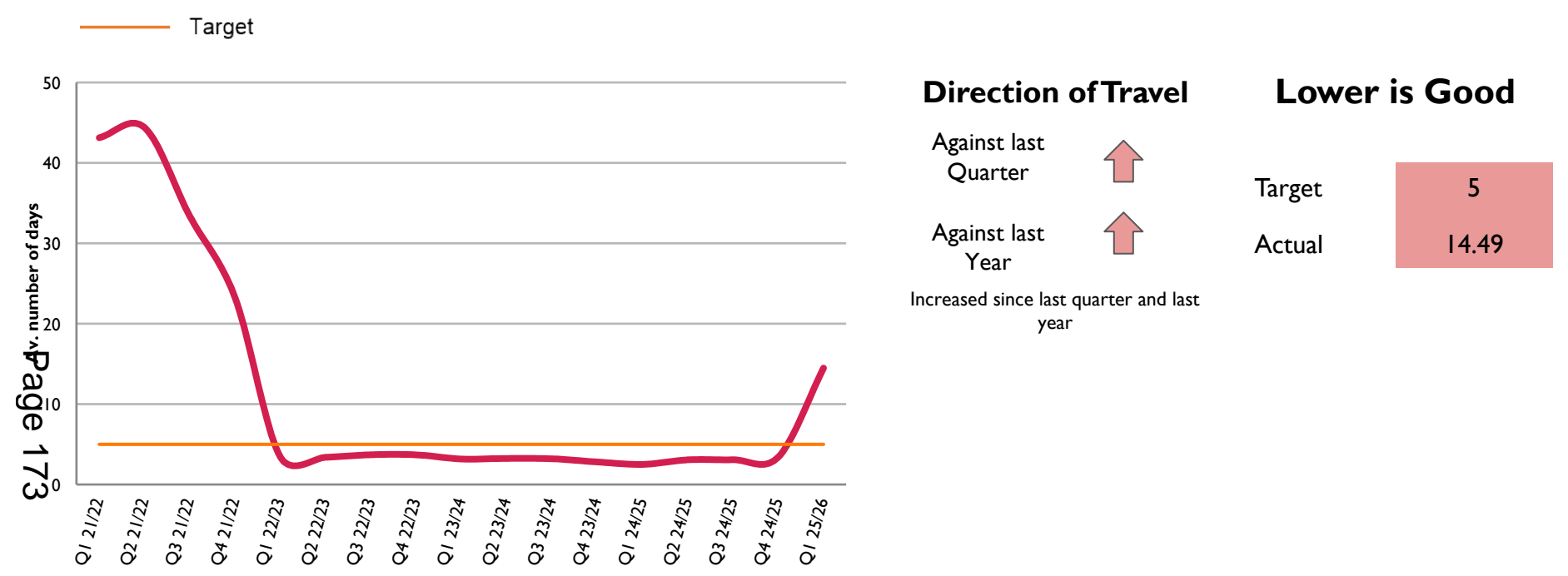
Gov.uk produces tables to show a snapshot of the number of CTS claimants at the end of each financial year. The below table shows number of claimants at the end of March 2025 and the percentage change from March 2024 for each authority.

	Number of Claimants at end of Sept 2024	Percentage Change since Sept 2023	County Rank (Higher = less claimants)
Oxford	9,105	-6.87%	1/5
South Oxfordshire	4,884	-1.65%	2/5
Cherwell	5,941	-1.51%	3/5
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>4,449</b>	<b>1.97%</b>	<b>4/5</b>
Vale of White Horse	5,094	6.68%	5/5

Processing times fell to 18.57 days, around 2.5 days lower than last quarter, with a slight year-on-year decrease, reflecting continued service improvement.

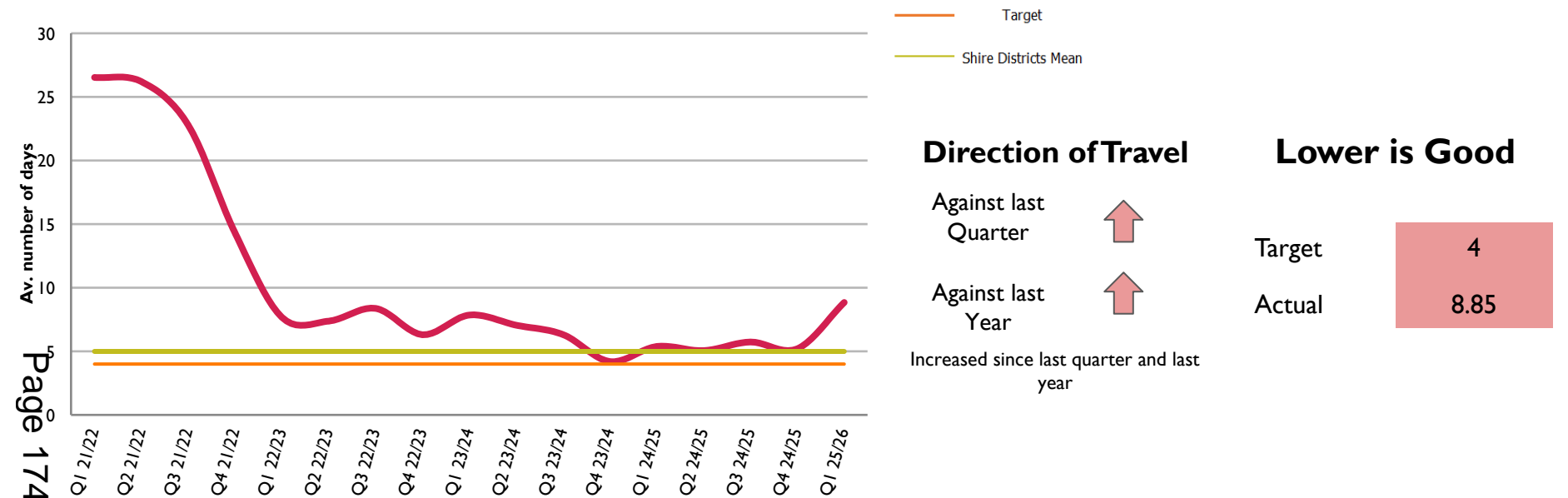


# Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Processing times rose sharply in Q1, reaching 14.49 days due to a planned one-month pause in Universal Credit uploads, which allowed the team to reduce the manual application backlog and enhance automation. Since resuming, automation has consistently exceeded 90%, and while processing times are improving, they may not return under target until Q3 due to the cumulative nature of the metric.

# Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



## How do we compare?

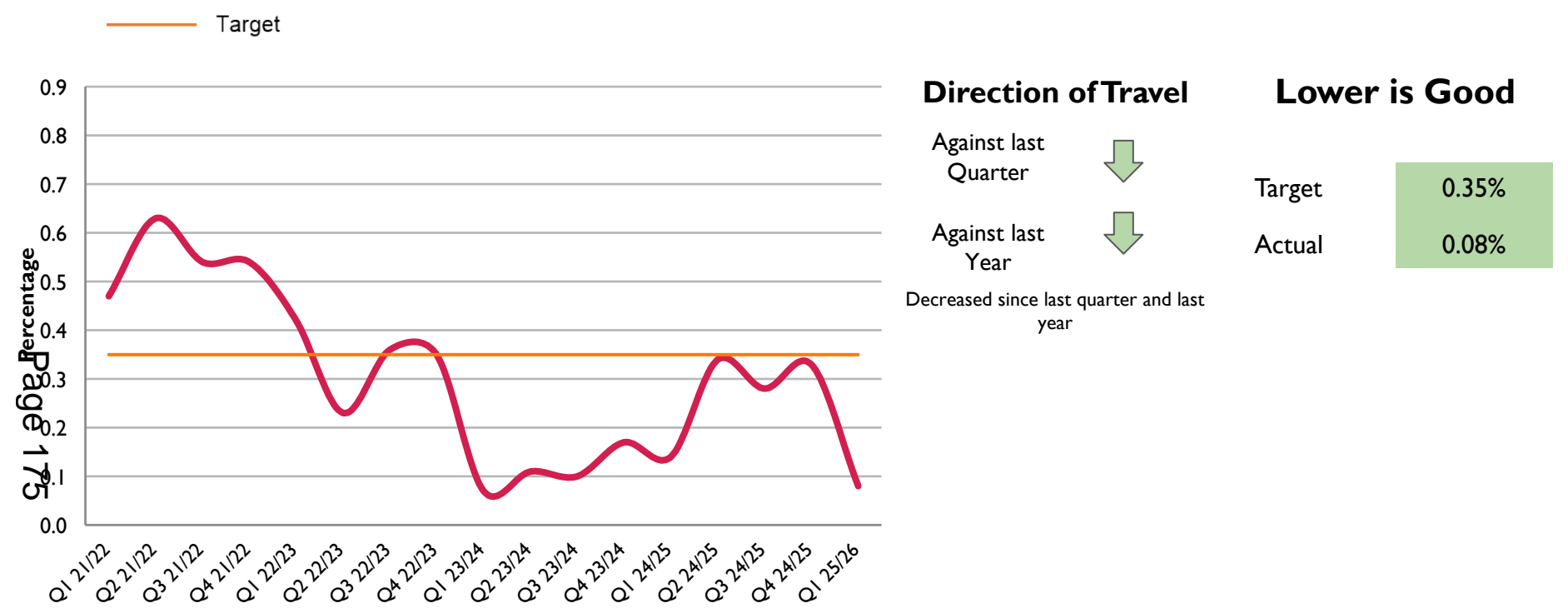
Gov.uk produces tables showing statistics on the average number of days to process a change in circumstance of an existing Housing Benefit claim. Latest Release – October – December 2024 (Q3 24-25)

Q3 24-25 Benchmark	Days	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	3.62	1/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	5.88	2/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	6.28	3/5	Second
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>7.38</b>	<b>4/5</b>	<b>Third</b>
Oxford	18.9	5/5	Bottom

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

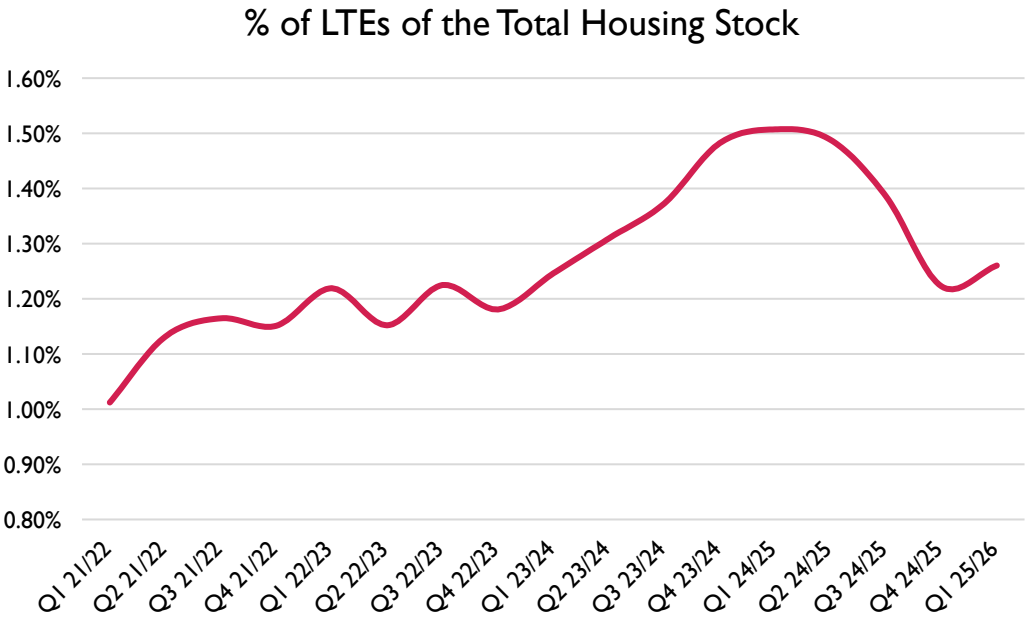
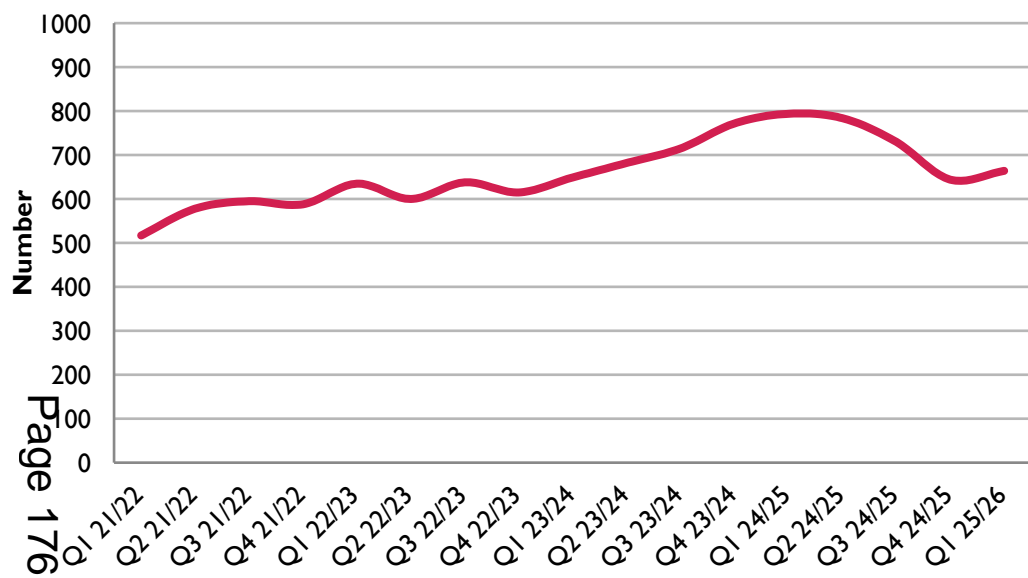
Processing times rose to 8.85 days, moving above the 4-day target and marking a notable increase from previous quarters. This was driven by the added complexity of managed migration to Universal Credit and a planned pause in UC uploads, which temporarily impacted workflows while supporting long-term automation improvements.

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





The Council remains below the national target of 0.48% and the stricter service target of 0.35%.

# (Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter but decreased since last year

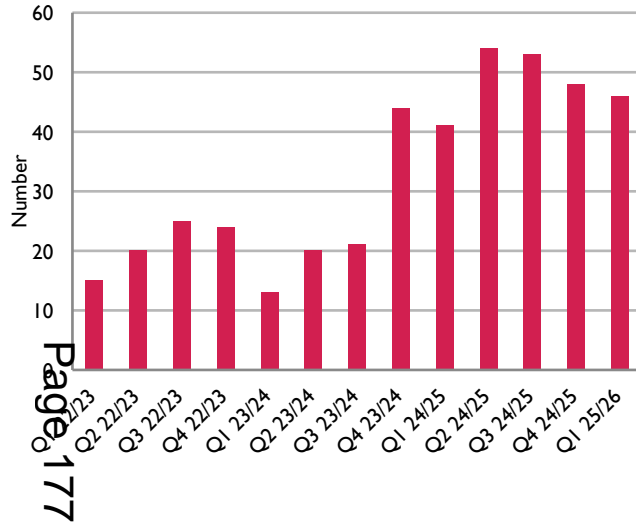
## Lower is Good

664

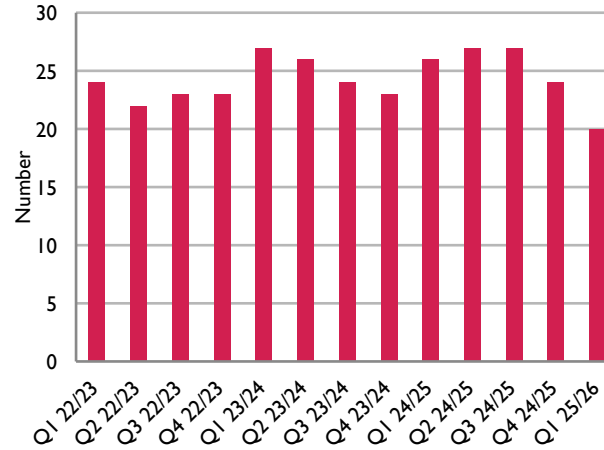
The Council recorded a modest increase of 20 long-term empty properties since last quarter, attributed to improved reporting systems. These enhancements have enabled more accurate tracking and will support more targeted interventions going forward.

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

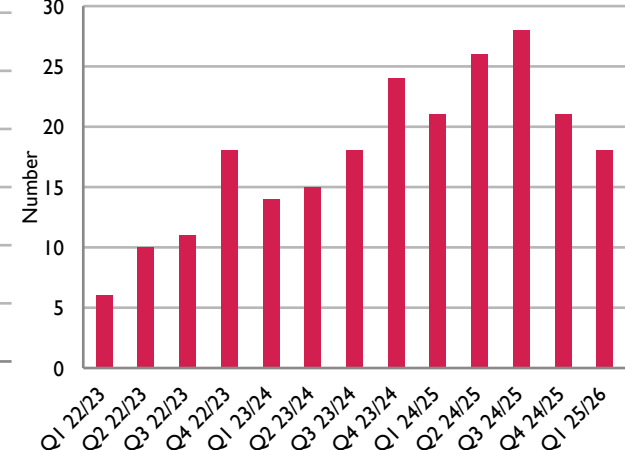
Households in B&B/hotel type accommodation



Households in hostels



Successful 'Move on' into suitable independent/LT accommodation

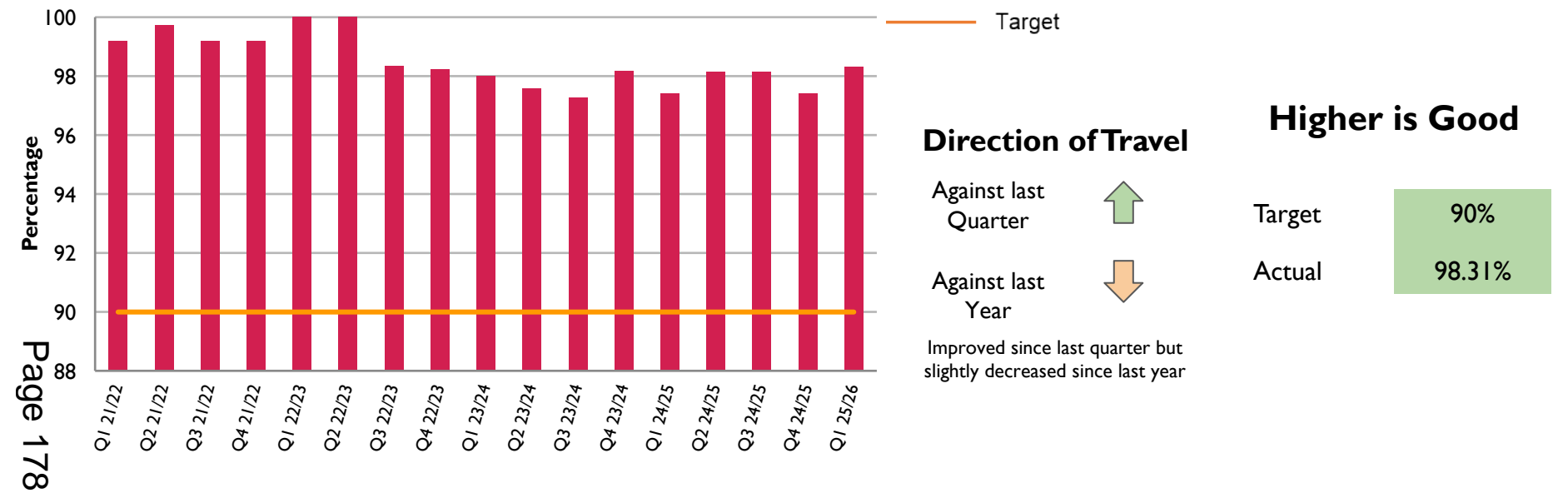


## Direction of Travel

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

At West, there's been a steady month-on-month decline in the use of insecure B&B-type accommodation. This reflects strong homelessness prevention work and effective partnerships with local providers, including initiatives like the Local Authority Housing Fund to boost self-contained temporary housing.

# Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



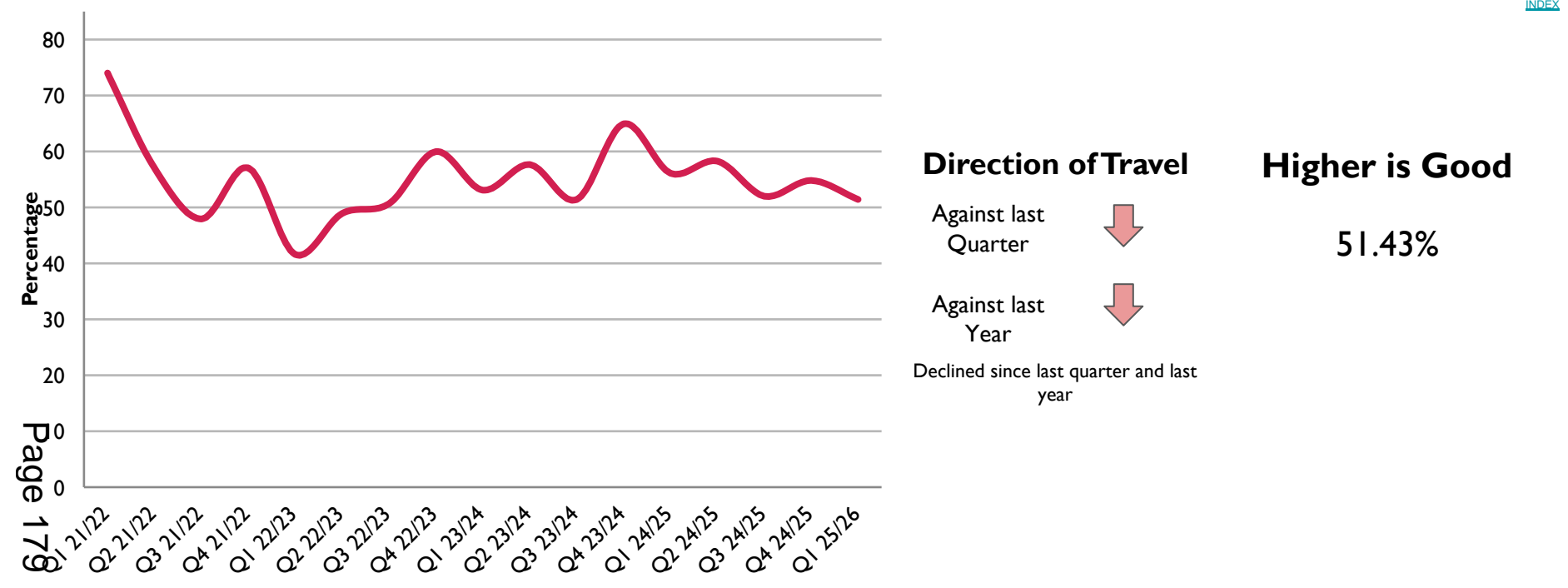
## How do we compare?

The Govmetric Channel Satisfaction Index is a monthly publication of the top performing councils across the core customer access channels. At least 100 customers need to be transferred to the survey to be included in the league table so even if satisfaction is high, it may not be included.

A total of 532 residents participated in the survey, of these, 523 customers reported being satisfied with the service, reflecting a high level of overall satisfaction.

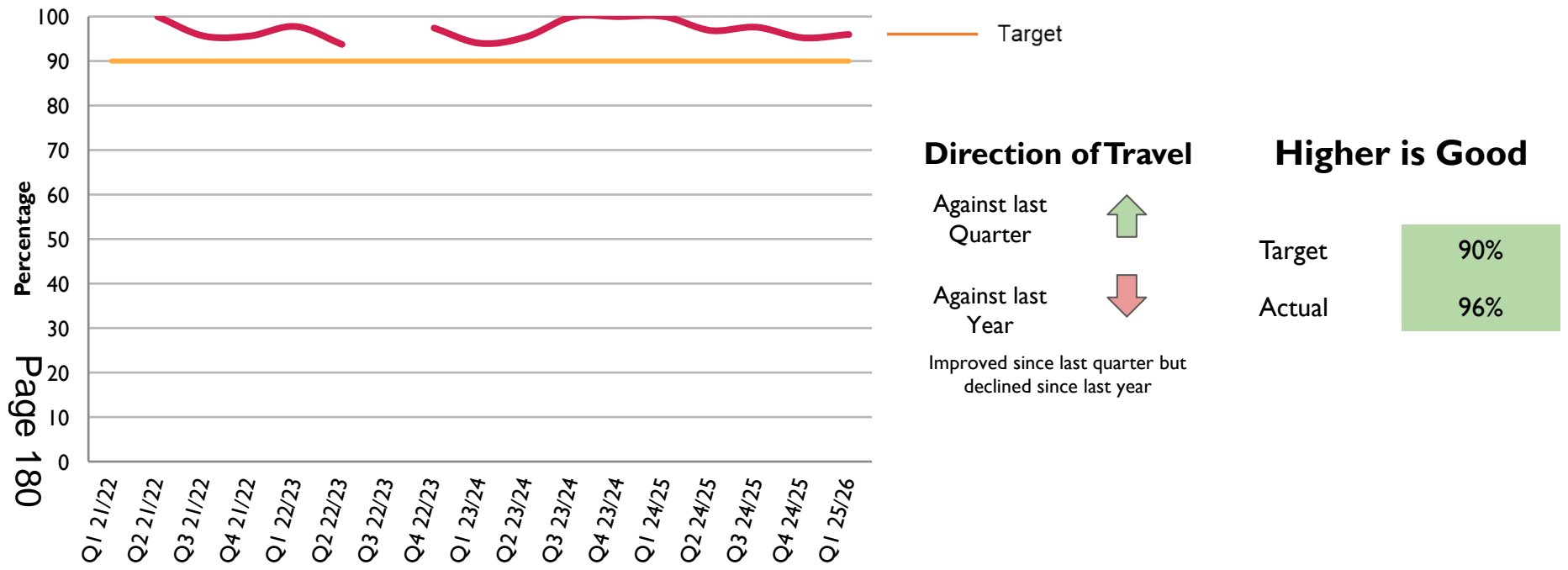
	April Rank	April Net Sat.	May Rank	May Net Sat.	June Rank	June Net Sat.
West Oxfordshire	1	96%	3	96%	2	97%

# Customer Satisfaction - Email



630 residents responded to the survey, with 324 expressing satisfaction (51.43%), down from 54.83% in Q4, with all outbound customer service emails including a survey link. The team continually monitors feedback closely and proactively seeks opportunities to enhance the overall customer experience.

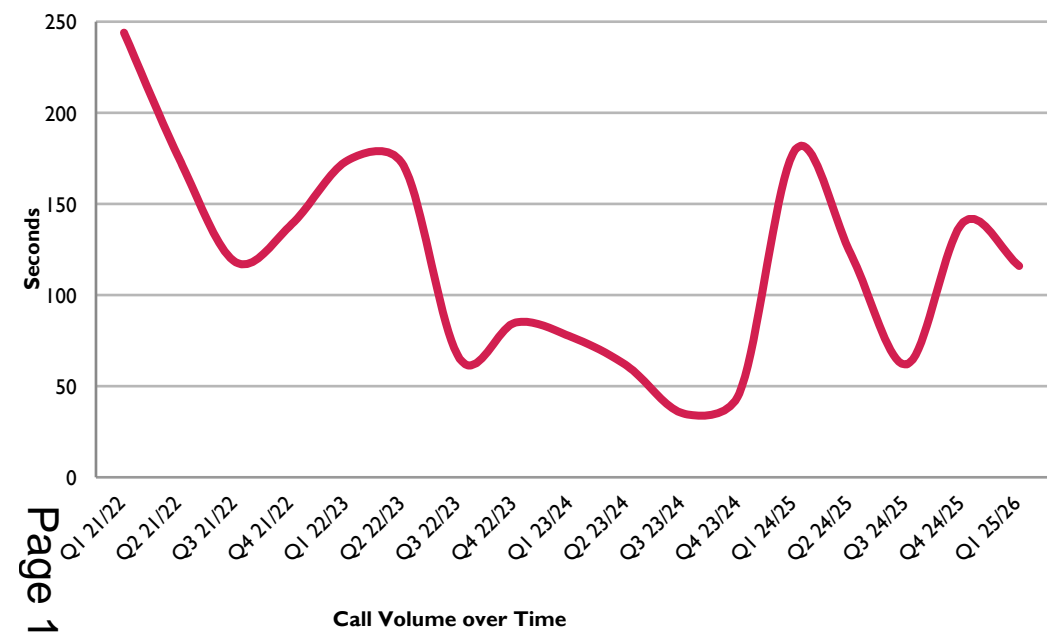
# Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face



Customer satisfaction with face-to-face interactions remains consistently strong.



# Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



## Direction of Travel

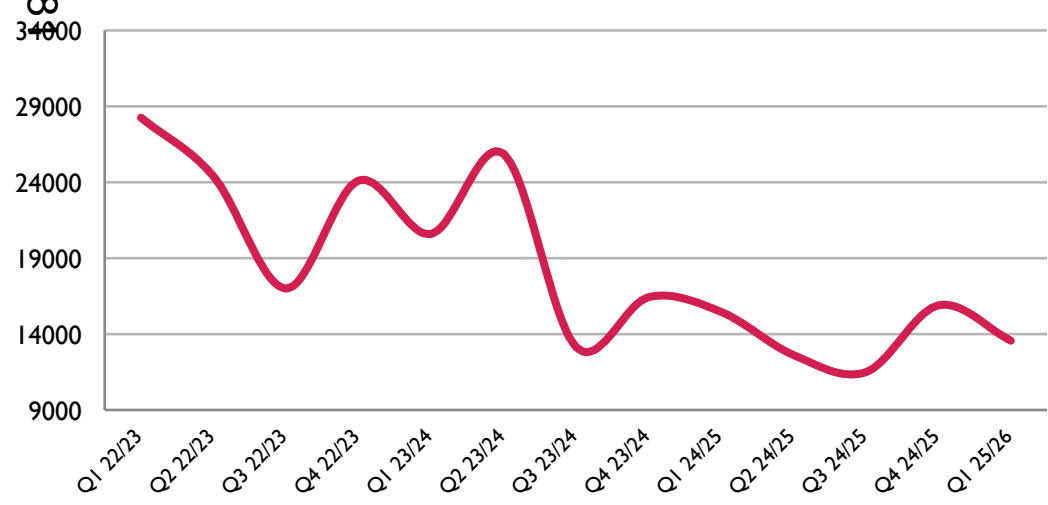
Lower is Good

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter and since last year

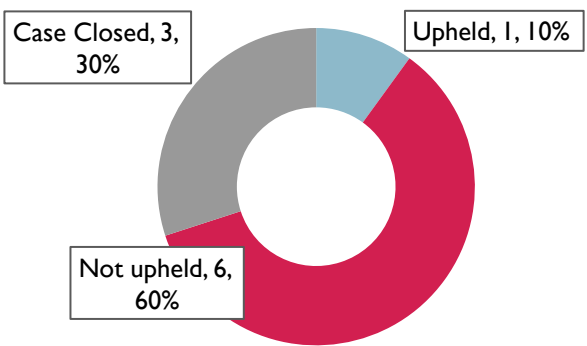
116 Seconds



In Q1, the Council achieved a one-minute reduction in average call waiting times compared to the same period last year. This improvement was delivered while maintaining operational consistency and high levels of customer satisfaction, despite the added demands of onboarding and training during peak periods.


# Number of complaints upheld


## Complaints by Status



## Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter but declined since last year

## How do we compare?

The table outlines the complaints received by the Ombudsman over the period, the decisions made on these cases, and the Council's compliance with any recommendations issued by the Ombudsman during this time.

Complaints received by the Ombudsman reflect cases where customers, having completed the Council's complaint process (see to the right), feel that the Council has not satisfactorily resolved the matter.

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

2024-25	Complaints Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents	Percentage Satisfactory Remedy	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations
Cherwell	3	33	0.6	100	N/A
Oxford	2	50	0.6	0	100
South Oxfordshire	1	0	0	N/A	N/A
Vale of White Horse	1	100	0.7	100	N/A
West Oxfordshire	1	100	0.8	0	100

A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st April 2025.

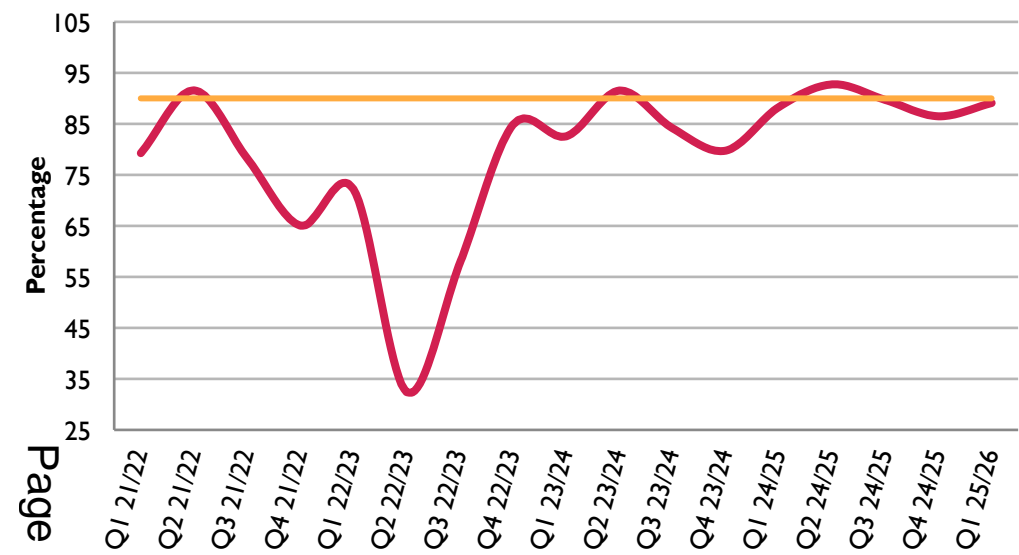
The new process has the following stages:

- Stage 1: A review of the complaint will be undertaken by an Operational Manager within the Service Area to which the complaint relates. A response needs to provide within 10 working days from the date that we advised that the complaint was valid.
- Stage 2: Requests for Stage 2 will be acknowledged and logged within five working days of the escalation request being received. Upon receipt of a Stage 2 request, an investigation into the complaint will be undertaken by the Complaint Officer or a member of the Complaints Team. A response will be provided to the customer within 20 working days from receipt of the request to escalate the complaint to Stage 2. Stage 2 is the organisation's final response; the complainant can then refer their complaint to the LGO.

# Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
West Oxfordshire				
Service Support	Customer upset organisation not recognised and invoice provided was incorrect.	Apology issued.	Upheld	9

# Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



— Target

## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



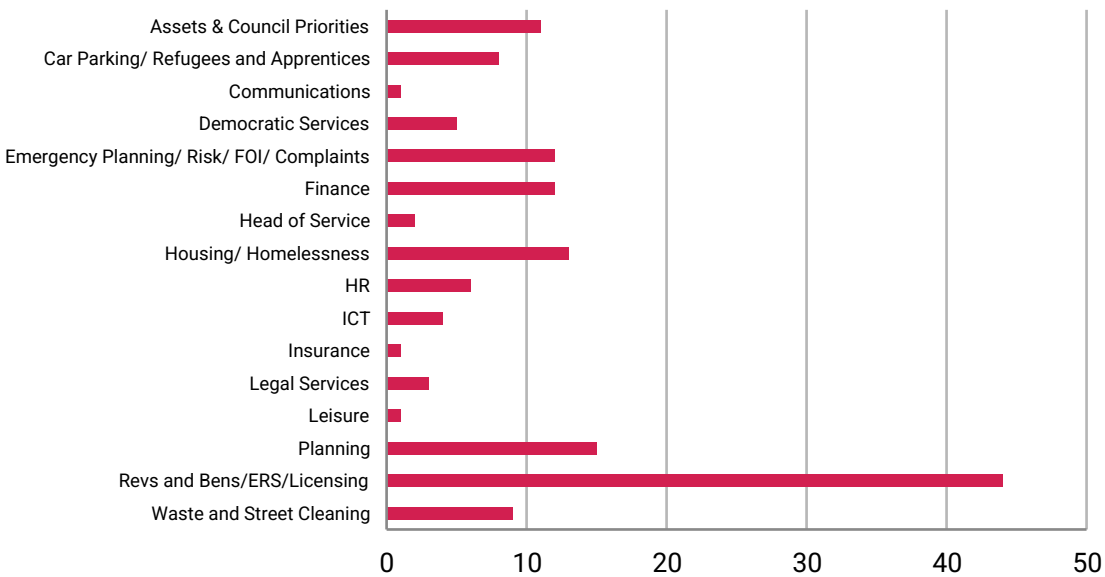
Improved since last quarter and last year

## Higher is Good

Target	90%
Q4 Actual	89.1%

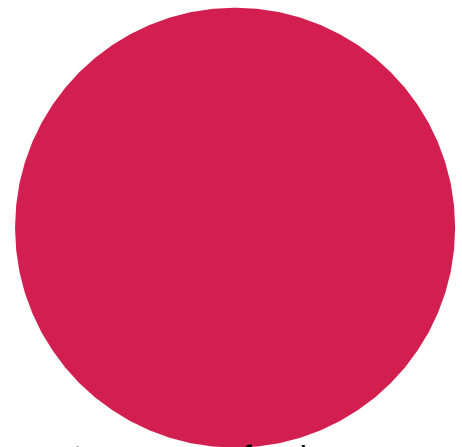
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Requests by Service Area



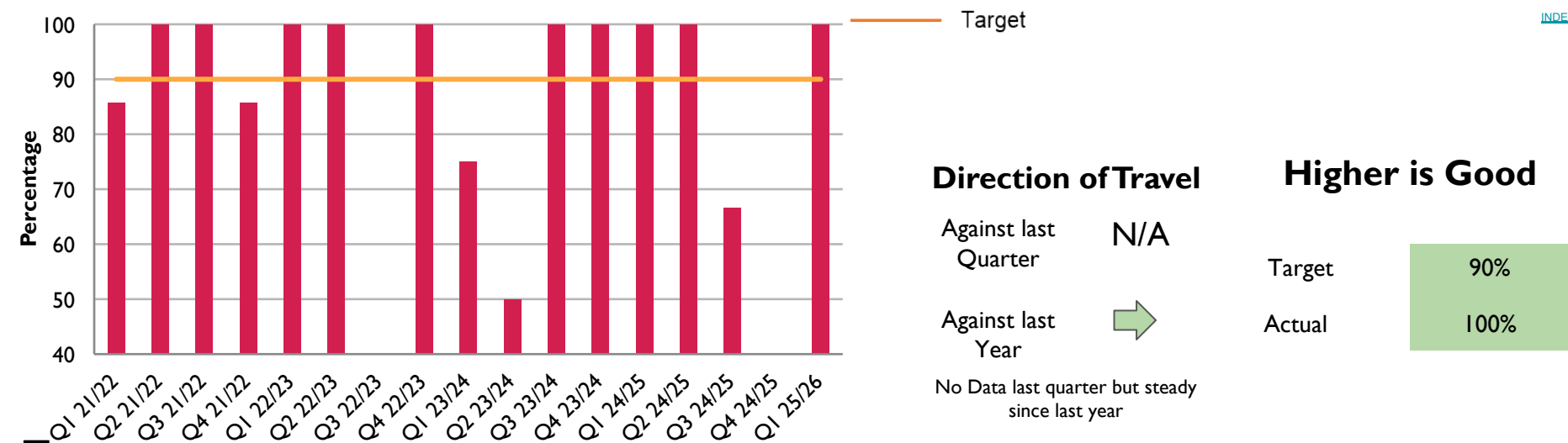
## Reason FOI request was not Answered within 20 Days

Service Area not provided Information in time



All Freedom of Information requests for the quarter have been addressed.

# Building Control Satisfaction



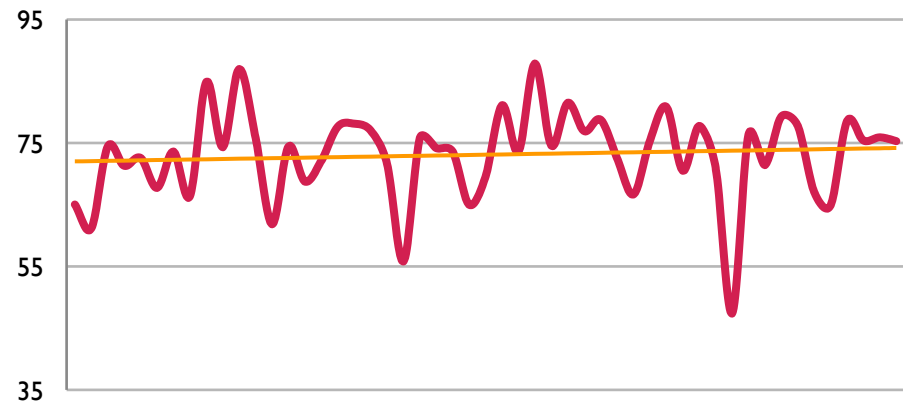
The satisfaction survey data continues to present challenges due to a low number of responses with only two received this quarter. In light of this, the team is exploring ways to improve the process. One option being considered is working with the Data Team to develop a webform, which would be emailed to customers who have received a completion certificate.

## How do we compare?

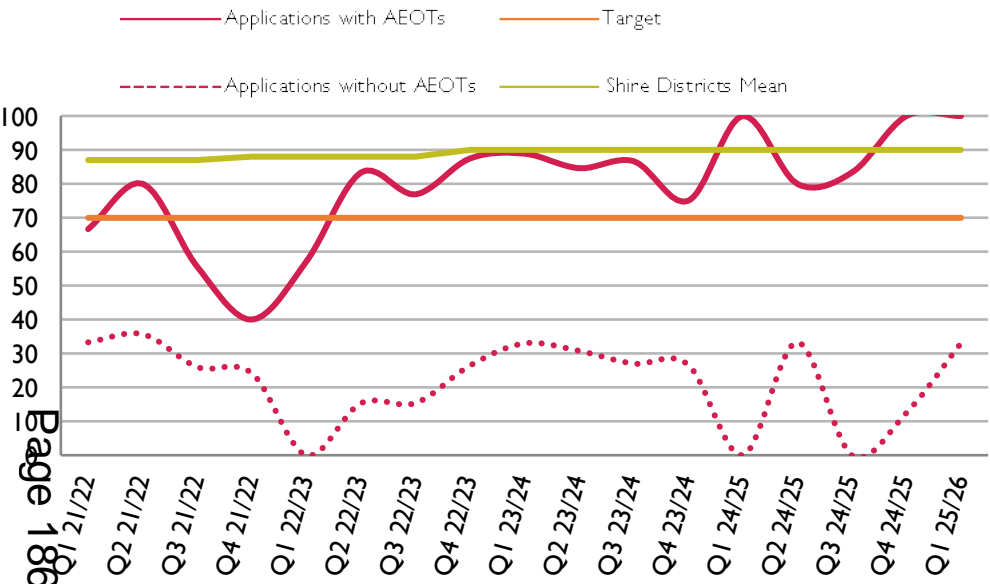
Percentage of share in the market

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Number of Apps for Quarter
West	75%	76%	75%	152

The below chart shows market share over time from April 2021



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



## Direction of Travel Higher is Good

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year →

Same since last quarter and last year

Target 70%

Actual 100%

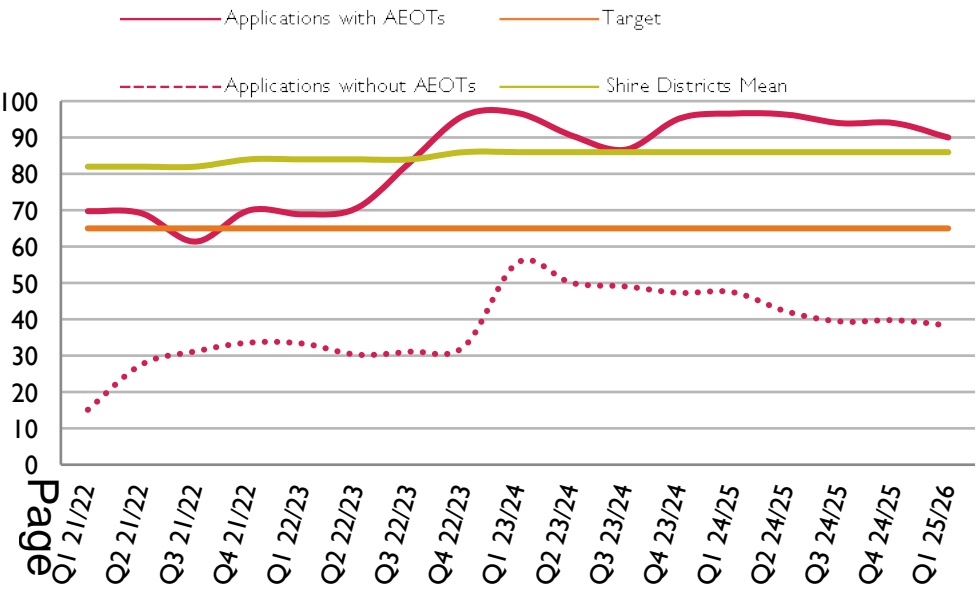
## How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform


Q4 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Oxford	100	1/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	100	1/5	Top
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1/5</b>	<b>Top</b>
South Oxfordshire	83	4/5	Third
Cherwell	78	5/5	Bottom


The service demonstrated consistently strong performance in Q1, with all three Major applications processed within the agreed timescales.

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



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter and last year

## Higher is Good

Target

65%

Actual

90%

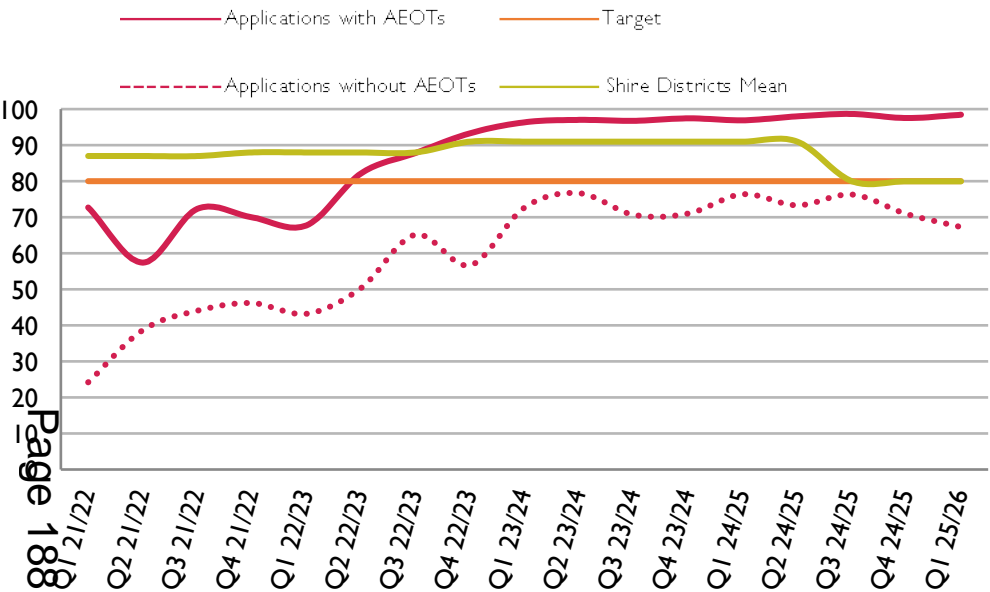
## How do we compare?

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform

Q4 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>1/5</b>	<b>Top</b>
South Oxfordshire	91	2/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	87	3/5	Second
Oxford	85	4/5	Third
Cherwell	78	5/5	Bottom

This quarter, the planning team remains fully staffed, but the absence of a dedicated Landscape Officer is contributing to delays in some areas. Despite this, the team continues to manage workloads effectively while seeking solutions to address the gap.

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



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Slightly increased since last quarter and last year

## Higher is Good

Target	80%
Actual	98.46%

## How do we compare?

Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform

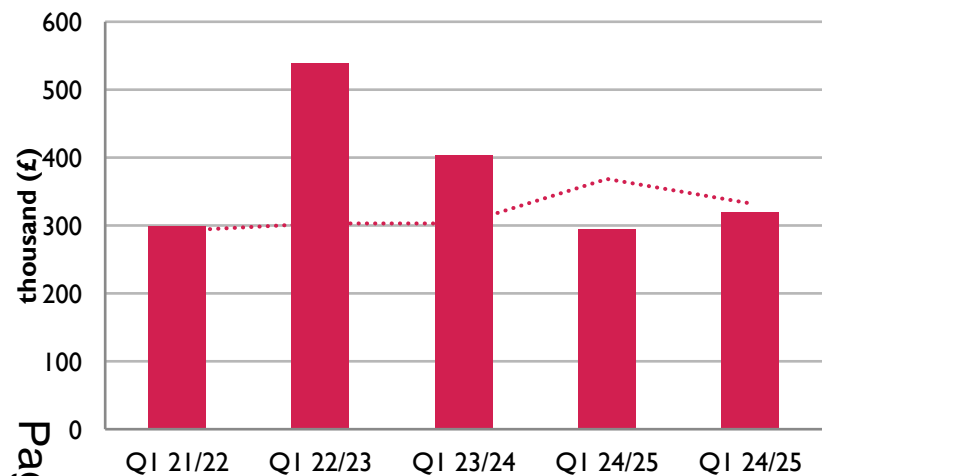
Q4 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	98	1/5	Top
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>2/5</b>	<b>Top</b>
South Oxfordshire	95	3/5	Second
Cherwell	89	4/5	Third
Oxford	89	5/5	Bottom

Determination times remain high, with 260 applications processed in Q4, including 256 within agreed timescales.

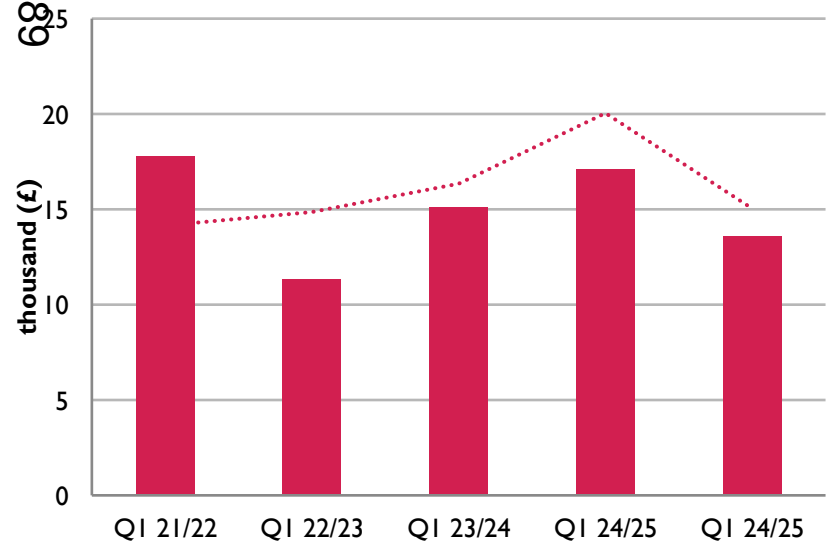


# Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice

Total planning income




Pre-application income




## Direction of Travel


**Higher is Good**


Total Planning Income

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Pre-Application Income

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Total Income declined since last quarter but increased since last year

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

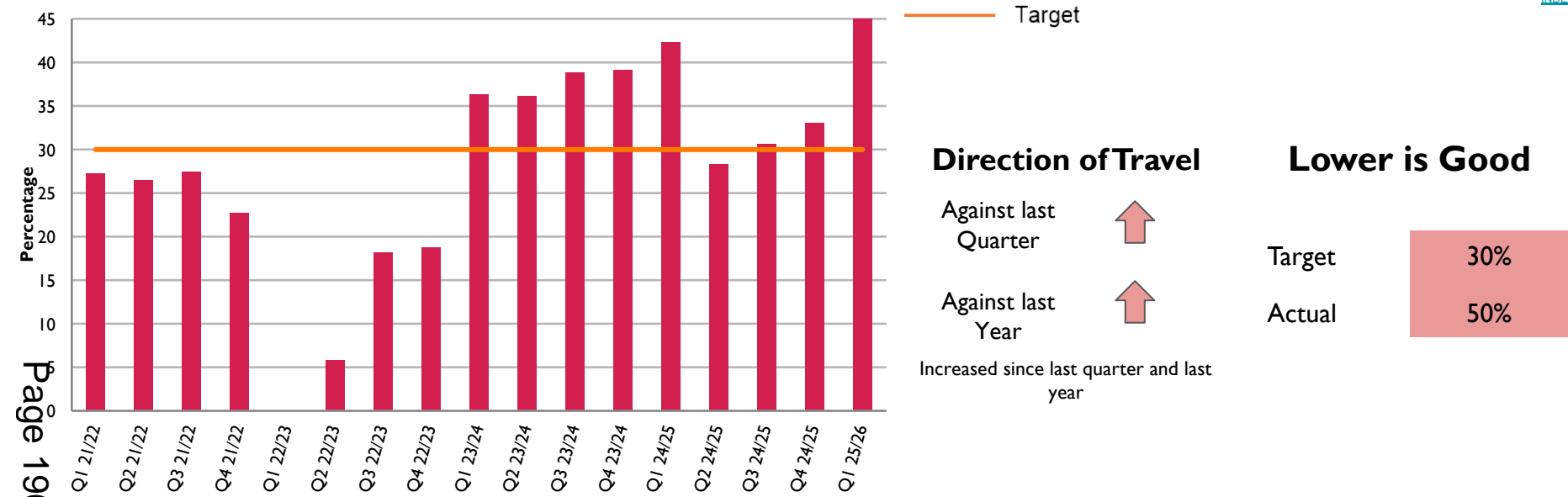
Total Planning Income (£)	
Target	332,543
Actual	318,925

Pre-Application Income (£)	
Target	15,043
Actual	13,594

In Q1, the Council experienced a slower start in planning income, falling slightly short of its targets. While pre-application fees increased, speculative activity has yet to pick up, suggesting a delay rather than a decline in interest.

# Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



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## How do we compare?

Percentage of planning appeals allowed – LG Inform

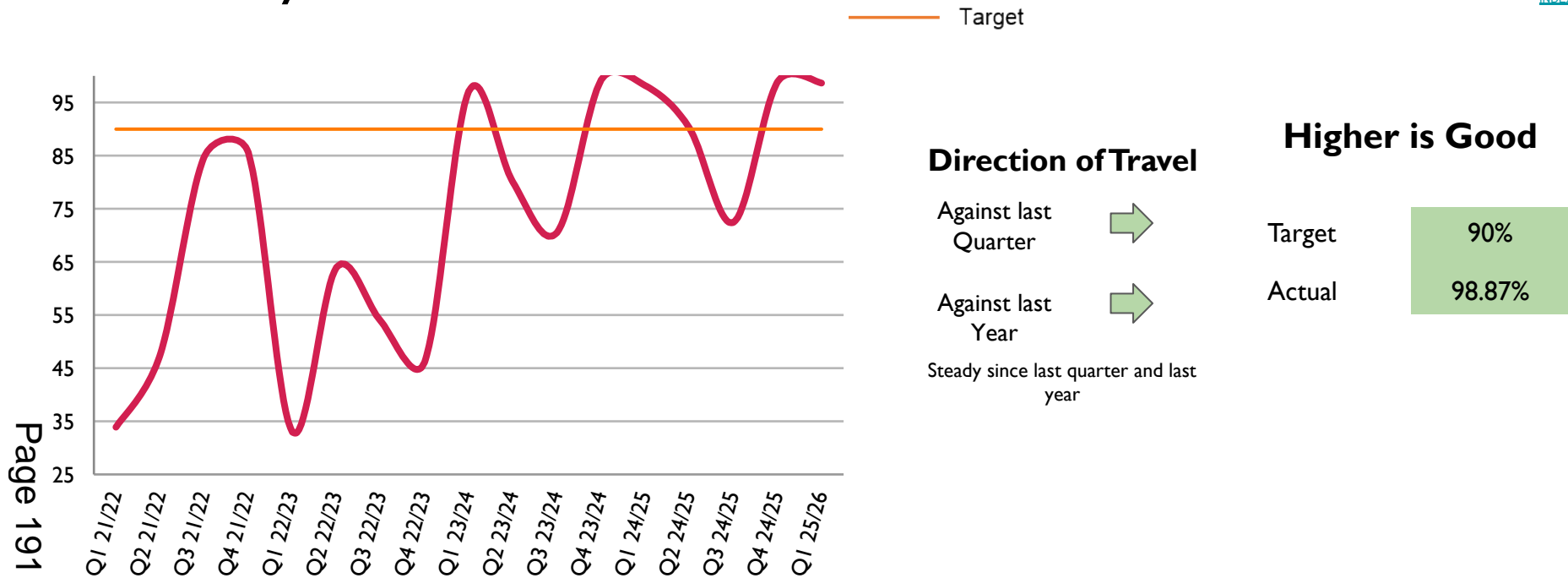
Q4 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
West Oxfordshire	25	1/5	Top
Oxford	38	2/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	42	3/5	Second
Cherwell	50	4/5	Third
South Oxfordshire	83	5/5	Bottom

This indicator aims to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed in favor of the applicant, with a lower percentage being more favorable. According to the latest statistics from the Planning Inspectorate, the national average for Section 78 planning appeals granted is 28% (source: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)).

The below shows the appeal split between Uplands and Lowlands for the year;

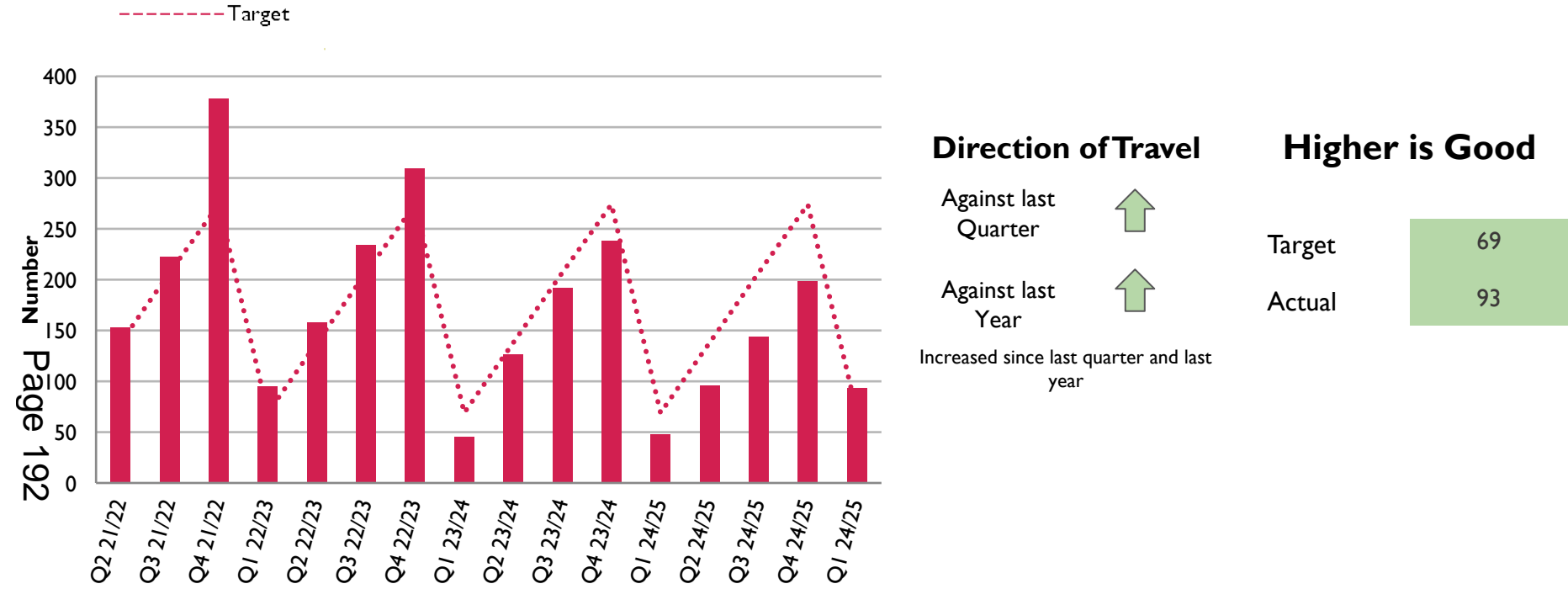
	Decided	Allowed	% Allowed
Uplands	4	2	50.00%
Lowlands	4	2	50.00%

# Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



In Q1, the Council maintained strong performance in completing official Land Charges searches, achieving 98.67% within the 10-day target - well above the 90% benchmark.

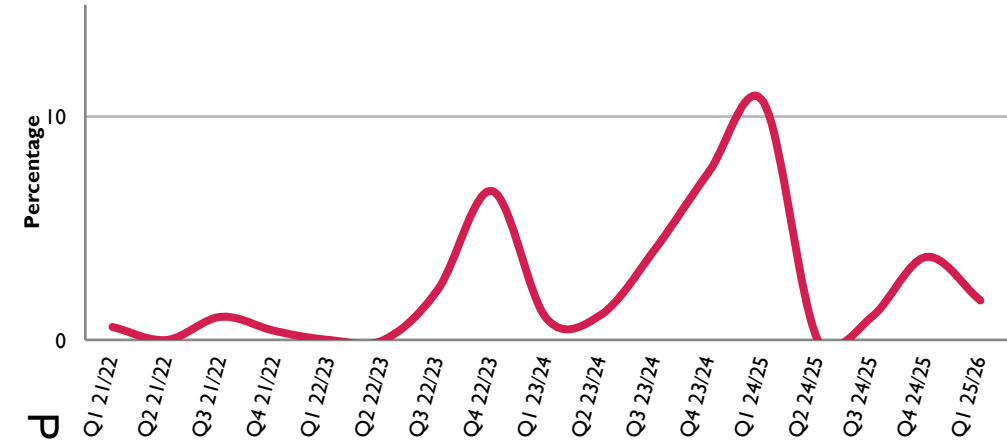
# Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



had a strong Q1, delivering 93 affordable homes, including 57 for social rent. Although 40 homes originally expected this quarter have slipped into Q2, the district remains on track for another strong year in delivery. In addition to progressing new housing delivery, the Council is actively addressing the growing need for temporary accommodation. A dedicated working group has been established, and a proposal is now in place to acquire residential properties to support this provision.

# 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)

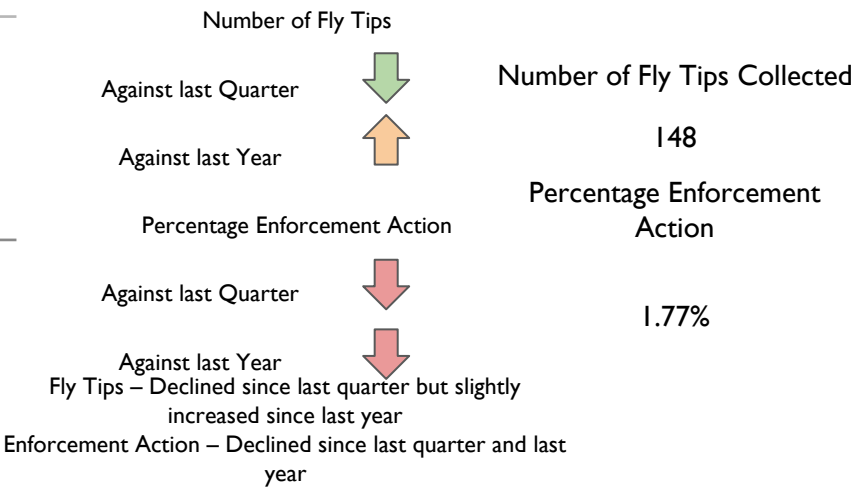


## How do we compare?

Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2023-24 for Local Authorities in England – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is 2023-24.

	Total Fly Tips	Total Enforcement Actions	Total FPNs	% FPNs per Fly Tip	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	445	580	18	4.04%	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	873	467	21	2.41%	2/5	Top
Cherwell	1101	1136	26	2.36%	3/5	Second
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.15%</b>	<b>4/5</b>	<b>Third</b>
Oxford	4959	297	7	0.14%	5/5	Bottom

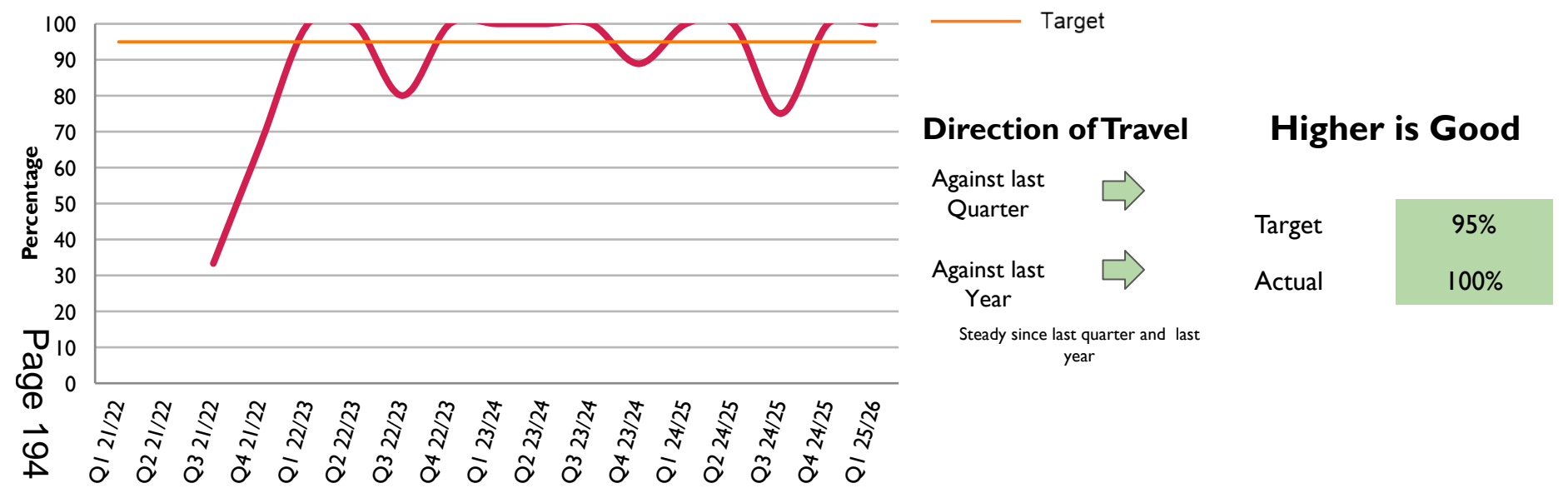
## Direction of Travel



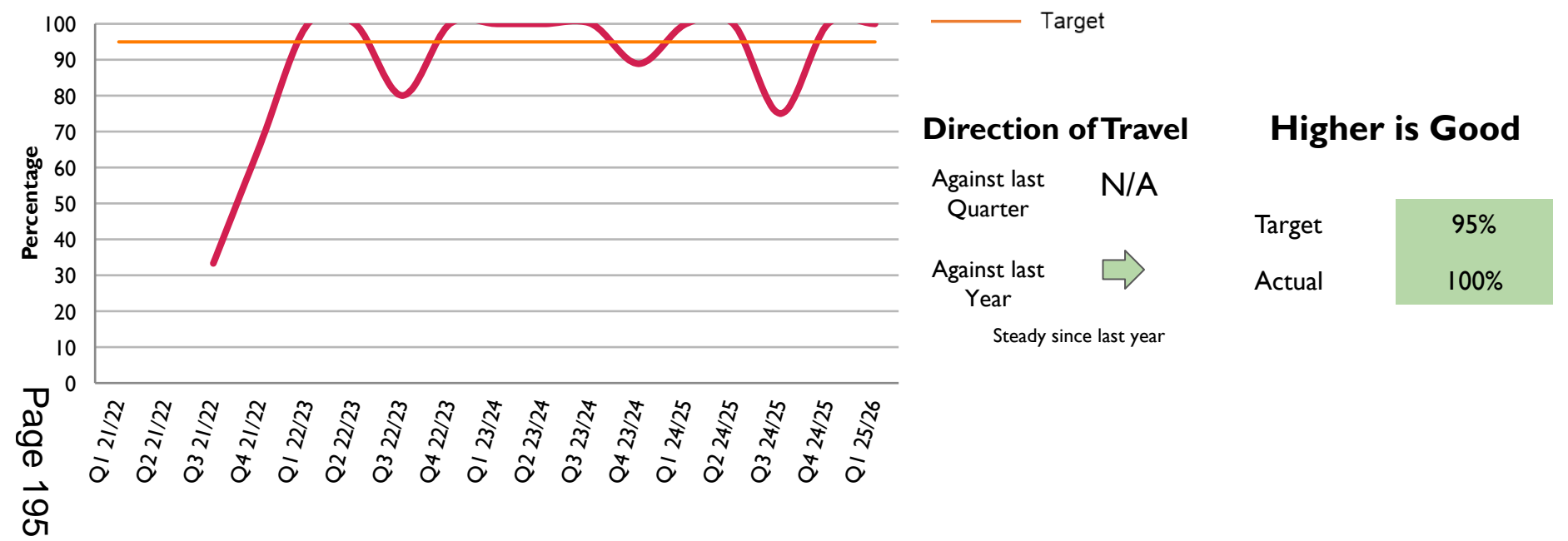
In Q1, the Councils enforcement activity targeted commercial waste offences, particularly among short-term lets, with a focus on illegal burning and missing documentation. The team also supported RAF Brize Norton on abandoned vehicles and is preparing for upcoming Stop & Search operations, public engagement campaigns, and a proposed district-wide PSPO to address dog fouling.

Discrepancies in the number of reported fly-tips has been identified due to incorrect case inclusion, leading to over-reporting. Corrected figures are being recalculated and will be submitted to Waste Data Flow. Additionally, future reporting will further improve with Alloy's Streets module In-Cab technology integration.

# Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales

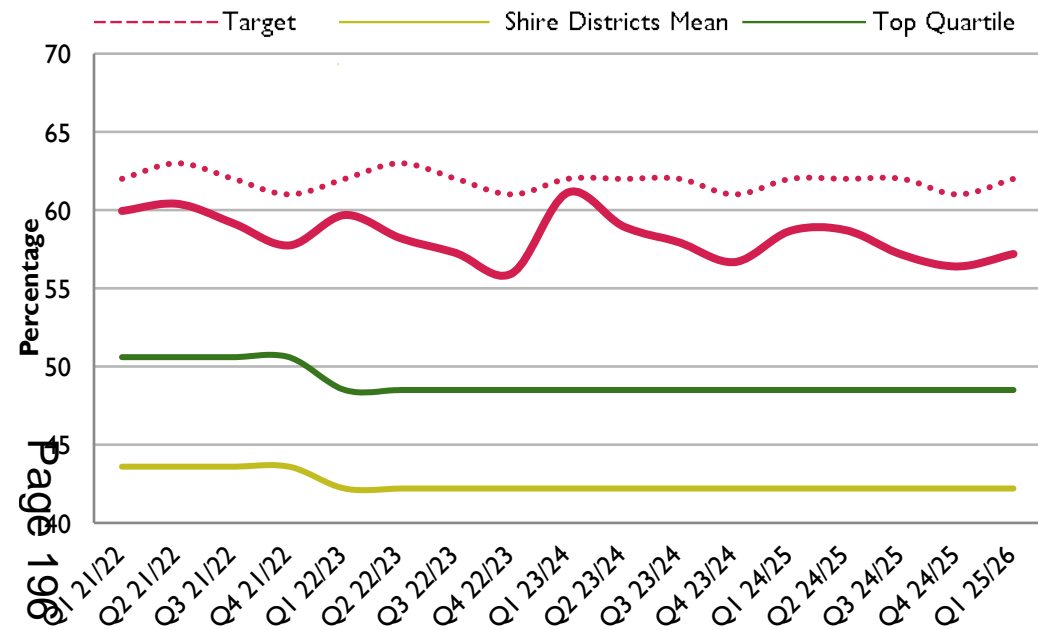


Seven High-Risk food inspection was undertaken during Q1, which was completed within the target timeframes.





Two notifications were received during Q1 which was assessed within one working day.

# Percentage of household waste recycled



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter but declined since last year

## Higher is Good

Target	62%
Actual	57.2%

## How do we compare?

Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is from 2023-2024.

2023-24 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
South Oxfordshire	62.9%	1/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	60.7%	2/5	Top
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>57.2%</b>	<b>3/5</b>	<b>Second</b>
Cherwell	53.2%	4/5	Third
Oxford	48.3%	5/5	Bottom

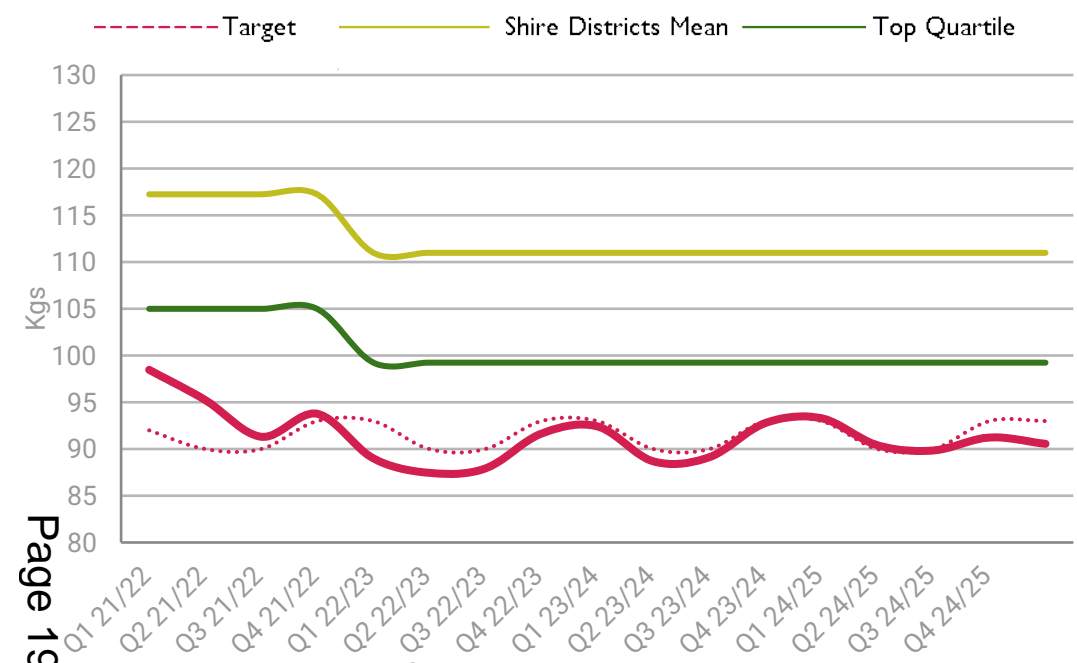
During Q1, there was a slight decline in the household recycling rate compared to the same period last year.

In 2023/24, household recycling rates across England varied widely, ranging from 15.8% to 62.9% among local authorities. The national average recycling rate rose slightly to 42.3%, marking a 0.6 percentage point increase from the previous year.


Amid this national landscape, West Oxfordshire ranked among the top 20 councils in England for household waste recycling for the financial year 2023-2024, highlighting its strong performance and commitment to environmental sustainability.



# Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Improved since last quarter and last year

## Lower is Good

Target	93
Actual	90.56

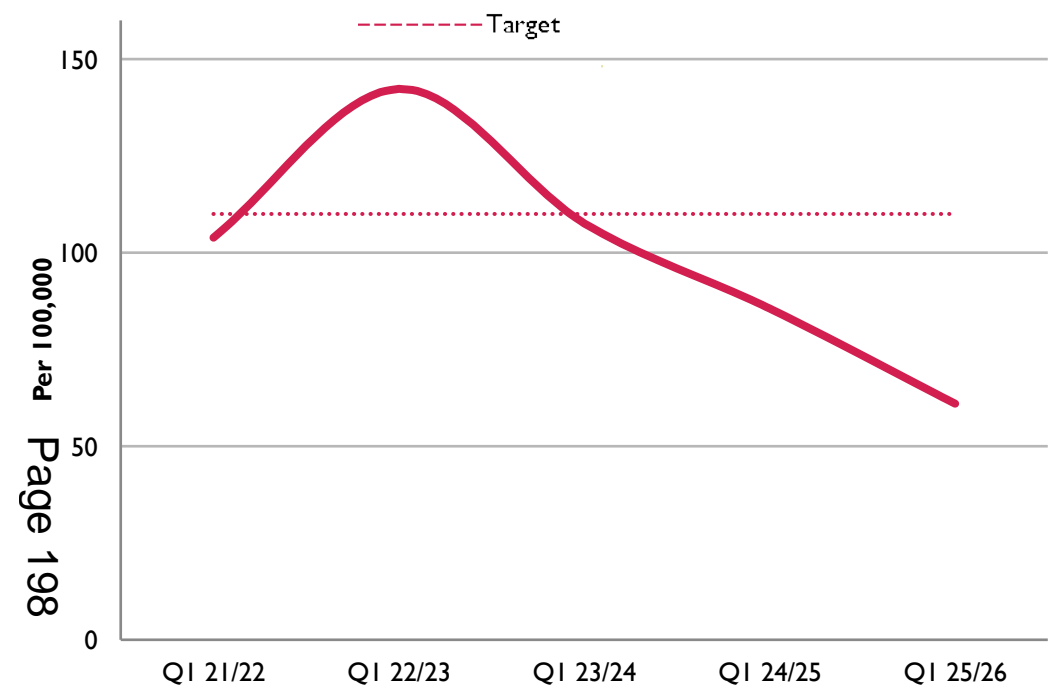
## How do we compare?

Residual household waste per household (kg/household) – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is from 2023-2024.

2023-24 Benchmark	Kg	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	303.2	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	304.8	2/5	Top
Oxford	335.7	3/5	Second
<b>West Oxfordshire</b>	<b>344.7</b>	<b>4/5</b>	<b>Third</b>
Cherwell	396.9	5/5	Bottom

During Q1, the Council remained below its residual waste target and ranked within the top quartile of English district councils, with levels under 99.25 kg per household—reflecting continued strong performance in waste reduction.

# Missed bins per 100,000



## Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter and last year

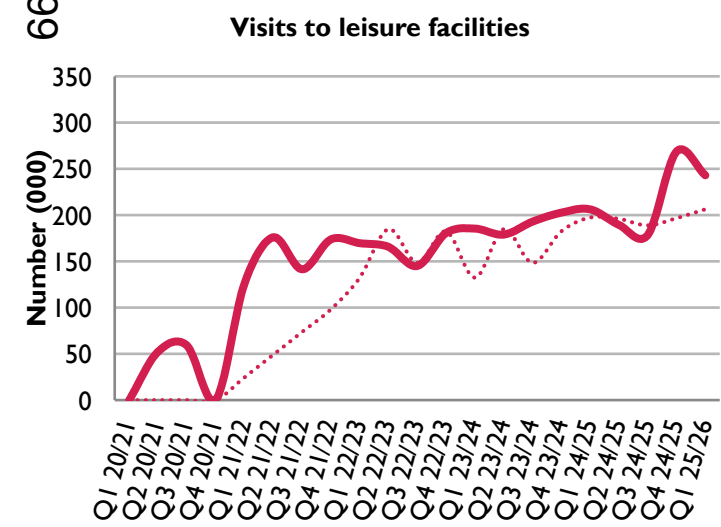
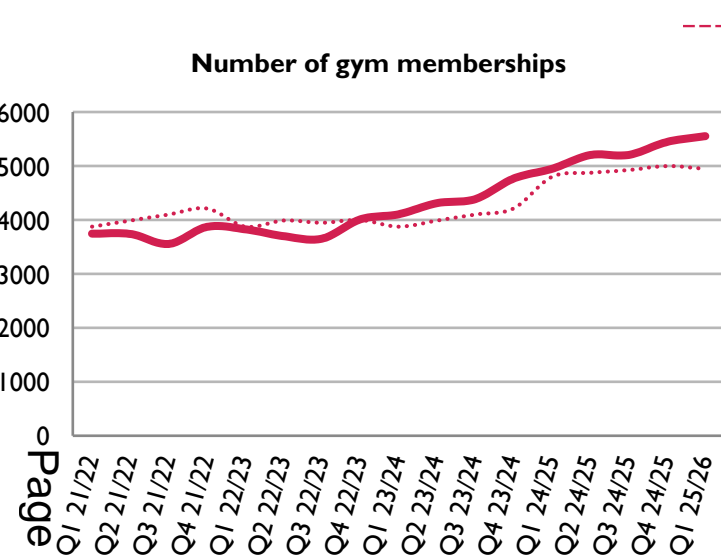
## Lower is Good

Target	110
Actual	61

The Council recorded 61 missed bins per 100,000 collections during Q1, well within the target of 110. While overall performance remains strong, work is ongoing with Ubico to address persistent issues with missed assisted collections through better use of available technology.


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


## Number of gym memberships




**Direction of Travel**


**Gym Memberships**

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

**Leisure Visits**

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Gym Memberships – Improved since last quarter and last year

Leisure Visits- Improved since last quarter and last year

**Higher is Good**

**Gym Memberships**

Target	4,947
Actual	5,554

**Leisure Visits**


Target	206,370
Q4 Actual	243,112

In Q1, the Council exceeded targets with 5,554 gym memberships and over 243,000 leisure centre visits, reflecting strong and sustained community engagement.

Breakdown of Leisure Visits per facility:

Facility	Q1 24-25	Q2 24-25	Q3 24-25	Q4 24-25	Q1 25-26
Bartholomew Sports Centre	9,681	9,747	5,506	16,712	20,268
Carterton Artificial Turf Pitch	6,840	6,840	6,840	9,252	858
Carterton Leisure Centre	70,220	62,866	57,100	64,139	57,346
Carterton Pavilion	600	600	600	600	600
Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	22,907	21,717	18,804	54,713	47,750
Windrush Leisure Centre	76,286	65,250	73,237	103,947	95,596
Witney Artificial Turf Pitch	19,320	19,320	16,487	19,640	19,557
Woodstock Open Air Pool	516	3,126	0	0	1137

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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>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS – YEAR 1 REPORTING</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Rachel Crouch Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities Email: <a href="mailto:rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk">rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Phil Martin Director of Place Email: <a href="mailto:phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk">phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Report author(s)</p>	<p>Heather McCulloch Community Wellbeing Manager Email: <a href="mailto:heather.mcculloch@westoxon.gov.uk">heather.mcculloch@westoxon.gov.uk</a> Lucy Empson Community Funding Officer Email: <a href="mailto:lucy.empson@westoxon.gov.uk">lucy.empson@westoxon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the performance at the end of Year 1 of all 7 organisations receiving grant funding. Furthermore, it is to consider the Council's appetite for offering future multi-year funding once this current arrangement comes to an end in March 2027.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Summary of performance</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities, to explore the feasibility of securing a legacy position for the Voluntary and Community Sector in this year's budget setting round to continue to offer a multi-year funding arrangement from 2027-2030.</li> </ol>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> </ul>

	<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>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	All organisations have provided full reports detailing their performance in year 1. Officers have met with each organisation to review progress. Officers have distilled the full reports to provide summaries as Annex A.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides a summary of the year 1 performance of each organisation in receipt of a Service Level Agreement funded from community grants. Furthermore, the report seeks to make the case for continuing to provide multi-year funding beyond 2027.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the Community Grants review in 2023, multi-year Service Level Agreements were awarded in March 2024. The agreements are in place between 2024 and 2027 and were awarded to:

- Wild Oxfordshire
- Wychwood Forest Trust
- Low Carbon Hub
- Theatre Chipping Norton
- Age UK Oxfordshire
- Volunteer Link Up
- Home-Start Oxford and Witney (with Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton)

- 2.2 The value of the agreements is £553,500 over 3 years – details are set out below.

- 2.3 The 7 organisations mentioned above are receiving Community Grant funding to deliver the following programmes:

Programme	Organisation	Award total (3 years)
Evenlode Catchment Partnership and Plan	Wild Oxfordshire	£75,000
West Oxfordshire Community Ecology programme	Wild Oxfordshire	£66,000
Conservation, land management and habitat restoration works	Wychwood Forest Trust	£99,000
Eynsham CAPZero	Low Carbon Hub	£75,000
Socially impactful arts, entertainment and culture programme	Theatre Chipping Norton	£75,000
Community development role	Age UK Oxfordshire	£54,000
Volunteer driver scheme	Volunteer Link Up	£37,500
1:1 Home visiting service; nurture groups and activities for struggling families with a child under 5	Home-Start Oxford and Witney	£72,000
Total		£553,500

- 2.4** Separately the Council has a multi-year contract with Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire (CAWO) which is overseen by Resident Services – Revenues and Benefits. This service is commissioned and runs from 2024-2027. Annually CAWO receives £150,000. Under this contract CAWO is required to give advice and support in respect of all types of welfare benefits; supporting residents with appeals as well as applications. They support residents in all aspects of housing, such as possession proceedings, disrepairs, tenancy issues, illegal evictions etc; as well as maximising income and reducing debt.

### **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** Each organisation has provided an annual report on performance. Officers have also met with each organisation to review progress and capture any highlights and challenges. A summary of the performance of each organisation is provided in Annex A. It was decided to remove SLA reporting from the standard quarterly corporate reporting and instead report separately.

- 3.2** Some highlights from the reports:

- Home-Start Oxford has reached an additional 381 beneficiaries over the target of 550 through 1:1 home support and groups with 95% of participating parents reporting increased self-esteem and confidence in parenting, thanks to the service.
- Theatre Chipping Norton has run a Free School Meal programme during school holidays delivering 10,920 food vouchers and art packs, run mental health workshops in schools and mental health groups providing 200 places for parents of young people affected by poor mental health.
- Age UK Oxfordshire has seen over 2000 people attend sessions including 12 pop-up events in towns and villages including Brize Norton, Cassington, and Fulbrook and 10 regular groups plus two one off events, Celebrating Age at Cogges and a Family Fun Day at Bablock Hythe.
- Volunteer Link Up's Community Transportation Service completed 2399 return journeys and have 916 clients registered with their service, 68% of whom live outside Witney and 84% of whom are aged 66 and over.
- Wild Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery officer has seen 6 further green spaces being managed for nature in Bladon, Ducklington, Kelmcott, Asthall Leigh, Stonesfield and Witney and supported Hedgerow for Heroes which totalled 1,176 volunteer hours.
- Wild Oxfordshire's Evenlode Catchment Partnership project has launched the film 'A River Sings', secured £201,000 for local projects from Thames Water and delivered four schemes with Wetland Creation Grant Scheme funding of £100k.
- Low Carbon Hub have built broad community representation into the governance of CAPZero and formed two new community groups, explicitly with the purpose of supporting net zero in the local area - Freeland Energy Group and Go Green Hanborough.



- Wychwood Forest Trust has continued to promote Gibbets Hill hosting high profile DEFRA visits, research projects and public tours as well as the creation of 9 wetland habitats on the site.

**3.3** Organisations will continue to provide reports on an annual basis. Officers will arrange regular meetings to discuss progress and challenges throughout the remaining funded period. The current agreements will come to an end in early 2027.

## **4. FUTURE FUNDING OPTIONS**

**4.1** Local Authorities have provided financial support to the Voluntary and Community Sector for decades, seeing the importance of investing in local organisations who are close to communities and understand their needs. The VCS are flexible and adaptable and can adjust to meet changing need much more effectively than the Council can. This was evidenced in the response to Covid in 2020. They are also highly cost effective and moreover are stepping in to support where statutory services are no longer able to. The Council has invested continually in the sector for over 30 years, long after some neighbouring Councils who have been unable to sustain this support.

**4.2** Local Government Reorganisation brings huge uncertainty for the whole system. Residents value highly the services provided by the VCS. The Council is expecting restrictions on spending to come into effect in 2027.

**4.3** Given that these multi-year agreements come to an end in 2027, it is recommended that the Council give careful consideration in this year's budget setting to continuing to offer a multi-year funding arrangement to run from 2027-2030 and Officers are asked to look at the feasibility of creating a legacy position so safeguarding key VCS partners and the essential support they provide to residents across the district. This SLA model for funding should be taken forward at such a time to not be impeded by anything that comes with local government reform. Early notification of this is required to enable the opportunity to be advertised during the 2026/2027 financial year. This could be an extension of existing contracts or an entirely new process.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**5.1** The Council could decide not to commission a further round of multi-year funding and instead agree to award annual grant funding for 2027/2028 – this would be helpful but would not provide the optimal level of security for the VCS. It would likely be the case the activities for which funding has been approved would cease once the 12 months is complete unless replacement funding can be found. We anticipate that competition, which is already very intense for other sources of funding, will further intensify for the period between 2027 and 2030 due to the uncertainty of local authority funding caused by the reorganisation and establishment of new organisations.

**5.2** The Council could decide not to invest further into community organisations from 2027 onwards. As above, this is likely to result in the reduction and in some cases closure of community services.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding to meet the commitments of the existing Community Grant funded Service Level Agreements is within existing budgets. This budget of £553,500 is made up as follows:

	£396,000	Budget
	£90,000	Underspend Round 1 Westhive
	£60,000	Contain Outbreak Management funding (COMF)
	£7,500	Councillor Priority Fund
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£553,500</b>	

- 6.1 Maintaining future multi-year funding could not be achieved at the current level, including an inflationary increase, without securing additional internal or external funding.
- 6.2 Funding for Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire is also within budget and also comes to an end in 2027.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Legal agreements are in place with all Service Level Agreement organisations.
- 7.2 Should the Council wish to continue with multi-year funding from 2027 onwards then the process for the introduction of these agreements would begin in April 2026/2027 and require legal support in the second half of the financial year.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 The continuation of the existing Service Level Agreements has minimal risk as progress is monitored by staff and subject to annual reporting. Any issues with performance can be picked up and either resolved or managed. There is scope for the Council to withhold funding if performance does not meet expectations or if there is a significant breach of contract.
- 8.2 In terms of future funding, removing all funding after April 2027 would present community and voluntary sector organisations with considerable challenges and render them unable to deliver some services. In addition, it could be reputationally damaging to the Council.
- 8.3 By continuing with funding for a further year the impact of the above risks would be delayed for 12 months. The reputational risk would be less as at this point the organisation would not be in its current form.
- 8.4 By continuing with funding for a further 3-year period the Council risks investing in activity which it will not directly see the recognition for supporting or the benefit to residents. It would however provide the greatest level of security to the VCS who receive it.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**9.1** All SLA organisations are expected to pay ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

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

**9.2** The Council requires organisation to submit their Equal Opportunities policy on application.

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

**10.1** Wild Oxfordshire and Wychwood Forest Trust programmes have positive impact on land use. Projects are focussed on creating more natural, resilient and biodiverse areas.

**10.2** Low Carbon Hub CAPZero is taking a fresh look at how to create a zero-carbon society.

**10.3** Age UK Oxfordshire projects will see a mixture of activities delivered close to where people live as their target participants are often isolated and do not drive.

**10.4** The Theatre programme generally takes place at the Theatre building itself, making use of a space which is already open and where other activity is already taking place.

**10.5** VLU’s transport scheme provides a service for those who cannot use public transport and who otherwise would be isolated and vulnerable. The scheme utilises volunteer’s own vehicles, so VLU has no control over the vehicles utilised for this purpose.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**11.1** None

(END)

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## Year 1 Progress Summary

### Annex A

#### Organisation: Home Start Oxford & Witney + Home Start Banbury & Chipping Norton

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<i>Home-Start Oxford and Home-Start Banbury are voluntary organisations providing free, confidential support for families with at least one child under the age of 5. Together they serve Oxford, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell. They provide non-judgmental, compassionate support for parents facing a range of challenges including isolation, low self-esteem, physical and mental health issues. Both are independent charities affiliated to <a href="#">Home-Start UK</a></i>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	<p>The two Home-Start charities, supported by a growing team of 20 volunteers, were expecting to deliver the following during the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 1:1 home visiting service across West Oxfordshire - supporting at least 20 families with children under 5.</li> <li>• A raft of inclusive and nurturing weekly groups and summer activities in Witney for 500+ beneficiaries each year.</li> </ul>	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Reach over 550 beneficiaries each year in West Oxfordshire.	<u>Home visiting:</u> Number of families visited under this contract was 30. <u>Groups:</u> Number of beneficiaries from groups 901. Total 931 beneficiaries in year 1.
	Beneficiaries will increase their self-esteem and confidence in parenting.	<u>Home-visiting:</u> 95% of families receiving Home Visits had improved or maintained their 'Parent Wellbeing: Self Esteem' scores <u>Groups:</u> 100% of families who took part in a group snapshot survey said they felt more confident in supporting their children's learning and development due to attending a Home-Start group
	Beneficiaries will increase their support networks reducing isolation.	<u>Home-visiting:</u> 93% of families receiving Home Visits had improved or maintained their 'Parent Wellbeing: Coping with feeling isolated' score 41% of families receiving Home Visits had improved or maintained their 'Use of other services' score <u>Groups:</u> 91% of families who took part in a group snapshot survey said they felt more confident to access the community or other services due to attending a Home-Start group
<b>Key Successes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reached an additional 381 beneficiaries</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointed new employee leading on Family Group Support which has freed up the Family Group Co-ordinator to focus on targeted outreach support with families and for planning the wider offer.</li> <li>The decision to reduce the number of summer events to avoid overstretching the team resulted in increased attendance rates and more efficiently delivered events.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff changes have interrupted progress but with no shortages of referrals.</li> <li>Parents Early Education Partnership (PEEP) groups: attempted to deliver speech and language focussed PEEP group in the summer which didn't result in enough referrals. Identified the need to run a longer and consistent programme to build trust with the referrers.</li> <li>Volunteer recruitment remains a challenge. In response, a shortened training programme has been introduced, a hybrid delivery model to reduce the face-to-face time involved which can act as a barrier has been adopted, a 'fast track for professionals' route has been introduced and approaching large organisations to target pre-retirement staff with tailored volunteer messaging has begun.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus for Year 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In response to identified needs through groups and health visitor feedback, a new invitation-only SEND group will be established in Witney called 'Daises'. This group will run weekly, excluding the summer holidays.</li> <li>Focus will be given to support families experiencing isolation in rural villages as this has been a key trend over the last year.</li> </ul>
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support with the promotion of recruitment to attract new volunteers to lead the 1:1 support with families and spread their reach across the district.</li> <li>Any support with securing a venue in Witney for volunteer training programme would be welcome.</li> </ul>
<b>Officer comments</b>	<p><i>The programme has benefitted far more residents than expected which is really positive. Home-Start's monitoring and evaluation processes are well developed and able to communicate impacts in a powerful way. WODC was complimented on the way in which the SLA process has been managed. The organisation has felt trusted by the Council and the process of review has not been onerous. Volunteering remains a challenge for the organisation.</i></p> <p><b>Quote from beneficiary of Home-Start:</b> "Everything feels like it is starting to lift – some days are still tough but not everyday like it used to feel. M is wonderful she is not judgy and makes me laugh. Her visit mid-week makes such a difference as it boosts me through to the weekend when Dad is about to support." - Mum experiencing peri-natal mental health issues, isolation and loneliness.</p>

## Organisation: Chipping Norton Theatre

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<p>The <a href="#">Theatre Chipping Norton</a> is a vibrant rural arts hub with a clear mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create and host inspiring performances that enrich lives across Oxfordshire and beyond.</li> <li>To make the arts accessible to everyone—offering support, fostering belonging, and ensuring no one is left out.</li> </ul> <p><i>In times of change, the theatre plays a vital role in the community. It offers escapism, connection, and shared experiences, while promoting inclusivity and creating lasting memories. It is more than a theatre, it is a catalyst for social change that champions community cohesion, whilst creating a joyful space for both those taking part in performances and the audience.</i></p>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	<p>The funding from the Council enables 'a programme of socially impactful arts, entertainment and cultural activities with a particular focus on Chipping Norton and surrounding rural communities, by providing activities for beneficiaries across the district. The programme gives particular focus to work with young people, improving health and wellbeing in older and vulnerable people, engaging with disabled people and marginalised groups, and those experiencing social, economic or cultural disadvantage'. Funding is not directed to the mainstream professional programme of performances in the main venue.</p>	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Work with partners to support vibrant local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employed a range of self-employed creative practitioners on the programme</li> <li>Delivered 2 large scale community plays attracting large audiences and visitors to the town</li> <li>Provided low cost and free opportunities for young people and adults to support working parents and carers</li> </ul>
	Support retention of existing and development of new services and facilities that contribute to the local economy, community wellbeing and cohesion.	<p>The community programme has provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>168 children provided with free arts activities every school holiday</li> <li>200 Places in Parent Mental Health Support Groups</li> <li>10,920 free school lunch funding provided</li> <li>2 large scale community plays performed and produced by 118 individuals</li> <li>866 Community Theatre Tickets</li> <li>77 attendees at free school holiday family fun days</li> <li>52 places in School Holiday Workshops</li> <li>990 youth theatre places available via bursaries (25%)</li> </ul>
	Support the Voluntary and Community Sector to continue to undertake activity which serves the needs of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convened the Chipping Norton Creatives network bringing together a range of voluntary sector community organisations to discuss challenges and find creative solutions.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked closely with the Branch on the development and provision of activities for vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Developed a Free School Meal offer during the summer holidays for local school children working in partnership with a range of local support organisations</li> </ul>
	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.	<b>Youth outreach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Mental Health groups have been a huge success.</li> <li>• Accessible and additional needs Youth Theatre programme provided ahead of schedule to meet the need within the community.</li> <li>• KS3 Cultural days and panto workshops good progress.</li> <li>• Work Experience and Duke of Edinburgh good progress.</li> <li>• Music and Drama sessions for Early years through new provider Little Limelight's up and running.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Successes</b>	<p><b>Creative Mental Health Support Programme</b> including mental health groups and workshops is in place to respond to a high level or need in local schools. The theatre has expanded their work with Chipping Norton School to support years 7, 8, 11 and SEN children with high anxiety, and begun a new partnership with Park School (local special educational mental health school) supporting young people who cannot access mainstream education.</p> <p>The <b>50<sup>th</sup> anniversary productions of Lark Rise and Bance Dance</b> saw <i>'ambitious performances transform the auditorium into an Oxfordshire barn, blending local, community actors with professional cast and crew. 118 people were engaged in the creation and performance of these two productions. 42 creatives and community volunteers, 29 community actors, 15 Morris dancers, 11 Chippy choir members, 8 professional actors, 7 Great Company members (adults with additional needs) and 7 local musicians'</i>.</p>	
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<p><i>'Additional funding has not yet received via CATS (Cotswold Arts Through Schools) to deliver this <b>Primary School Anti-Bullying Workshops</b> programme but the offer has now gone out to schools in Spring 25. It was decided to put the anti-bullying project materials onto an open-source format and multiple primary schools have reported using the free workshop plans and handouts in schools.'</i></p> <p>Development in some areas of West Oxfordshire, such as Carterton, has been challenging in Year 1.</p>	
<b>Focus for Year 2</b>	<p><i>As part of its commitment to inclusivity and community cohesion, the theatre will expand its core strategy to include dedicated work <b>with older people</b>. A key focus for Years 2 and 3 will be the development of former Highlands Day Centre on Burford Road which will be developed by The Theatre. 'This programme will enable the creation of a new programme aimed at addressing social isolation and enhancing mental wellbeing among older adults. Recognising this as a new area of work, the theatre will actively seek to build meaningful partnerships with organisations within the District that have expertise in engaging older communities. These collaborations will be central to co-hosting and co-developing the programme, ensuring it is shaped by best practice, lived experience, and community needs.'</i></p>	



<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<p>The Council can help with getting the message out about the type of work delivered by the Theatre to a wider health/social care audience. Promoting the two short films would be helpful. The Theatre is keen to engage with Councillors, see here for a video that shares <a href="#">The story of social impact at The Theatre</a>.</p> <p>The Council can help to connect with services and support organisations in Carterton.</p>
<b>Officer comments</b>	<p><i>The Theatre has performed well in Year 1 – delivering a really diverse range of socially impactful and inclusive arts activity led by a dedicated and highly creative team– notably the mental health and free school meals programmes. The Theatre team report feeling supported by the Council and that the reporting regime is manageable. The survey of participants has not proved to be a valuable addition in year 1 so we have agreed not to conduct it in year 2 but instead focus on case studies and stories of change.</i></p> <p><i>The Theatre has created two further films hearing from young people taking part in both <a href="#">Mental Health Programme</a> and the <a href="#">Theatre Youth Programme</a>.</i></p>

## Organisation: Age UK Oxfordshire

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<i>Age UK Oxfordshire is a leading charity that believes every older person should be included and valued. They work locally, nationally and internationally to make that happen. Through campaigning, local support, advice and friendship, their mission is to change the experience of ageing within society.</i>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	The grant is to part-fund the cost of a Community Development Worker for 3 years, to deliver activities and support community development for older people in West Oxfordshire. The role dovetails with the Oxfordshire County Council funded Community Links Oxfordshire contract, which connects people to services, support, activities and opportunities that enable them to maintain their independence, stay healthy, feel less lonely and have opportunities to contribute through volunteering.	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Having a better understanding of the needs of older people and of what is available for older people locally.	12 pop-up events delivered in towns and villages including Brize Norton, Cassington, and Fulbrook have been delivered. These events provided information, advice, and a friendly face in familiar settings like village shops and community fridges.
	Increasing engagement of local communities in developing solutions to locally identified needs.	Age UK has ‘conducted consultations using resilience-based questions to better understand how older people cope with stress and isolation were carried out across the district. The insights gathered are informing future service design, with plans to focus efforts on Carterton after high levels of need were indicated.’
	Increasing amount of locally, accessible and sustainable support and activities for older people, ultimately building strong resilient and self-supporting communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 groups set up/sustained</li> <li>• The six sessions targeting loneliness and isolation engaged with 140 people and the 10 pop up sessions in local communities engaged with 220 people.</li> <li>• 122 sessions delivered</li> <li>• 2000+ people attending across all sessions</li> </ul>
	Increased opportunities for and support of the use of social capital.	In year 1, Age UK report they ‘have expanded opportunities for residents and local groups to build and activate social capital—networks of trust, mutual support, and collaboration that are essential to thriving communities. Through targeted facilitation, they have fostered cross-sector partnerships working with, Local area coordinator and Chipping Norton Theatre, local bus and travel providers and Charity shops and created inclusive spaces for connection at groups and events’

	Formal and informal volunteering opportunities across the generations to support enhanced community cohesion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report does not set out details of this being cross generational. They did reference a very powerful example of the development of a volunteer for whom volunteering has been very impactful. They hope to build this into a case study in Year 2.</li> </ul>
	Continued and ever developing partnership working across statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors with reduction in replication or duplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A partnership event was delivered in April 2025 bringing together colleagues from 12 West Oxfordshire organisations to share local insights and best practice.</li> <li>Collaboration with Carers Oxfordshire and Scam Awareness team at the Celebrating Age event</li> <li>This work continues to build in year 2 as Age UK plan to link in with Witney gospel for nations (GFN) group.</li> </ul> <p>They reference a concern that there could be some duplication of effort around partnership meetings and are seeking to explore this further in Year 2</p>
<b>Key Successes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the national the Age Without Limits campaign, the Age UK Oxfordshire <i>'West Oxfordshire team hosted a joyful and inclusive <b>Celebrating Age Activity Day at Cogges Farm</b> which was a huge success. Over 60 people joined for a day filled with connection, learning, and laughter.</i></li> <li><i>'Age UK brought the community together for a <b>Duck Race and Family Fun Day</b> in one of West Oxfordshire's areas of greatest need. Held in collaboration with a local pub, the event welcomed over 100 people of all ages to enjoy a riverside duck race, delicious BBQ, and a host of family-friendly activities.'</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several adults seeking internet support are unable to read or write. This has made it significantly more difficult to provide effective digital assistance, highlighting a need for support or alternative approaches for those with low literacy levels.</li> <li>There have been a series of staff changes across the year which has meant some challenges and interruptions in service.</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus for Year 2</b>	There is an ambition to start <b>Age-Friendly towns initiative</b> in Year 2 but it's unclear from the report of the scale intended and therefore what might be achievable. <i>The report states 'With some initial barriers to start this work (Age UK) are now working with partners to develop age-friendly towns across West Oxfordshire. Meetings with Age UK Hertfordshire and discussion with WODC have laid the groundwork for this long-term vision. Using the Community Insights and speaking to experienced link workers they are going to select one Town and test a pilot.'</i>	
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of the Age-Friendly towns initiative would require the engagement and contribution of partners – including WODC.</li> <li>Would like to work with Age UK to build more meaningful measurement reporting into their Year 2 report to show impact including stories of change.</li> </ul>	
<b>Officer comments</b>	<i>During Year 2 we plan to meet more regularly to keep in touch with developments and explore collaborations including the Age Friendly town plans which requires further detail. The staffing changes have obviously been challenging for the team in year 1 but things appear to have settled down and this should be helpful moving forward.</i>	

	<p><b>Quote from beneficiary of Age UK -</b> <i>“I go to many AUKO groups I live alone and I try to go out as often as possible, I travel to several different AUKO groups around the county as they are friendly and enjoyable, we have fun. I know I can always come to AUKO if I have a problem or need help with anything.”</i></p>
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## Organisation: Volunteer Link Up

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<p><i>Volunteer Link Up links people who want to help others with those in their community who need the type of support they provide. Their core business is the Community Transportation Service, Befriending/Practical Help Service and Witney Land Army activities. They do not provide a general volunteer brokering service. The grant is solely for the Community Transportation Service element to support the annual cost of delivering the 'core business' to residents of West Oxfordshire. They work alongside a number of village befriending schemes to assist with transportation where required.</i></p>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	<p>The Community Transportation Service supports individuals who cannot travel to urgent appointments, either because they cannot drive or because they have difficulty using public transport. Volunteer drivers use their own cars and are directly paid expenses by the client (currently 45p per mile). They prioritise medical, dental and well-being appointments, therefore supporting improvements in physical, psychological and emotional health, drivers will wait for up to 2 hours for a client at a medical or wellbeing appointment.</p>	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Number of return journeys	In 2024-25 there were 2399 return journeys completed. This is a 17% increase from 2022-23.
	Number of clients	916 clients are registered for the Community Transport Service
	Number of volunteers	127 volunteers
	Geographical spread of clients	<i>'Witney is the busiest with 32% of our clients living in the town, followed by Carterton with 12.5%, Charlbury with 8.5%, Chipping Norton with 6% and Bampton with 3%. The remaining clients live in the many rural areas of West Oxfordshire.'</i>
	Age of clients	70% are in the 75+ age bracket with 14% aged 66-75.
	Hours delivered by volunteer drivers	<i>'The average journey takes 4 hours of a volunteer's time. Setting aside the many 'on costs' of employing a paid driver, the minimum wage is currently £12.21 per hour. To carry out the 2399 journeys, volunteers gave 5116 hours of their time. If services in West Oxfordshire had to employ these drivers, it would cost £62,466.36 in wages'.</i>
	Cost of journeys	<p>The average journey cost to the client is £11.25. An equivalent taxi fare would be £55.00 rising to £91.00 for a 2 hour wait.</p> <p>The 2399 journeys during this financial year would cost VLU clients £26,988.75 in which Taxi fares would have cost our residents £131,945.00 to £218,309.00.</p>
	Purpose of journey	The majority of journeys are related to health and wellbeing – primarily GP and dental appointments with some trips to attend groups or for shopping
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<p>Volunteering is by far the greatest challenge facing Volunteer Link Up. The by-product of advertising for volunteers is increased demand which make things difficult.</p>	

<b>Focus for Year 2</b>	The recruitment and development of volunteers will be a main focus for VLU
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	Help with promoting volunteering would be appreciated. Help with digital solutions to map services would also be valuable
<b>Officer comments</b>	<i>VLU is a small and very dedicated team and has continued to deliver a reliable and valued service for which demand has grown over the past 2 years. There is scope for them to be more visible and make better use of digital to demonstrate their reach and impact.</i>

## Organisation: Wild Oxfordshire: Grant 1 - Nature Recovery

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<i>'Wild Oxfordshire is a charity seeking to create a more natural, resilient and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all. We catalyse change by identifying conservation need supporting nature recovery action across the County. We collaborate with numerous individuals, communities and organisations, offering expertly curated and inspiring information, bespoke advice, and nature-based solutions. We offer a range of services within West Oxfordshire to enable nature recovery; Community Ecology, Landscape Ecology, and the Evenlode Catchment Partnership.'</i>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	<p>The Community Ecology Programme in West Oxfordshire District delivers nature recover working with local communities to enable residents to improve green spaces for wildlife. <i>'The programme will empower local communities to improve spaces for wildlife and help people connect with wildlife on a local scale. The work will not only benefit nature and nature recovery but will also have a positive impact on the wellbeing of individuals and the communities.'</i></p> <p>The funding will contribute to the funding of 0.4 FTE Nature Recovery Specialists - the remaining funding of this FTE is to be covered by matching-funding through a variety of sources.</p>	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Increased number of greenspaces being managed for nature in West Oxfordshire with an increase in biodiversity.	<p>Worked with the following groups to give advice on enhancing and managing their greenspaces;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bladon Parish Council / Environment Group</li> <li>• Ducklington Parish Council</li> <li>• Kelmscott Manor</li> <li>• Asthall Leigh Parish Council</li> <li>• Stonesfield Environment Group</li> <li>• St Christopher's school in Langford</li> <li>• Witney landowner</li> <li>• WODC Biodiversity Officer</li> </ul> <p>All advice given has been put into action, bar one location.</p> <p>Wild Oxfordshire has also given funding and biodiversity policy advice via email and phone to various WODC-based environmental groups, and sign posted to external organisations when appropriate.</p>
	Increased knowledge, confidence, and skills about wildlife within West Oxfordshire's communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 x community group training sessions in Witney on bat and reptile surveying, 90% of attendees reported they would continue to carry out surveys as a result of the training.</li> <li>• Wild Oxfordshire's Local Environment Groups Conference took place and focussed on 'Local to Landscape Nature Recovery Action'.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild Oxfordshire presented at a Councillor Local Nature Recovery Briefing meeting in November to showcase work taking place across the district.</li> </ul>
	Increased nature connectedness for West Oxfordshire's residents which improves community cohesion, health and wellbeing, and sustainable shopping choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attended a total of 7 nature recovery events/talks.</li> <li>• The Hedgerow Heroes project, worked with 10 local groups and parishes across Oxfordshire to plant 3,330m of new hedge this planting season and supported management of 610m of existing hedgerows through gapping up, coppicing and hedge laying.</li> <li>• 1176 volunteer hours were put towards the project, and 10,100 hedgerow whips were planted.</li> </ul>
	Continued support and facilitation of county partnerships working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature Recovery Lead and other staff are involved in Oxfordshire's LNRS and associated working groups</li> <li>• Continued to support all Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (OLNP) working groups, facilitate the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group (an OLNPs working group).</li> <li>• 2 x Conservation Target Area (CTA) Leads and Friends meetings – this is a forum for conservation groups and land managers in Oxfordshire to exchange ideas, knowledge and information about the management of priority habitats and species within the county's CTAs.</li> <li>• Engaging Communities Round Table meeting with organisations who work with community groups around nature and the environment in Oxfordshire, to foster better collaboration and increase our joint positive impact.</li> <li>• Engagement and training with WODC's Nature Recovery Officers and teams.</li> <li>• Advice to the Lower Windrush Valley Project's new Project Manager.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Successes Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of green spaces being managed for nature = 6 (Bladon, Ducklington, Kelmcott, Asthall Leigh, Stonesfield and Witney). These include village greens, roadside verges, schools and other publicly-owned and accessible land, including a chalk grassland, riverside area and copse.</li> <li>• Number of community training events conducted = 2 (bats and reptiles). These were well attended and feedback was very positive.</li> <li>• Number of community events attended in West Oxfordshire = 7, including the Local Environment Groups Conference on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in Burford, 'Wild about the Wychwoods', Brize Norton's 'Big Bash' and Charlbury's Nature Day</li> <li>• Number of partnership meetings attended and facilitated = 47</li> <li>• As an example of a project, Hedgerow Heroes totalled 1,176 volunteer hours and 10,100 hedgerow whips being planted in West Oxfordshire.</li> </ul>	



<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild Oxfordshire community ecology team provide advice to community groups, but it is up to them whether they choose to implement that advice or not. They did have a good response to the survey at the end of 2024 and all but one of the respondents had put their advice into practice at that time.</li> <li>• Advice is also given on funding and biodiversity policies via email and phone to various WODC-based environmental groups, who are signposted to relevant organisations where more specialist or local advice can be found.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus for Year 2 Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar work for 2025-26 – ongoing provision of advice to community groups as and when it is requested.</li> <li>• Wildflower survey training session at Kilkenny Lane Country Park and reptile survey training at North Leigh Common.</li> <li>• Storytelling training event</li> </ul>
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following-up on statutory biodiversity duty with town and parish councils/meetings and offering Wild Oxfordshire community ecology team for further advice</li> <li>• Regular catch-up meetings with the Wild Oxfordshire team will be set up for 2025-26.</li> </ul>
<b>Officer comments</b>	<i>The Wild Oxfordshire Community Ecology team and other members of staff are a vital piece of the jigsaw for providing advice and support for biodiversity and nature recovery projects in the District, including the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</i>

## Organisation: Wild Oxfordshire: Grant 2 - Evenlode Catchment Partnership

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<i>'Wild Oxfordshire is a charity seeking to create a more natural, resilient and biodiverse Oxfordshire for the benefit of all. We catalyse change by identifying conservation need supporting nature recovery action across the County. We collaborate with numerous individuals, communities and organisations, offering expertly curated and inspiring information, bespoke advice, and nature-based solutions. We offer a range of services within West Oxfordshire to enable nature recovery; Community Ecology, Landscape Ecology, and the Evenlode Catchment Partnership.'</i>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	Wild Oxfordshire will be delivering the <a href="#">Evenlode Catchment Partnership</a> (ECP)- a hosting and coordination role to facilitate the delivery of the ECP catchment plan over the next three years with the ECP Project Manager, ECP Project Officer and ECP engagement officer.	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Provide support and co-ordination for delivery of the catchment plan	Co-ordination and project management by Wild Oxfordshire to ensure the partnership runs as a cohesive unit, without which the partnership would quickly fragment. In 2024-25 they have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held frequent working group and steering group meetings to facilitate plan delivery and partnership wide meetings every quarter. The ECP collectively engage with and provide constructive comment on planning issues and policy, water quality and environmental matters.</li> <li>Held quarterly ECP partnership meetings.</li> <li>120 attendees at the Thames Water SWC celebration and exhibition event 15th March. Held at FarmED, chance to thank all our volunteers and see the work we have delivered over the project 4 years.</li> </ul>
	Provide Engagement officer time to assist with community events:	Wild Oxfordshire's Engagement and Project Officers attended local community events, promoted projects through the website and assisted the Education, Recreation and Access team deliver community projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the Local Environment Groups Conference in Burford, ECP Project Manager - Ann Berkeley delivered a webinar as part of the 'Voices of the River' and gave a talk on the ECP.</li> </ul>
	Obtain funding and deliver natural flood management, river restoration and wetland creation projects.	Project Manager and Project Officer secured/led on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured £46,000 for river restoration projects from Thames Water; £55,000 for NFM projects from Thames Water and £100,000 for Wetland Creation Grant Scheme from Thames Water.</li> <li>Ascott under Wychwood projects - dependent on landowner buy in. Similar project delivered at Fairspear Hill Farm creating areas where surface water flows can be stored to reduce flood risk</li> </ul>

		<p>and to settle out sediments. A further scheme was designed at Fernhill Farm but the landowner pulled out at the last minute.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of an ECP film to help encourage landowners, farmers and communities to engage in NFM - <a href="#">A River Sings</a>.</li> <li>• 4 Wetland Creation Grant Schemes delivered in this period.</li> <li>• Construction of a fish spawning bed at Cornwell, reconnection of a brook at Rynehill.</li> </ul>
	Provide support and training for Riverfly Monitoring and other surveys.	Wild Oxfordshire's ECP Project Officer assisted in training and surveying in both riverfly and other surveys (river form and nature) carried out in Cornwell, encouraging locals to monitor their river reaches and increasing the knowledge and records of the river environment and health training. These surveys are very helpful in showing water quality status in terms of river improvement or decline. It is also filling in the gaps in regulatory EA monitoring which there is now far less compared to past decades.
	Provide Engagement Officer time to create 4-5 walks showcasing project work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 walks that take in many ECP projects on their routes have been created and are on the website.</li> <li>• The other route at Wootton was not progressed further because it was discovered that no clear views of our river restoration project were possible from public rights of way.</li> </ul>
	Prepare for new governance arrangements as agreed by the Partnership to be in place for the 2025 financial year (year 2 of the Service Level Agreement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim Terms of Reference are now in place</li> <li>• New Steering group not quite agreed, will be in place by the beginning of May.</li> <li>• New Chair of ECP to be in place by the beginning of May</li> </ul>
<b>Key Successes Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination and management of large environmental improvement projects on behalf of partners, including working group and steering group meetings, and fundraising.</li> <li>• River restoration and natural flood management projects, e.g. Bledington</li> <li>• Water Restoration Fund – Ascott under Wychwood focus for river restoration and natural flood management delivery, including the creation of surface water flow storage areas to reduce flood risk at Fairspear Hill Farm</li> <li>• Continued support for Earthwatch riverfly surveys and training of volunteers – key focus on monitoring individual sewage treatment works to get more detailed information on water quality and pollution incidents.</li> <li>• Big Give Green Match Fund – a week of fundraising with the launch of the film 'A River Sings' in Chipping Norton to encourage farmers, landowners and communities to engage in natural flood management</li> <li>• Wetland Creation Grant Scheme (£100k funding obtained): engaged with landowners to provide assistance in designing projects and applying for consents; four schemes delivered, e.g. construction of fish spawning bed at Cornwell and reconnection of brook at Rynehill.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education: attendance at community natural flood management events – e.g. Moreton in Marsh community day and talks provided, e.g. Local Environment Groups Conference in Burford</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water restoration fund awarded, which meant that lots of partnership and working group meetings were held to establish where this would be spent, so overhaul of catchment plan had to be postponed.</li> <li>• ELMS knowledge exchange was not delivered, as DEFRA had not published the required details.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus for Year 2 Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New whole catchment plan</li> <li>• Steering group rejuvenated with new Chairperson – new governance arrangements to be put in place</li> </ul>
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation on planning applications within the catchment to highlight where development proposals may impact on projects and habitat creation, e.g. natural flood management schemes – system to be set up.</li> </ul>
<b>Officer comments</b>	<p><i>It is amazing how much the ECP team have been able to deliver in the first year of the SLA and 'A River Sings' is a great showcase for the types of environmental projects that have come to fruition. These provide multiple benefits for nature, climate and people. It is a testament to the dedication of the ECP Project Manager and the rest of the team. We are very grateful for their hard work and look forward to hearing more about what they've been able to achieve in Year 2.</i></p>

## Organisation: Wychwood Forest Trust LTD

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<p><a href="#">Wychwood Forest Trust LTD</a> (WFT) work with local communities to protect and restore the spaces once part of the historic Wychwood Forest - 120 square miles and 41 parishes of West Oxfordshire. They acquire land considered degraded and give it the space it needs to become a nature reserve of tomorrow. The organisation also run projects promoting the Wychwood's unique cultural identity. With a wide array of events - from traditional rural skills courses and regular volunteering opportunities to a bustling Forest Fair - engage diverse local groups with the natural world around them.</p>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	<p><i>'WFT manages a diverse range of countryside and habitat conservation and restoration activities that provide the residents of West Oxfordshire with both high-quality, accessible places to enjoy the numerous benefits of contact with the natural world, and also offer broad choice of opportunities to genuinely and constructively be involved in effecting positive change – the impact of their work couldn't be reached without the support of hundreds of volunteers each year.'</i></p>	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes for year 1</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	Submit development grant application to National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for Windrush in Witney project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed relationships with further cultural partners for the project, including the surviving Witney/Burford woollen mill, and through the SLA process have had positive discussions with Chipping Norton Theatre. Both new contacts and potential collaborations have the potential to strengthen the social heritage aspects of the project.</li> <li>Most of the required consultation for this stage of the application has been undertaken. The project has been the subject of two public engagement talks during the year and been used as a proposal landscape repair case study for more technically informed audiences.</li> <li>Currently working towards the August deadline for submission of the development grant application to NLHF, although deadlines are rolling and quarterly, have no bearing on assessment, and the application will not be submitted until we are confident that it is ready.</li> <li><i>'It's thought there has been some confusion over the mechanics, application stages and lifespan of a NLHF project such as this. These are the early stages of a minimum five-year, c.£2m commitment, where WFT as the applying non-profit will shoulder all the reputational and financial risk. It is also one that WFT would be doing without inclusion in the SLA.'</i></li> </ul>
	Promote Gibbets Hill as a vanguard nature recovery research project for West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the year the site has been visited by the LNP team, most of the key regional representatives of the DEFRA agencies, and by many professional and community groups active across West Oxon and beyond seeking knowledge and inspiration.</li> </ul>

	Oxfordshire within the emerging county Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Oxford University ecosystem restoration research collaboration at the site is now operational and recording data across four research plots. A suite of physical, chemical and bioacoustics monitoring is under way.</li> <li>Expert-led tours of the project for the public have been held regularly throughout the year, averaging two per month and 25 people each time.</li> </ul>
	Wetland creation at Gibbets Hill and tour of site for WODC Councillors and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetland habitat repair project assessed and designed with the Freshwater Habitats Trust.</li> <li>9 substantial wetland habitats created.</li> <li>Rapid early colonisation by pioneer invertebrate and amphibian species has occurred.</li> </ul>
	Agree Heads of Terms for a management agreement with WODC for Barnes Meadow in central Witney. Convene a public meeting to establish an acceptable and agreed set of site management principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After initial informal discussions about WFT involvement in the future management of Barnes Meadow following WODC/community purchase, draft Heads of Terms (HoT) were supplied. Whilst broadly acceptable in principle, as outlined previously the land has some public sensitivities, and needs to dovetail with the broader landscape management principles of the NLHF project in the future.</li> <li>A public meeting in November gathered views on future management of Barnes Meadow, with strong opinions expressed over internal stock fencing. Around 40 responses informed draft management principles.</li> <li>Subject to agreeing a management approach the HoT will be revisited and address the boundary and other responsibility considerations.</li> </ul>
	Oversee management and support volunteer groups at Kilkenny Country Park during recruitment for WODC Nature Recovery Officer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WFT coordinated and oversaw work parties for the local group during the interim period at the beginning of the year. When in post the two new officers were introduced to the group and then supported for several months as they gained confidence.</li> <li>The group is now under the supervision of the remaining WODC officer, with logistical support, equipment and advice provided as required from WFT.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Successes Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gibbets Hill Nature Reserve – good promotion with various partners and other organisations, including regional representatives from DEFRA agencies and community groups seeking knowledge and inspiration; and ongoing academic research collaboration, wetland habitat creation</li> <li>Barnes Meadow – agreed to take on the management of this new WODC-owned area which is located next to Grimes Meadow (owned and managed by WFT); public meetings and consultation carried out; initial management approach agreed with WODC.</li> <li>Support for volunteer group at Kilkenny Lane Country Park provided, including habitat management advice and leading work parties.</li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff turnover – 3 key people involved in project development within WODC, Lower Windrush Valley Project and at Wychwood Forest Trust – slow progress with the Windrush in Witney development bid application to the National Lottery. Bid will be</li> </ul>	

	submitted slightly later than hoped, but the aim is to make sure that it is robust and thorough. Work will continue on this project in Year 2.
<b>Focus for Year 2 Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windrush in Witney project development bid application to National Lottery</li> <li>• Site visit to Gibbetts Hill Nature Reserve for WODC Members and Officers</li> <li>• Barnes Meadow management – removal of fence, ongoing community liaison and initial management implemented</li> <li>• Continued advice and support for biodiversity enhancements at Kilkenny Lane Country Park</li> </ul>
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windrush in Witney Project – support from WODC ecology team with the initial application</li> </ul>
<b>Officer comments</b>	<i>Wychwood Forest Trust are one of the council's key partners and they carry out a wide range of actions that respond to the nature and climate emergencies, as well as supporting local people. The rewilding of Gibbetts Hill Nature Reserve is an inspiration to us all about what can be achieved by letting nature do what it does best and the Council is proud to support this project.</i>


## Organisation: Low Carbon Hub IPD LTD

Section	Details	
<b>Organisational Overview</b>	<p>Low Carbon Hub is a social enterprise committed to demonstrating that it is possible to meet energy needs in a way that benefits both people and the planet. Recognising the decline of fossil fuels and the accelerating shift toward renewable energy, Low Carbon Hub advocates for the development of a new energy system that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritises renewable generation and energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions</li> <li>• Ensures that energy spending delivers greater value for communities and strengthens the local economy</li> <li>• Encourages the growth of locally-owned community energy projects, empowering local people</li> <li>• Enhances the health and comfort of homes, businesses, and community buildings</li> <li>• Embraces smart and flexible technologies to maximise future innovations</li> </ul>	
<b>Funded Project Aims</b>	<p>The funding will go towards resourcing a project team at the Low Carbon Hub to deliver the first plan period for the Cuckoo Lane CAPZero. The team includes: a project manager; a community engagement manager; an administrator; and oversight from Dr Barbara Hammond the Senior Responsible Officer for the project.</p>	
<b>Agreed outcomes and progress in year 1</b>	<b>Agreed outcomes</b>	<b>Progress in year 1</b>
	<p>Governance: Establish governance structure and delivery model to enable the long-term implementation of a 'Community Action Plan for Zero-Carbon Energy'.</p> <p>Domestic retrofit; 50 homes in Cuckoo Lane Primary Substation Area to effective whole house retrofit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPZero initiative has built broad community representation into its governance system through membership of the Stewardship Group and working groups with proposed improvements to the system as they progress into the second year. Terms of reference, minutes, risks, issues and learning logs are maintained for the project.</li> <li>• The approach to domestic retrofit engagement in Year 1 relied upon close collaboration, in particular with RetrofitWorks, who deliver the Cosy Homes Oxfordshire service in partnership with Low Carbon Hub, and Oxfordshire County Council, who were responsible for the delivery of the 'HUG2' affordable warmth funding for domestic energy efficiency improvements to eligible properties</li> <li>• Analysis of Low Carbon Hub and wider activities in the area shows that the target of at least 50 households beginning their retrofit journey has been exceeded.</li> <li>• Three case studies of properties in the CAPZero area, two of which have had a Cosy Homes Oxfordshire Whole House Plan and implemented measures, have been published on the website and promoted in the CAPZero newsletter and community communications. One further case study is in progress.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low Carbon Hub worked with Oxfordshire County Council to identify properties that were likely to be eligible for HUG2 funding and created tailored communications with the aim of increasing take up of this publicly funded scheme.</li> <li>They have ended year 1 with more clarity about what residents want and need to enable retrofit locally; good progress in collecting accurate monitoring data; enthusiastic participation from Cosy Homes Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council and local community groups; and ideas and positivity about a calendar of domestic-retrofit-focussed engagement in Year 2.</li> </ul>
	Engagement of non-domestic; recruit 10 businesses to develop an energy strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Year 1, the focus was on engaging local businesses with free energy assessments offered by Energy Solutions Oxfordshire (ESOx), promoted through partner channels and direct outreach.</li> <li>Whilst energy assessments and carbon reduction reports have not been produced in Year 1, foundations have been laid for this work to build in Year 2. In addition, 9 x businesses/organisations in the Primary Substation Area (PSA) have taken action.</li> </ul>
<b>Key Successes</b>	A key success from Year 1 has been the formation of two new community groups, formed explicitly with the purpose of supporting net zero in the local area through CAPZero implementation. Freeland Energy Group formed early in the year, as an offshoot of Freeland Parish Council, and Go Green Hanborough, led by WODC Executive Member for Environment, Lidia Arciszewska, launched in March 2025.	
<b>Challenges Faced and Actions Taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging residents and businesses to take up greener practices, for example retrofit their homes and premises. A range of engagement methods have been tried and tested, with the aim of identifying barriers and finding creative solutions to remove these.</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus for Year 2</b>	<p>Existing domestic demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All households eligible for funding are supported in securing it.</li> <li>Inspire and motivate households to retrofit by sharing tangible examples and “how to”.</li> <li>Build the capability of community groups to support households.</li> <li>Enable and encourage behaviour change to reduce demand reduction/peak demand.</li> <li>Enable and encourage access to privately funded retrofit delivery.</li> </ul> <p>Non-domestic demand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to financial support.</li> <li>Encourage and enable small businesses and non-domestic organisations to access ESOx and other support.</li> <li>Normalise measuring and proactive reduction in energy demand.</li> <li>Proactive engagement to support realisation of solar and battery potential.</li> </ul> <p>New build and planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage press and developers regarding LETI standards.</li> <li>Ensure LETI standards included in Local Plans and wider planning regulations.</li> <li>Support active community engagement in planning.</li> </ul>	

	<p>Large-scale clean energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend the 12 Acre Farm money, create benefit, tell everyone about it.</li> <li>• Influence to maximise community benefit from Botley West.</li> </ul> <p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support LCWIP development</li> <li>• Promotion of active transport, car clubs and shared transport</li> <li>• Support private and public EV charge points</li> <li>• Watching brief of the P&amp;R</li> </ul> <p>Nature recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with the Nature Recovery Network, support the work of local actors and promote opportunities for involvement in existing activities.</li> <li>• Include nature recovery in events, for example open homes and gardens.</li> <li>• Join up all nature recovery threads within CAPZero.</li> <li>• Collect data and develop a method for monitoring nature-based activities in the area.</li> <li>• Clear guidance for all new developments.</li> </ul>
<b>Support Needed (if any)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WODC officers will continue to be involved in the project Steering Group and working groups and facilitate the link between CAPZero and the Oxfordshire local area energy planning, wider retrofit work, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041, and the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</li> </ul>
<b>Officer comments</b>	<p><i>CAPZero is a groundbreaking project that is modelling how a cluster of communities in West Oxfordshire can create a zero-carbon energy system in their local area, in a way that works for them. It is a plan developed by community representatives together with experts. Good foundations have been laid in Year 1, and it is now hoped that the project implementation phase will start to accelerate climate action across residents and businesses in the PSA. Further work is also needed to develop a robust CAPZero model for other PSAs so that there can be more CAPZeros in Oxfordshire within the next year.</i></p>

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE - 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE PROVISION</b>
Wards affected	Bampton & Clanfield, Burford, Brize Norton and Shilton, Carterton, Charlbury & Finstock, Chipping Norton, Eynsham & Cassington, Witney & Woodstock & Bladon
Accountable member	Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment Email: <a href="mailto:lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk">lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Claire Locke. Interim Executive Director – Corporate Services Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Claire Locke. Interim Executive Director – Corporate Services Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	The review has considered current provision of public conveniences in each location, costs, income and building condition. The aim is to provide a balance between the continued provision of good quality public toilet facilities, protect essential facilities into the future and to reduce the financial burden on the Council.
Annexes	Annex A – Table summarising costs, income, usage and condition Annex B – Summary of Condition survey indicative costs Annex C – Maps showing the location of facilities Exempt Annex D – Lease terms relevant to surrender Annex E – Equalities Impact Assessment
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to:  I. Agree to work with Town and Parish Councils and the Public Convenience Task and Finish Group to explore the options in regards to transferring these assets where possible, either on long leases or freehold, as detailed in the report.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Delegate authority for the terms of any disposals arising from recommendation 1 to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance.</li> <li>3. Agree that, where transfer cannot be achieved, to retain facilities at Langdale Gate in Witney, Guildenford and High Street in Burford, Bampton Town Hall, New Street in Chipping Norton, Hensington Road in Woodstock and Kilkenny Country Park, and to bring forward a further report regarding the repairs and improvements required to ensure good quality facilities are provided.</li> <li>4. Agree, where transfer cannot be achieved, to terminate leases at the Town Hall in Chipping Norton and Charlbury, noting the lease implications set out in Annex D to the report.</li> <li>5. Agree, where transfer cannot be achieved, to close facilities at The Leys, Witney, Browns Lane, Woodstock, Back Lane, Eynsham, Black Bourton Road in Carterton which are in the Council's ownership and consider options such as conversion, lease or sale of the buildings.</li> </ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li> <li>• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
Key Decision	Yes
Exempt	<p>NO</p> <p>Annex D exempt – contains confidential lease information</p>
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Public Conveniences working Group</p> <p>Consultation with relevant Town and Parish Councils will follow this 'in principle' decision, to discuss what happens with individual facilities.</p>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The Council provides thirteen sets of Public Conveniences district wide. Ten of these facilities are owned by the Council and three are leased. Despite a small charge at some facilities, the cleaning and maintenance costs means that the Council provides a high level of subsidy for this discretionary service.
- 1.2** Many towns now have multiple locations which offer the public free access to Public Conveniences at libraries, community centres, supermarkets and facilities provided by Town Councils.
- 1.3** In the context of Asset Management review, the Council is considering how discretionary facilities can be fit for the future. Transferring facilities to Town and Parish Councils could ensure facilities are retained at a local level.
- 1.4** Data has been used to review costs, income and usage. A 'cost per use' figure is helpful in identifying facilities that require a higher level of subsidy. This information is summarised in Annex A. Condition surveys have also been carried out to identify facilities that will require significant investment in the coming years to ensure they remain in a suitable condition. This information is referenced in Annex A but further information is contained in Annex B.
- 1.5** The review has considered options to retain, close, transfer or terminate leases for the public conveniences, whilst considering the needs of the users, and other local provision and affordability.
- 1.6** The recommendations seek to transfer all facilities but acknowledge the need to retain some high use facilities in key locations if transfer is not possible. Facilities which are retained will require some investment and a future report will consider costs as well as options for cashless payment and changes to charges. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees Public Conveniences working group will support the process of discussing options with Town and Parish Councils and considering terms for transfer or options for improvement where facilities are retained.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** West Oxfordshire District Council operates thirteen public toilets across the district, in 8 towns and villages. All sites charge 20p per use and this has not increased since charges were introduced in 2014.
- 2.2** Reactive maintenance is dealt with as and when necessary, however no refurbishments or improvements have taken place for a significant number of years. The cleaning and responsive maintenance is contracted to Danfo UK Ltd. The contract costs are the main expenditure for each site, which has increased over the last year due to wages, fuel and consumables.

### **3. MAIN POINTS**

- 3.1** Data on service costs, usage and income are listed by individual site in Annex A. This includes the net cost to the Council for each use of the facilities. The overall net subsidy the Council incurred in providing this service in 2024/25 was £269,747.
- 3.2** Whilst provision of the public toilets is a discretionary service, it is recognised the importance of easy access to facilities for shoppers and tourists. However, the existing level of subsidy is unsustainable for the Council and may make the service vulnerable under a new Unitary authority arrangement.

### **4. District wide provision of public conveniences.**

- 4.1** There are 13 sets of facilities across 9 towns and villages. Witney, Burford, Woodstock, Chipping Norton all have 2 sites operated by the Council. Bampton, Charlbury, Carterton, Brize Norton & Shilton and Eynsham all have 1 site operated by the Council.
- 4.2** Where there are multiple facilities provided, they are located relatively close together. It should also be considered that many towns and villages have multiple cafes, restaurants, public houses and tourist attractions which have toilet available for customers. Annex C provides maps showing the location of WODC run public conveniences and other publicly accessible facilities in each town.
- 4.3** Whilst there is considered to be a need for continued service provision, there could be a reduction in the number of facilities provided which would reduce costs.

### **5. Transferring responsibility for public conveniences.**

- 5.1** The Council could transfer facilities to Town and Parish councils. Where facilities are located in Council owned car parks it will be appropriate for the District Council to retain the freehold and transfer the public conveniences on a long lease. This avoids complications should the wider site ever be considered for sale or redevelopment. Where facilities sit separate to or on the edge of other council owned land freehold transfer may be appropriate with suitable covenants requiring the continued provision of toilet facilities and enabling the district council to receive a capital receipt should the facilities close and be sold or repurposed in the future. There may be exceptions to this if continued provision is not needed, for example, at The Leys, Witney, the Town Council have recently built new facilities. Each site will therefore be considered based on individual circumstances.
- 5.2** Not all Town or Parish Councils will wish to take on the facilities and the Council therefore needs to consider what action will be taken if transfer is not agreed. Where alternative facilities are available it is recommended leases are surrendered or facilities are closed.
- 5.3** In addition to the costs of running the facilities, the Council needs to consider the costs to keep these facilities in good order. Annex B provides indicative costs for repairs and replacement each year for the next ten years. This has been summarised in the annex as Year 1 costs, costs from 2025 – 1st April 2028 (Unitary authorities established) and total cost over the next ten years. It is important to stress these costs are indicative. They may

not all need to be incurred, they may not all need to be incurred in the periods stated and they have not been tendered. However, they provide a valuable insight for decision making and budget setting, into the level of investment that may be needed.

#### Surrender of leases

- 5.4 At Charlbury the community centre is located close to the council owned public conveniences and has similar opening times. Usage is relatively low at this site. At Chipping Norton the Council provides alternative facilities at New Street car park and there are also other facilities provided locally (Annex A).
- 5.5 It is recommended that the Council seek to surrender these leases. Please refer to Annex D which contains confidential information relating to these leases and sets out the potential implications of surrender. Surrendering these leases and closing the public conveniences would reduce costs by approximately £44,000 annually.
- 5.6 Whilst condition survey information indicates repair and replacement costs, some of these costs would be borne by the building owners, not WODC as lessee. However, the Council will need to carry out certain works to reinstate the building to a required condition in line with the lease terms before it is handed back. These costs will be negotiated with the building owners once the process of lease surrender commences.

#### Transfer or closure

- 5.7 It is proposed that facilities at The Leys, Witney, Back Lane, Eynsham, Browns Lane, Woodstock and Black Bourton Road, Carterton are transferred to the relevant Town Councils or closed. In all cases there are alternative facilities provided close by (Annex A). Closing these facilities will reduce costs by approximately £70,000 annually. It may result in a slight increase in consumables at the other council owned facilities as usage is consolidated into one site. This cost is hard to quantify.
- 5.8 If the facilities listed in 5.7 were retained the Council would need to invest approximately £87,700 between now and 2028.
- 5.9 Freehold facilities could be sold providing a capital receipt to the Council or they could be stripped out and converted for a new commercial use. This can be fully explored if transfer is not possible and the council could decide whether it pursues disposal or investment to retain as a commercial asset. If transfer is not viable, an options appraisal will be prepared for each relevant facility, and a further report will be brought back to the Council for decision.

#### Transfer or retention

- 5.10 The remaining facilities would ideally be transferred but if transfer is not viable the Council may wish to consider retention of these facilities as they are either high demand facilities in key tourism locations (Guilford and High Street in Burford, New street in Chipping Norton), near large car parks that serve shoppers (Langdale Gate, Witney) or located in areas where there are little or no other alternative facilities (Bampton Town Hall and Kilkenny Country Park). Hensington Road, Woodstock will be looked at separately and in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council seeking to make changes to the to the Old Library site in Hensington Road.

5.11 If facilities are retained, the Council will need to allocate funding for essential repairs and maintenance which are estimated to be in the region of £56,000 between now and 2028. However, the Council may also wish to consider investment to upgrade older facilities. Consideration could also be given to introducing cashless payment as all facilities are 'cash only' currently. Cashless payment can be more user friendly as people do not need to find the right change. However, there is a significant capital cost of around £1350 per unit to install card readers. Consideration could also be given to the appropriate level of fee, with scope to increase charges and reduce the level of subsidy, particularly if facilities are improved and customers are offered a better standard of facility. These options can be considered as part of a future report on investment into retained facilities.

## **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 6.1 The Council could retain all facilities, but this would not address the level of subsidy currently incurred and may make the service vulnerable when Unitary authorities are created.
- 6.2 The Council could seek to close more facilities, if transfer to Town and Parish Councils does not occur however this may impact on users, where alternative facilities are not available, which could in turn affect the local economy.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The recommendations seek agreement in principle to transferring public conveniences to Town and Parish Councils. However there has not yet been consultation with these Councils, so the proposals in this report may be subject to change. Delegations are sought to enable matters to progress but where proposals change it may be necessary to bring a further report to Executive.
- 7.2 The aim is to achieve the right balance between essential local provision and cost and to protect these facilities at a local level into the future.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The provision of public convenience currently has an annual revenue cost to the Council of £269,747.
- 8.2 The recommendations in this report seek to reduce this net subsidy, however the level of reduction will depend on the number of facilities that are transferred and associated costs.
- 8.3 The budget requirements for essential repairs and maintenance are set out in Annex C. Any funding requirements for 2025/26 will be met from revenue funding. Funding for future years will be built into the budget setting process.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Public conveniences are a discretionary service and therefore the Council could cease to provide the service.



- 9.2** The Council is the freeholder of all but 3 of the public conveniences (see annex A). The Council can therefore choose to sell or repurpose the buildings that it owns subject to the relevant permissions.

## **10. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1** The Council may suffer reputational damage from any closure of facilities and increasing charges. However, offering the facilities to the Town or Parish Councils in the first instance and providing effective communication to explain may help mitigate this risk.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 11.1** Closure of public conveniences may impact some groups more than others. An EIA is provided at Annex E.

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

- 12.1** There may be a reduction in fuel usage from servicing, maintaining and cash collection all existing facilities. However, as the proposals include where retention of at least one set of facilities in each Town or Village, there will be limited reduction in travel for the contractor.
- 12.2** There will be a small reduction in utilities used if any of the toilets are closed but demand may transfer the facilities remaining open. It is likely the consumables usage may also transfer.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1** None.

(END)

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## Annex A

Car Park Location	Income	Cost*	Footfall	Cost per use	Condition Yr l cost	Recommendation
<b>Transfer or retain</b>						
Burford, Guildenford	£1478	£27,874	7184	£3.67	£3550	Within WODC owned carpark High tourist demand, lowest cost.
Chipping Norton, New st	£1062	£26,429	5314	£4.77	£7450	Within WODC owned carpark High tourist demand
Witney, Langdale Gate	£1092	£32,214	5464	£5.69	£13,350	On edge of WODC car park High demand for shoppers. Also used for Shop Mobility
Woodstock, Hensington road	£499	£16,788	2517	£6.47	£6500	In WODC owned car park , also used as small satellite depot by Ubico
Brize Norton & Shilton, Kilkenny	£384	£13,266	1923	£6.70	£1100	New facilities serving Country park. Users include high number of children.
Burford High st	£1436	£31,875	7394	£4.12	£4300	High tourist demand
Bampton Town Hall	£525	£12,996	2626	£4.75	£4150	Leased facilities but limited alternatives locally. Cost relatively low.
<b>Surrender leases</b>						
Charlbury, Spendlove	£503	£18,543	2582	£6.99	£1600	Relatively low usage and alternative facilities close by at community centre.
Chipping Norton, Town Hall	£636	£26,906	3183	£8.25	£11,500	Retaining facilities at New Street

	Income	Cost*	Footfall	Cost per use	Condition YrI	Reccomendation
<b>Transfer or close</b>						
Witney, The Leys	£584	£29,670	2925	£9.94	£28,325	Other facilities in area and very expensive due to low usage.
Eynsham, Back La.	£236	£10,515	1183	£8.69	£4400	Low demand & high cost. Transfer on long lease as in centre of WODC car park.
Carterton, Black Bourton	£271	£15,341	1358	£11.09	£3900	Other facilities in the area and very expensive due to low usage.
Woodstock, Browns La.	£502	£16,538	2498	£6.42	£43,900	Relatively low demand across the two Woodstock sites. Closing one should increase demand at Hensington road.
Totals	£9208	£278,955	46,161	N/A	£134,025	

**Other toilets available in Towns/village where we are proposing to transfer, close or surrender lease**

<b>Public Convenience, Location</b>	<b>Alternative facilities located nearby</b>
The Leys, Witney	Supermarket x 1
Back Lane, Eynsham	Coffee Shop x 1, Restaurant x 1, Hotel x 1, Pub x 2
Black Bourton, Carterton	Supermarket x 2, Library, Pub x 2, Coffee Shop x 2, Restaurant x 3
Brown's Lane, Woodstock	Restaurants x 4, Pub x 4, Coffee Shop x 1, Hotel x 1
Spendlove, Charlbury	Library & Community Centre, Pub x 3, Coffee Shop x 2
Town Hall, Chipping Norton	Pub x 3, Café x 4, Restaurant x 2

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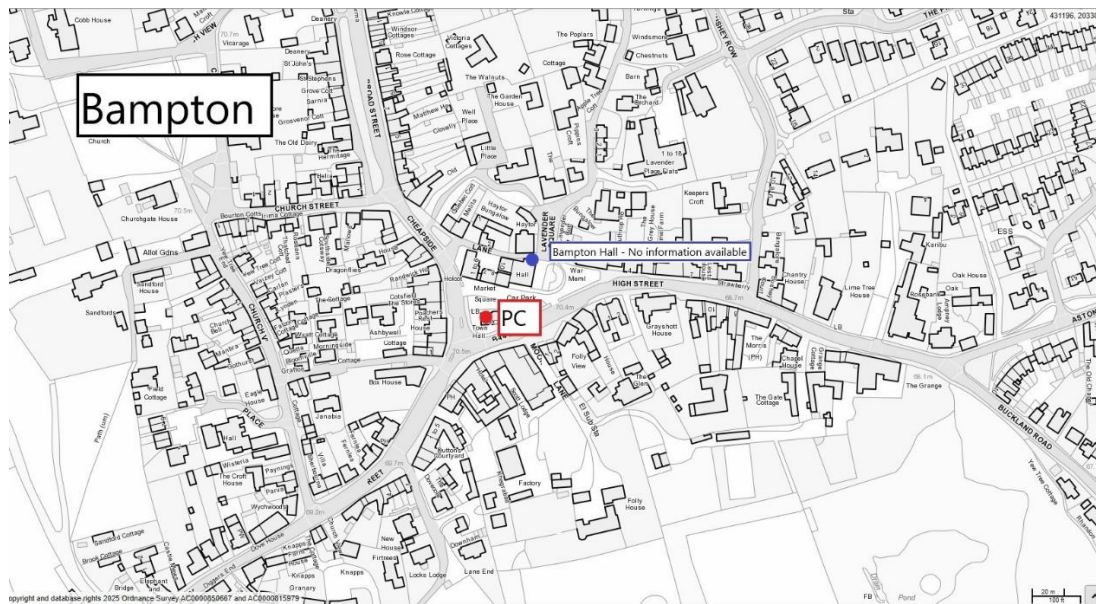
## Annex B

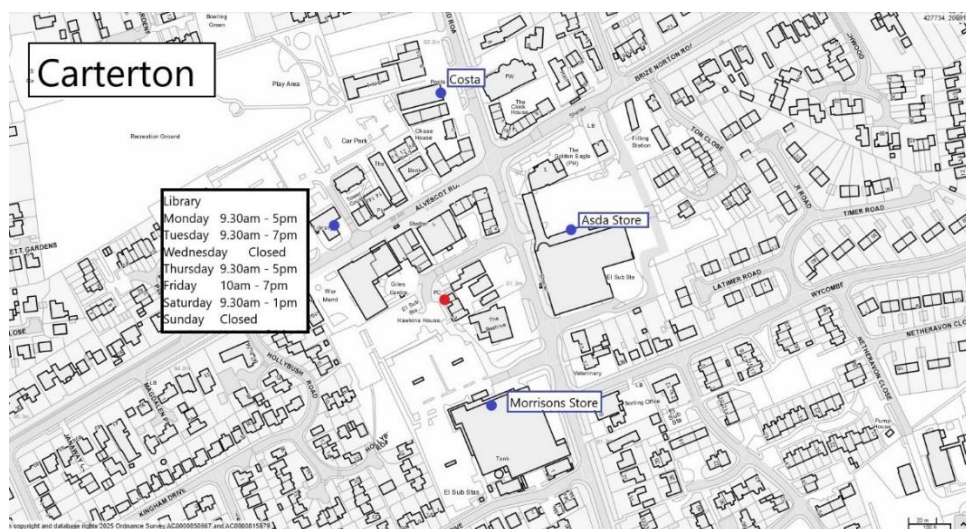
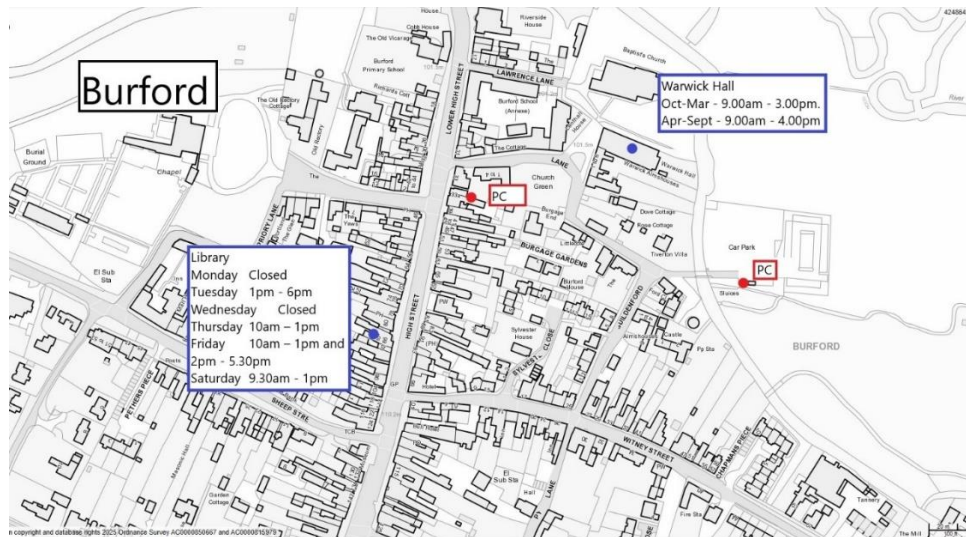
Facility	Yrs 1- 10 cost	Year 1	Cost 2025 – 2028
Transfer or retain			
Burford, Guildenford	£16,650	£3550	£5650
Chipping Norton, New st	£24,300	£7450	£9750
Witney, Langdale Gate	£45,350	£13,350	£16,150
Woodstock, Hensington	£20,900	£6500	£9700
Brize Norton & Shilton, Kilkenny	£13,750	£1100	£2150
Burford High st	£21,150	£4300	£7100
Bampton Town Hall	£18,000	£4150	£5550 (estimated £1550 WODC as tenant)
Sub-total	£160,100	£40,400	£56,050
Surrender leases			
Charlbury, Spendlove	£12,700	£1600	£2600 (estimated £700 WODC as tenant)
Chipping Norton, Town Hall	£21,150*	£11,500	£13,000 (estimated £4850 WODC as tenant)
Transfer or Close			
Witney, The Leys	£49,275	£28,325	£30,550
Eynsham, Back La.	£16,650	£4400	£6000
Carterton, Black Bourton	£16,900	£3900	£5800
Woodstock, Browns La.	£56,100	£43,900	£45,350
Sub-total	£138,925	£80,525	£87,700

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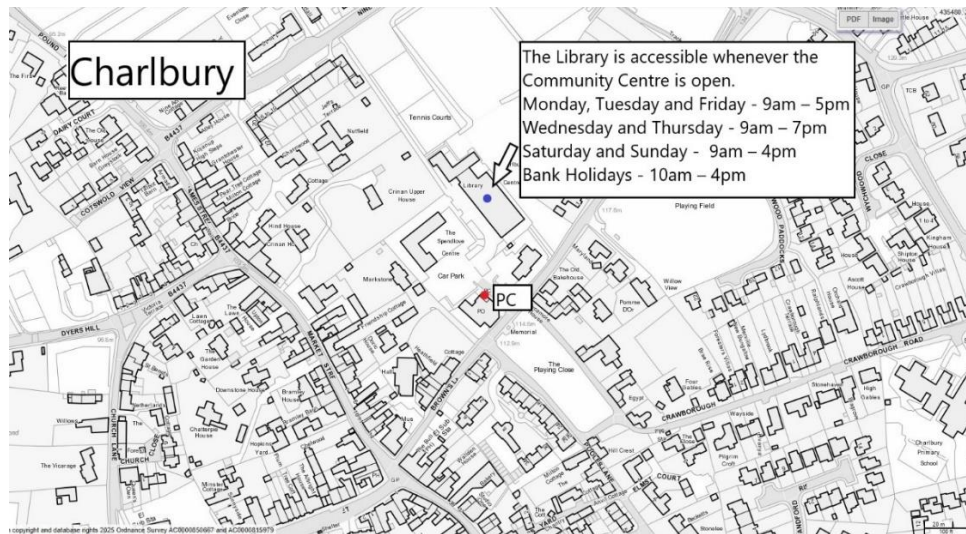
Bampton





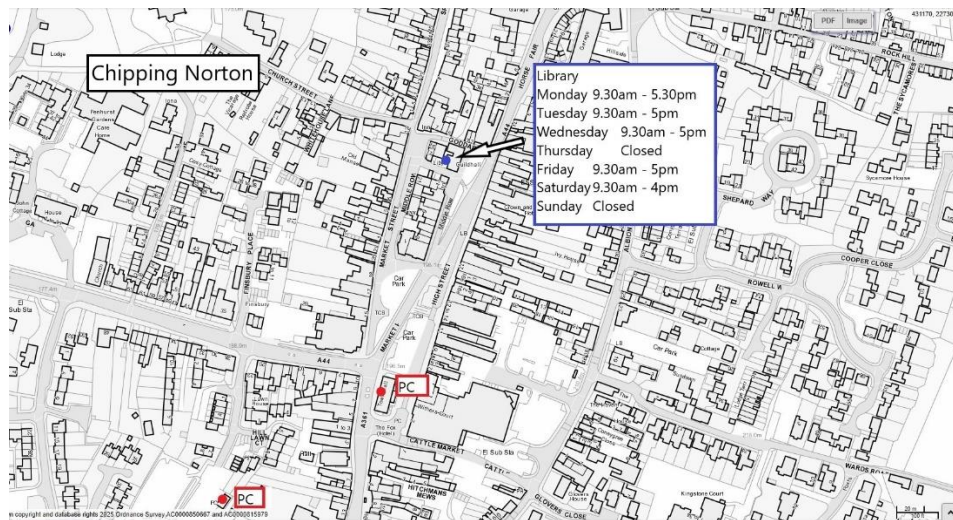
## Charlbury

The Library is accessible whenever the Community Centre is open.  
 Monday, Tuesday and Friday - 9am – 5pm  
 Wednesday and Thursday - 9am – 7pm  
 Saturday and Sunday - 9am – 4pm  
 Bank Holidays - 10am – 4pm

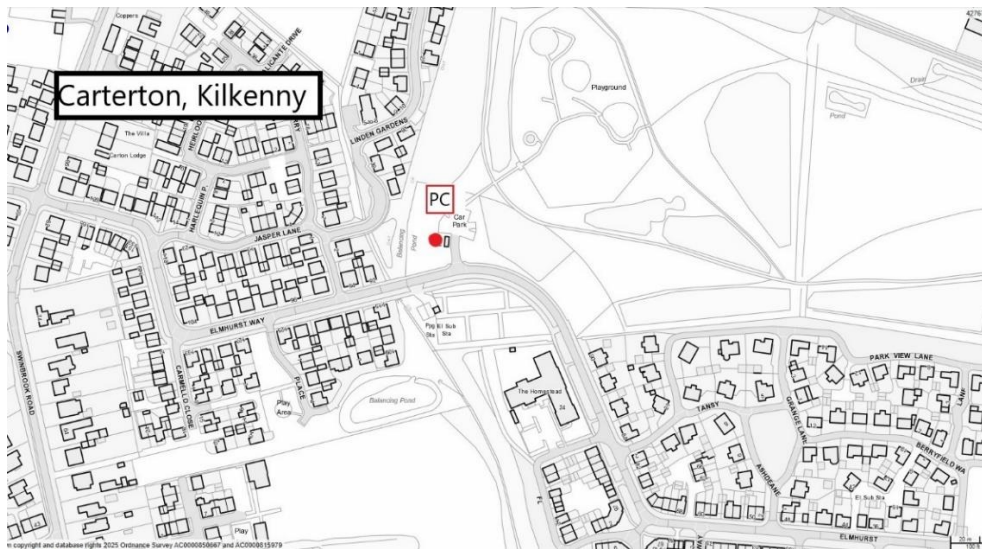
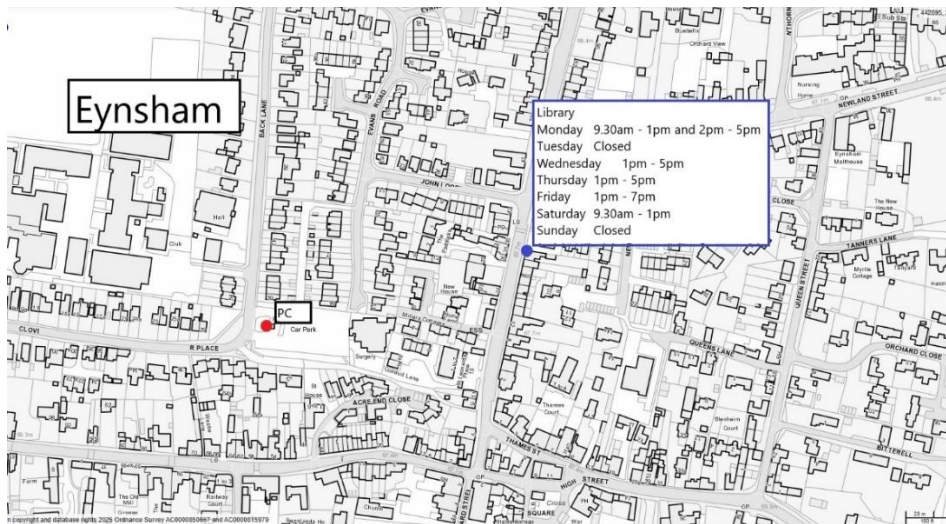


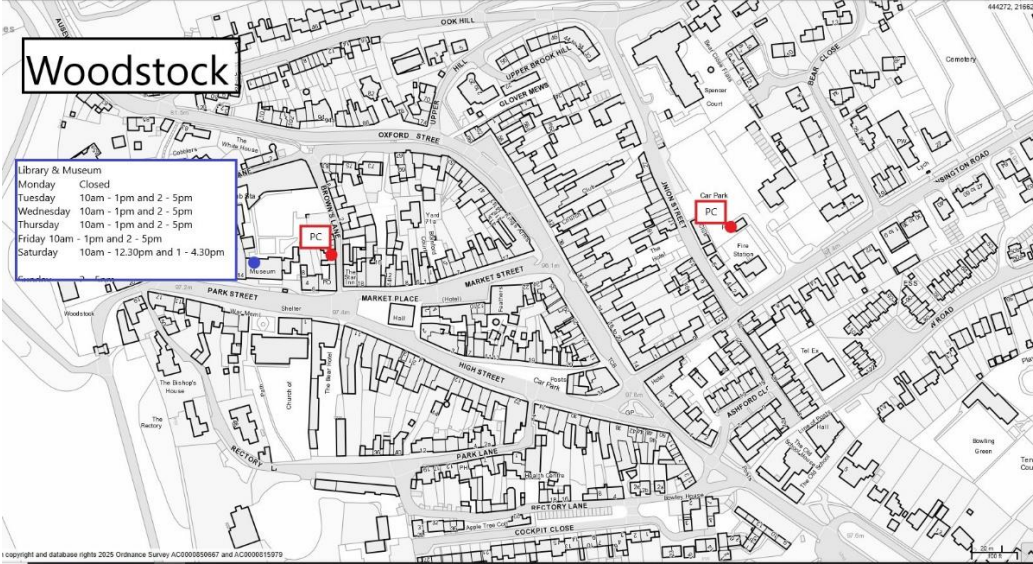
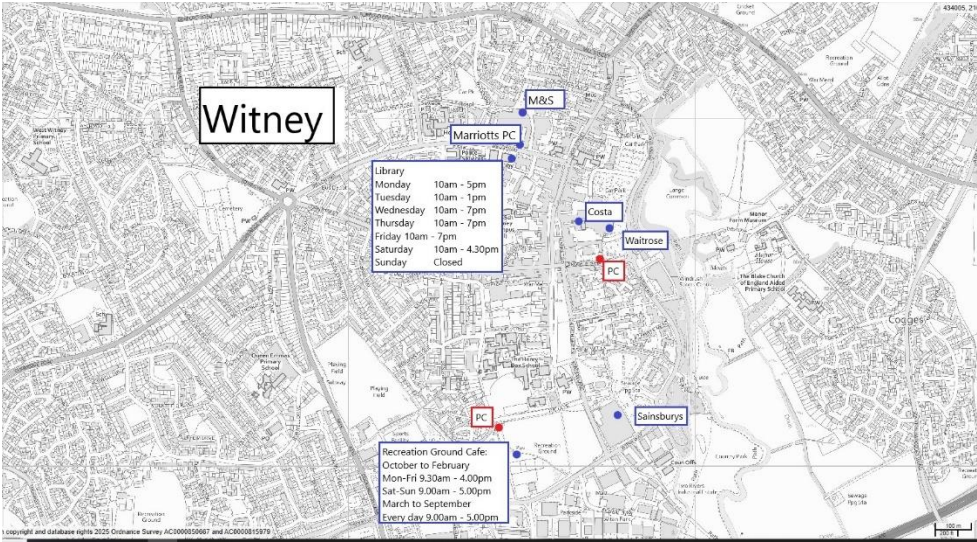
## Chipping Norton

Library  
 Monday 9.30am - 5.30pm  
 Tuesday 9.30am - 5pm  
 Wednesday 9.30am - 5pm  
 Thursday Closed  
 Friday 9.30am - 5pm  
 Saturday 9.30am - 4pm  
 Sunday Closed









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## Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

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

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

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

Once completed a copy should be emailed to [cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk](mailto:cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk) to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Claire Locke

Date of assessment: 21.07.25

Telephone: 01285 623427

Email: [Claire.locke@publicagroup.uk](mailto:Claire.locke@publicagroup.uk)

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

WODC Public conveniences service

Is this a new or existing one? Existing

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

The Council currently provides 13 sets of public conveniences across the district. The facilities are charged, with a 20p per use fee in place. However disabled persons may gain entry to disabled access facilities free of charge with a RADAR key.

The service aims to meet the needs of shoppers and visitors, with facilities located in the larger settlements close to shops and services.

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

The service is discretionary and heavily subsidised as the fees do not cover costs. With a discretionary service which requires circa £270K subsidy per year it will be vulnerable to future cuts particularly when larger unitary authorities are formed in 2028.

The service review has considered the availability of other local free public conveniences, which are provided by Town, Parish Councils or County (Library) Councils or others. It has not included provision of facilities where a customer may be expected to make a purchase before using the toilets (i.e. Cafes).

The review is proposing all facilities are offered to Town and Parish Councils to manage at a local level. If transfers are not agreed some facilities (low demand or alternative provision available) will be closed/leases surrendered. High demand or high need facilities would be retained by WODC.

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	✓	Data on costs (cleaning contract, utilities & cash collection), income, footfall and a calculated 'cost to use' to indicate the relative value of the facilities and level of subsidy. Some facilities are disproportionately expensive as they have low usage. In Towns where multiple facilities are provided, transferring or closing a WODC owned or leased facility should have little or no impact on the public. Communications would need to be managed, with signage warning of future closure and directing to alternative facilities to ensure customers do not arrive at a facility to find it closed and not know where to go.
Results of recent consultations and surveys	✓	A survey of other free local public conveniences within a short walk of facilities being reviewed. Opening hours of alternative facilities has also been considered.



Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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

There will be a discussion with the Town or Parish Councils in which the Public Conveniences are sited, once WODC Executive has made an in-principle decision to transfer facilities. The decision report notes that the recommended transfer and any future retention or closure may be subject to change following this consultation. There may be circumstances which affect how these facilities are provided, which WODC are not yet aware of.

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

No

Details of Consultation

If NO please outline any planned activities

See 6 above.

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

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	<input type="checkbox"/>

LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	X
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

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

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

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

*Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure*

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People	X			Very young children may need quick access to toilets	Transfer to Town and Parish Councils will actually protect facilities into the future, so this is positive.  However, any closure could have a negative impact. Closure or lease surrender is only being considered where there are alternative facilities within a short walk.  Signage in advance of any changes would give regular users advance warning. Where any facilities close signage would clearly indicate where alternative facilities can be found.
Age – Old People					
Disability	X			Those with mobility issues may struggle to travel further to access toilets and those with certain disabilities may need quick access to toilets	
Sex – Male					
Sex – Female					
Race including Gypsy and Travellers					
Religion or Belief					
Sexual Orientation					
Gender Reassignment					
Pregnancy and maternity	X			Those who are pregnant may need to access facilities more frequently	

Geographical impacts on one area					
Other Groups					
<b>Rural considerations:</b> ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.					

## 10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
Executive Decision	Claire Locke	-	September 2025
Contact relevant Town and Parish Councils with information relating to costs, usage etc and inviting discussion regarding transfer	Claire Locke/Susan Hughes	Project support required	October – December 2025
Review facilities that will transfer/close/be retained following above discussions	Claire Locke/Susan Hughes	Estates and legal teams will need to lead any transfer of assets or surrender of leases	By March 2026
Transfers & Closures	Claire Locke/Susan Hughes	Estates and legal teams will need to lead any transfer of assets or surrender of leases	Variable. TBC


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

--

## Declaration

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

Completed By:	-	Date:	-
Line Manager:	Claire Locke	Date:	21/07/25
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:		Date:	21/07/25

 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>REVIEW OF THE UBICO SHAREHOLDER AGREEMENT &amp; UBICO BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENTS</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:Andy.Graham@westoxon.gov.uk">Andy.Graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Phil Martin, Director of Place Email: <a href="mailto:Phil.Martin@westoxon.gov.uk">Phil.Martin@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Si Pocock-Cluley, Environment Services and Waste Transformation Lead Email: <a href="mailto:si.pocock-cluley@westoxon.gov.uk">si.pocock-cluley@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to agree a new UBICO Shareholder Agreement and Ubico Board Member Appointments
Annexes	Annex A – Ubico Articles of Association Exempt Annex B – Ubico Shareholder Agreement Exempt Annex C – Cover note highlighting proposed changes Exempt Annex D – Cover note highlighting further proposed changes
Recommendation(s)	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Approves the termination of the shareholders’ agreement between the following local authority shareholders: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. West Oxfordshire District Council</li> <li>b. Cheltenham Borough Council</li> <li>c. Cotswold District Council</li> <li>d. Forest of Dean District Council</li> <li>e. Stroud District Council</li> <li>f. Tewkesbury Borough Council</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>g. Gloucester City Council; and</p> <p>h. Ubico Ltd</p> <p>that was entered into in January 2020 (the “2020 Shareholders’ Agreement”).</p> <p>2. Approves the proposal described in this report to enter into a replacement Shareholders’ Agreement between the above parties in the form set out in exempt Annexe B to this report.</p> <p>3. Approves the proposal described in Exempt Annex D to this report in relation to number of votes for each shareholders, further amending the agreement set out in Exempt Annex B.</p>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	YES
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Phil Martin – Director of Place</p> <p>Madhu Richards – Director of Finance (S151)</p> <p>Leonie Woodward – Head of Legal</p>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** Ubico Ltd, an environmental services provider jointly owned by eight local councils including West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), has completed a comprehensive review of its Shareholder Agreement to ensure alignment with current legislation and operational needs. Following Gloucester City Council's addition as a shareholder since the last agreement in 2020, the Ubico Board engaged with all shareholder representatives to incorporate feedback into a revised draft. The proposed amendments, including further refinements prompted by potential local government reorganisation, have been documented and discussed at the Shareholder Forum. Ubico now seeks formal approval from WODC to enter into the updated Shareholder Agreement, which addresses previous inconsistencies and enhances clarity. Additionally, WODC is invited to consider appointing a Director to Ubico's Board, with Ubico requesting consultation to ensure a balanced skillset across the Board. This report recommends agreement to the revised Shareholder Agreement but does not make a recommendation regarding Board appointment.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Ubico Ltd is an environmental services provider owned by the following shareholding councils:
- West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)
  - Gloucestershire County Council
  - Cheltenham Borough Council
  - Cotswold District Council
  - Forest of Dean District Council
  - Stroud District Council
  - Tewkesbury Borough Council
  - Gloucester City Council
- 2.2** Ubico currently manages Waste and Environment Services under contract to the WODC. It provides waste, recycling, street cleaning, landscaping and a variety of other environmental services to its shareholding district councils and to a limited external market.
- 2.3** Governance arrangements for UBICO are laid out in the Articles of Association (Annexe A) and the Shareholders' Agreement set out in exempt Annexe B to this report.
- ## **3. Ubico Shareholder Agreement**
- 3.1** Ubico's Board of Directors conducted a routine review of the company's Shareholder Agreement in June 2024 to ensure that the Agreement continues to reflect the needs of the business in terms of the relationship between Ubico and all of the partners as a group; and that it aligns with current legislation.
- 3.2** Since the current shareholder agreement (Exempt Annexe B) was signed in 2020 Gloucester City Council have become a shareholder of Ubico.
- 3.3** The Board's proposed changes were discussed with each shareholding Council's Shareholder Representative and/or Chief Executive during August 2024 and their initial

feedback sought. Having received all the feedback, this has been considered and incorporated into a final proposed draft which is shown in the marked up document (Exempt Annexe 2.)

- 3.4 Exempt Annexe C, cover note documenting the proposed changes is attached.
- 3.5 The Shareholder Forum on 25th October 2024 discussed the proposed changes to the Shareholder Agreement. Each Shareholder agreed to take the proposed changes through the formal decision-making process at their own council and to seek approval to enter into the replacement Shareholders' Agreement on the revised terms and conditions.
- 3.6 Ubico are now in a position to issue the Agreement for signing. However, the announcement of potential local government reorganisation at the end of 2024 became a key consideration during the most recent round of shareholder engagement about the revised document. As a result, the Ubico executive team, in consultation with their legal advisors, revisited both the Shareholder Agreement and the company's Articles of Association to assess whether any further amendments would be prudent before final sign-off.
- 3.7 A further cover note (Exempt Annexe D) was produced with a further proposed change to the Shareholder Agreement
- 3.8 Ubico are asking for agreement with the marked up amendments to the Shareholders agreement, to also include the change proposed in Exempt Annexe D, so that a new document can be produced for signing

#### **4. Ubico Board Member Appointment**

- 4.1 The number of Directors of Ubico shall not be less than four (4) consisting of at least one LA Director, one Independent Director and one Executive Director
- 4.2 There are currently nine (9) Directors made up of two (2) executive directors, three (3) independent directors and four (4) LA Directors
- 4.3 Each Shareholder may appoint and remove one (1) LA Director (who shall not be a councillor) to the Board.
- 4.4 WODC have not currently appointed a Director to the Ubico Board
- 4.5 If WODC wish to appoint a Director, Ubico have expressed a desire for the make up of the Board to be balanced across all core skills and would therefore ask to be consulted on what skills would be most desirable

**For Councils without an appointed officer serving as a non-executive director on Ubico's board, Ubico will assign a 'link' non-executive director to represent each shareholder.** The link NED will be an additional and alternative point of contact to the executive team for the shareholders and will act as a conduit for updates on key matters considered by the board.



## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1** Do nothing – maintain the existing Shareholder Agreement. This would not address the inconsistencies and lack of clarity in existing Agreement.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1** This report recommends that WODC agree and enter into the proposed new Shareholder Agreement which has been drafted to address inconsistencies and lack of clarity that appeared in the current 2020 Shareholders' Agreement. The proposed changes to the provisions of the 2020 Shareholders' Agreement that will be incorporated in the replacement Shareholders' Agreement are summarised in the exempt Annexe D to this report.
- 6.2** This report also recommends that WODC note the opportunity to appoint a Director to Ubico, it is important to note that this report however does not make any recommendations on whether any such appointment should be made.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications contained in this report's recommendations.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Since the creation of the company, the shareholders' agreement has been amended and updated to reflect the growing number of shareholders and the changing legislation; the changes reflected in this report are part of this on-going process.

The first set of suggested amendments bring the new shareholders into the main agreement and reflect post Brexit legislation; this is part of good practice and maintains clarity, avoiding possible future disputes.

The second set of proposals looks to future proof the agreement, which would be essential to preserve this Council's impact in the partnership.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1** Do nothing, maintaining the existing Shareholder Agreement would not address the inconsistencies and lack of clarity in existing Agreement.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 10.1** Not Applicable

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

- 11.1** Not Applicable

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None

12.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at [www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk) or by contacting democratic services [democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk) for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

(END)

Company number: 07824292

**PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES**  
**Ubico Limited (the "Company")**

On 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020 the following special resolution was passed by the Shareholders of the Company:

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

That the articles of association attached to this resolution are approved and adopted in substitution for and to the exclusion of any articles of association of the company previously registered with the Registrar of Companies.

.....  
**Chairman of Board**

13/02/2020  
.....  
**Date**

THURSDAY



A18 \*A8Z76PFK\* #265  
20/02/2020  
COMPANIES HOUSE

THE COMPANIES ACT 2006  
PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES  
ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION  
OF  
UBICO LIMITED

February 2020

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## PART 1

### INTERPRETATION AND LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

#### 1 Defined terms

1.1 In the articles, unless the context requires otherwise—

**"articles"** means the company's articles of association;

**"bankruptcy"** includes individual insolvency proceedings in a jurisdiction other than England and Wales or Northern Ireland which have an effect similar to that of bankruptcy;

**"chairman"** has the meaning given in article 14;

**"chairman of the meeting"** has the meaning given in article 43;

**"Companies Acts"** means the Companies Acts (as defined in section 2 of the Companies Act 2006), in so far as they apply to the company;

**"Conflict"** has the meaning given in article 17;

**"director"** means a director of the company (including without limitation) an Independent Director, an Executive Director or a LA Director) and **"Directors"** shall be all of the directors of the Company from time to time;

**"distribution recipient"** has the meaning given in article 32.2;

**"document"** includes, unless otherwise specified, any document sent or supplied in electronic form;

**"electronic form"** and **"electronic means"** have the meanings given to them in section 1168 of the Companies Act 2006;

**"Executive Directors"** means those directors appointed in accordance with article 21.8;

**"Finance Director"** means the person, who may or may not be a person engaged on a full time basis with the operations of the company, appointed as finance director by the shareholders;

**"fully paid"** in relation to a share, means that the nominal value and any premium to be paid to the company in respect of that share have been paid to the company;

**"group company"** means, in relation to a company, a subsidiary undertaking or parent undertaking of the company or a subsidiary undertaking of any parent undertaking of the company, provided that the definition of "undertaking" in section 1161 of the Companies Act 2006 shall for these purposes also include any person (incorporated or unincorporated) created by statute;

**"hard copy form"** has the meaning given in section 1168 of the Companies Act 2006;

**"holder"** in relation to shares means the person whose name is entered in the register of shareholders as the holder of the shares;

**"instrument"** means a document in hard copy form;

**"Independent Directors"** means those directors appointed in accordance with article 21.5;

**"LA Directors"** means those directors appointed in accordance with articles 21.3 to 21.5;

**"Managing Director"** means the person, who may or may not be engaged on a full time basis in the management of the company, appointed as managing director by the shareholders;

**"Operations Director"** means the person, who may or may not be engaged on a full time basis in the operations of the company, appointed as operations director by the shareholders;

**"ordinary resolution"** has the meaning given in section 282 of the Companies Act 2006;

**"paid"** means paid or credited as paid;

**"participate"**, in relation to a directors' meeting, has the meaning given in article 12;

**"Permitted Situation"** has the meaning given in article 17;

**"proxy notice"** has the meaning given in article 49;

**"public body"** means a contracting authority as such term is defined in regulation 2 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015/102 (as may be amended from time to time) and **"public bodies"** shall be construed accordingly;

**"relevant director"** has the meaning given in article 56 and 57;

**"Representative"** has the meaning given in article 37.1;

**"shareholder"** means a person who is the holder of a share;

**"shares"** means shares in the company;

**"special resolution"** has the meaning given in section 283 of the Companies Act 2006;

**"subsidiary"** has the meaning given in section 1159 of the Companies Act 2006; and

**"writing"** means the representation or reproduction of words, symbols or other information in a visible form by any method or combination of methods, whether sent or supplied in electronic form or otherwise.

- 1.2 No model articles contained in any statute or subordinate legislation, including those contained in the model articles for private companies limited by shares contained in Schedule 1 of the Companies Act (Model Articles) Regulations 2008, shall apply to the company.
- 1.3 Unless the context otherwise requires, other words or expressions contained in these articles bear the same meaning as in the Companies Act 2006 as in force on the date when these articles become binding on the company.
- 1.4 References to a **"person"** shall be construed so as to include any individual, firm, corporation, government, state or agency of a state or any joint venture, trust, association or partnership (whether or not having separate legal personality).

## 2 Objects

- 2.1 The object of the company is to provide services:

- 2.1.1 to public bodies; and



- 2.1.2 other customers (whether public bodies or not) as considered appropriate by the shareholders from time to time provided services to non-public bodies shall always remain incidental to the primary aim of providing services to public bodies.

**3 Powers**

- 3.1 The company may do all such lawful things as may further the company's objects.

**4 Liability of shareholders**

- 4.1 The liability of the shareholders is limited to the amount, if any, unpaid on the shares held by them.

**PART 2**

**DIRECTORS**

**DIRECTORS' POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**5 Directors' general authority**

- 5.1 Subject to the articles, the directors are responsible for the management of the company's business, for which purpose they may exercise all the powers of the company.

**6 Shareholders' reserve power**

- 6.1 The shareholders may, by special resolution, direct the directors to take, or refrain from taking, specified action.
- 6.2 No such special resolution invalidates anything which the directors have done before the passing of the resolution.

**7 Directors may delegate**

- 7.1 Subject to the articles, the directors may delegate any of the powers which are conferred on them under the articles or the implementation of their decisions or day to day management of the affairs of the Company:
- 7.1.1 to such person or committee;
  - 7.1.2 by such means (including by power of attorney);
  - 7.1.3 to such an extent;
  - 7.1.4 in relation to such matters or territories; and
  - 7.1.5 on such terms and conditions;
- as they decide

7.2 If the directors so specify, any such delegation may authorise further delegation of the directors' powers by any person to whom they are delegated.

7.3 The directors may revoke any delegation in whole or part, or alter its terms and conditions.

## **8 Committees**

8.1 Committees to which the directors delegate any of their powers must follow procedures which are based as far as they are applicable on those provisions of the articles which govern the taking of decisions by directors.

8.2 The directors may make rules of procedure for all or any committees, which prevail over rules derived from the articles if they are not consistent with them.

## **DECISION-MAKING BY DIRECTORS**

### **9 Directors to take decisions collectively**

9.1 The general rule about decision-making by directors is that any decision of the directors must be either a majority decision at a meeting or a decision taken in accordance with article 10.

9.2 Each director shall have one vote. Unless otherwise stated within these articles, resolutions proposed at a directors' meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes.

9.3 If:

9.3.1 the company only has one director, and

9.3.2 no provision of the articles requires it to have more than one director,

the general rule does not apply, and the director may take decisions without regard to any of the provisions of the articles relating to directors' decision-making.

9.4 If only one director is eligible to vote on any authorisation required under article 17, the general rule does not apply, and the eligible director may take decisions in relation to the relevant matter without regard to any of the provisions in the articles relating to directors' decision-making.

### **10 Unanimous decisions**

10.1 A decision of the directors is taken in accordance with this article when all eligible directors indicate to each other by any means that they share a common view on a matter.

10.2 Such a decision may take the form of a resolution in writing, copies of which have been signed by each eligible director or to which each eligible director has otherwise indicated agreement in writing.

10.3 References in this article to eligible directors are to directors who would have been entitled to vote on the matter had it been proposed as a resolution at a directors' meeting.

- 
- 10.4 A decision may not be taken in accordance with this article if the eligible directors would not have formed a quorum at such a meeting.

## **11 Calling a directors' meeting**

- 11.1 Any director may call a directors' meeting by giving notice of the meeting to the directors or by authorising the company secretary (if any) to give such notice.
- 11.2 Notice of any directors' meeting must indicate:
- 11.2.1 its proposed date and time;
  - 11.2.2 where it is to take place;
  - 11.2.3 if it is anticipated that directors participating in the meeting will not be in the same place, how it is proposed that they should communicate with each other during the meeting;
  - 11.2.4 an agenda specifying in reasonable detail the matters to be raised at the meeting; and
  - 11.2.5 copies of any papers to be discussed at the meeting.
- 11.3 Notice of a directors' meeting must be given to each director, but need not be in writing. Notice may be sent by electronic means to an address provided by a director for the purpose.
- 11.4 Notice of a directors' meeting need not be given to directors who waive their entitlement to notice of that meeting, by giving notice to that effect to the company not more than 7 days after the date on which the meeting is held. Where such notice is given after the meeting has been held, that does not affect the validity of the meeting, or of any business conducted at it.
- 11.5 The directors shall hold a meeting at least four times a year, with no two meetings being held more than three months apart.

## **12 Participation in directors' meetings**

- 12.1 Subject to the articles, directors participate in a directors' meeting, or part of a directors' meeting, when:
- 12.1.1 the meeting has been called and takes place in accordance with the articles, and
  - 12.1.2 they can each communicate to the others any information or opinions they have on any particular item of the business of the meeting.
- 12.2 In determining whether directors are participating in a directors' meeting, it is irrelevant where any director is or how they communicate with each other.
- 12.3 If all the directors participating in a meeting are not in the same place, they may decide that the meeting is to be treated as taking place wherever any of them is.

### **13 Quorum for directors' meetings**

- 13.1 At a directors' meeting, unless a quorum is participating, no proposal is to be voted on, except a proposal to call another meeting.
- 13.2 The quorum for directors' meetings must comprise of two thirds of the Directors including at least one LA Director one Independent Director and one Executive Director.
- 13.3 If the total number of directors for the time being is less than the quorum required, the directors must not take any decision other than a decision:
  - 13.3.1 to appoint further directors, or
  - 13.3.2 to call a general meeting so as to enable the shareholders to appoint further directors.
- 13.4 The shareholders shall use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that meetings of directors are not inquorate by virtue of the LA Directors failing to attend such meetings.

### **14 Chairing of directors' meetings**

- 14.1 The directors may appoint one of the Independent Directors to chair their meetings.
- 14.2 The person so appointed for the time being is known as the "**chairman**".
- 14.3 The directors may terminate the chairman's appointment at any time.
- 14.4 If the chairman is not participating in a directors' meeting within ten minutes of the time at which it was to start, the participating directors must appoint one of themselves to chair it.

### **15 Casting vote**

- 15.1 If the numbers of votes for and against a proposal are equal, the chairman or other director chairing the meeting will not have a casting vote.

### **16 Conflicts of interest – transactions or arrangements with the company**

- 16.1 The relevant provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (including, without limitation, sections 177 and 182) shall apply in relation to declarations of interest in proposed and existing transactions or arrangements with the company.
- 16.2 Provided that he has disclosed to the directors the nature and extent of any interest of his in accordance with and to the extent required by the Companies Acts, a director notwithstanding his office:
  - 16.2.1 may be a party to, or otherwise interested in, any contract with the company or in which the company is otherwise interested;
  - 16.2.2 may be a director or other officer of, employed by, a party to any contract with or otherwise interested in any group company or in any

body corporate promoted by the company or any group company or in which the company or any group company is interested; and

16.2.3 may act by himself or his firm in a professional capacity for the company (otherwise than as auditor).

16.3 For the purposes of this article 16:

16.3.1 a director shall be deemed to have disclosed the nature and extent of an interest which consists of him being a director, officer or employee of any group company; and

16.3.2 a general notice given to the directors that a director is to be regarded as having an interest of the nature and extent specified in the notice in any contract in which a specified person or class of persons is interested shall be deemed to be a disclosure that the director has an interest in any such contract of the nature and extent so specified.

16.4 Where a director is a director or other officer of, or employed by, a group company (including a local authority), he:

16.4.1 may in exercising his independent judgment take into account the success of other group companies as well as the success of the company; and

16.4.2 shall in the exercise of his duties, where that other group company is a parent company, have a duty of confidentiality to the parent company in relation to confidential information of the parent company, but he shall not be restricted by any duty of confidentiality to the company from providing information to any parent company.

## **17 Conflicts of interest requiring board authorisation**

17.1 The directors may, subject to the quorum and voting requirements set out in the articles, authorise any matter which would otherwise involve a director ("relevant director") breaching his duty under the Companies Acts to avoid conflicts of interest (a "Conflict").

17.2 Any director (including the relevant director) may propose that the relevant director be authorised in relation to any matter the subject of a Conflict. Such proposal and any authority given by the directors shall be effected in the same way that any other matter may be proposed to and decided upon by the directors under the provisions of the articles save that the relevant director shall not count towards the quorum nor vote on any resolution giving such authority and save further that if there are insufficient directors eligible to vote and therefore to form a quorum, article 17.3 will apply.

17.3 Where the directors give authority in relation to a Conflict:

17.3.1 the terms of the authority shall be recorded in writing (but the authority shall be effective whether or not the terms are so recorded); and

- 17.3.2 the directors may revoke or vary such authority at any time but this will not affect anything done by the relevant director prior to such revocation in accordance with the terms of such authority.
- 17.4 A Conflict in relation to a director arising solely as a result of him being a director, officer or employee of any group company (including a local authority) shall be deemed to have been authorised for the purposes of this article 17 and section 175 of the Companies Act 2006.
- 17.5 Where article 17.4 above applies or the directors otherwise give authority in relation to a Conflict, or where any of the situations referred to in article 16 (a "**Permitted Situation**") applies:
- 17.5.1 the directors may (whether at the relevant time or subsequently) (i) require that the relevant director is excluded from the receipt of information, the participation in discussion and/or the making of decisions (whether at meetings of the directors or otherwise) related to the Conflict or Permitted Situation; and (ii) impose upon the relevant director such other terms for the purpose of dealing with the Conflict as they may determine;
- 17.5.2 the relevant director will be obliged to conduct himself in accordance with any terms imposed by the board in relation to the Conflict or Permitted Situation; and
- 17.5.3 the directors may provide that where the relevant director obtains (otherwise than through his position as a director of the company) information that is confidential to a third party, the director will not be obliged to disclose that information to the company, or to use or apply the information in relation to the company's affairs, where to do so would amount to a breach of that confidence.
- 17.6 A director shall not, by reason of his office or of the fiduciary relationship thereby established, be liable to account to the company or the shareholders for any remuneration, profit or other benefit realised by reason of his having any type of interest in a Conflict authorised under this article or in any Permitted Situation and no contract shall be liable to be avoided on the grounds of a director having any such interest.

## **18 Directors may vote when interested**

- 18.1 Subject where applicable to disclosure in accordance with the Companies Acts or the articles and subject to any terms imposed by the directors in relation to any Conflict or Permitted Situation, a director shall be entitled to vote in respect of any matter in which he is interested directly or indirectly and if he shall do so his vote shall be counted and, whether or not he does, his presence at the meeting shall be taken into account in ascertaining whether a quorum is present.
- 18.2 Subject to article 18.3 below, if a question arises at a meeting of directors or of a committee of directors as to the right of a director to participate in the meeting (or part of the meeting) for voting or quorum purposes, the question may, before the conclusion of the meeting, be referred to the chairman whose ruling in relation to any director other than the chairman is to be final and conclusive.

- 18.3 If any question as to the right to participate in the meeting (or part of the meeting) should arise in respect of the chairman, the question is to be decided by a decision of the directors at that meeting, for which purpose the chairman is not to be counted as participating in the meeting (or that part of the meeting) for voting or quorum purposes.

**19 Records of decisions to be kept**

- 19.1 The directors must ensure that the company keeps a record, in writing, for at least 10 years from the date of the decision recorded, of every unanimous or majority decision taken by the directors.

**20 Directors' discretion to make further rules**

- 20.1 Subject to the articles, the directors may make any rule about how they take decisions, and about how such rules are to be recorded or communicated to directors.

## **APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS**

**21 Methods of appointing directors**

- 21.1 Each shareholder agrees to procure that the number of directors of the company shall not be less than four consisting of at least one LA Director appointed in accordance with articles 21.3 to 21.5, one Independent Director appointed in accordance with article 21.7 and one Executive Director appointed in accordance with article 21.8. The maximum number of directors shall be thirteen, consisting of three Independent Directors appointed in accordance with article 21.7, three Executive Directors appointed in accordance with article 21.8 and either no more than seven LA Directors appointed, with each shareholder appointing one LA Director each in accordance with articles 21.5.1 or three LA Directors jointly appointed by the shareholders in accordance with article 21.3. If and to the extent that three LA Directors are jointly appointed by the shareholders in accordance with article 21.3 the maximum number of directors shall be nine.
- 21.2 Subject to articles 21.3 to 21.5 each shareholder shall be entitled to appoint and remove one LA Director (who shall not be a councillor) to the board.
- 21.3 Notwithstanding article 21.2 but subject to article 21.5 if the shareholders unanimously agree, they shall jointly nominate three persons, who are not councillors, to be appointed by the board as LA Directors (and any replacements of such directors as required), on behalf of all shareholders, from time to time. Each shareholder shall have the opportunity to nominate a person to be appointed as LA Director. Once all shareholders have made their nomination or expressed a wish not to nominate, the shareholders shall by simple majority decision, agree persons to be nominated. If the shareholders do not unanimously agree to jointly nominate a LA Director in accordance with the process set out in this article within two months of the nominee being required to be appointed, the procedure in article 21.4 shall apply.
- 21.4 Notwithstanding article 21.2 but subject to article 21.5, if an LA Director is required to be appointed pursuant to article 21.3 and the shareholders have not agreed on a nominee within two months of the nominee being required to be appointed, each shareholder may instead, within one month of the nominee being required to be appointed, nominate its own LA Director or multiple shareholders may jointly

nominate their own LA Director, for appointment by the board subject to there being no more than seven LA Directors on the board at any one time and each shareholder only appointing one LA Director each.

- 21.5 Alternatively subject to there being no more than seven LA Directors on the board at any time and each shareholder only appointing one LA Director each:
- 21.5.1 the shareholders may determine unilaterally that instead of following the procedure under articles 21.3 and 21.4 they shall each nominate their own individual LA Directors in accordance with article 21.2; or
- 21.5.2 multiple shareholders may jointly nominate their own LA Directors.
- 21.6 The individual right to appoint a LA Director under articles 21.2, 21.4 or 21.5 shall not apply to any shareholder who has exercised their right to jointly nominate a LA Director under either articles 21.3 or 21.5.2.
- 21.7 The shareholders shall by simple majority decision jointly nominate three persons to be appointed by the board as Independent Directors (and any replacements of such directors as required). The shareholders shall appoint the Independent Directors through an open recruitment process.
- 21.8 The shareholders shall appoint, by a simple majority decision, three Executive Directors, being the persons holding the role of Managing Director, Finance Director and Operations Director, as directors of the company from time to time by notice in writing to the company. On termination of any persons role as a Managing Director, Finance Director or Operations Director, they will automatically cease to be a director of the company and their replacement shall be appointed as a director, by the shareholders by notice in writing to the company.
- 21.9 The appointment of an Executive Director under article 21.8 shall take effect on the date on which the notice is received by the company or, if a later date is given in the notice, on that date.
- 21.10 No director shall serve more than six (6) consecutive years (consisting of two terms of three years) as a director commencing from the date of appointment. Unless otherwise agreed, a director's appointment shall automatically terminate at the next general meeting following the date on which he has served six consecutive years as a director.

## **22 Termination of director's appointment**

- 22.1 A person ceases to be a director as soon as:
- 22.1.1 in the case of an LA Director nominated by one shareholder, the shareholder who nominated the LA Director notifies the company that the individual is to be removed as a director;
- 22.1.2 in the case of an LA Director nominated by more than one shareholder but not all the shareholders, all shareholders who nominated the LA Director notify the company that the individual is to be removed as a director;



- 22.1.3 in the case of an LA Director nominated by all shareholders, more than 50% of the shareholders notify the company that the individual is to be removed as a director;
- 22.1.4 that person is an Independent Director and more than 50% of the shareholders notify the company that the individual is to be removed as a director;
- 22.1.5 that person is an Executive Director and has been appointed as a result of holding the role of Managing Director, Finance Director or Operations Director and no longer holds that role;
- 22.1.6 that person ceases to be a director by virtue of any provision of the Companies Act 2006 or is prohibited from being a director by law;
- 22.1.7 a bankruptcy order is made against that person;
- 22.1.8 a composition is made with that person's creditors generally in satisfaction of that person's debts;
- 22.1.9 a registered medical practitioner who is treating that person gives a written opinion to the company stating that that person has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a director and may remain so for more than three months;
- 22.1.10 notification is received by the company from the director that the director is resigning from office, and such resignation has taken effect in accordance with its terms.

## **23 Directors' remuneration**

- 23.1 Any entitlement of directors to receive remuneration shall be determined by the majority decision of the shareholders. Directors may undertake any services for the company that the directors decide.
- 23.2 Unless the shareholders decide otherwise by majority decision, directors' remuneration accrues from day to day.
- 23.3 Unless the shareholders decide otherwise by majority decision, directors are not accountable to the company for any remuneration which they receive as directors or other officers or employees of the company's subsidiaries or of any other body corporate in which the company is interested.

## **24 Directors' expenses**

- 24.1 Any entitlement of directors to be reimbursed for expenses incurred shall be determined by majority decision of the shareholders.

**PART 3**  
**SHARES AND DISTRIBUTIONS**  
**SHARES**

**25 All shares to be fully paid up**

- 25.1 No share is to be issued for less than the aggregate of its nominal value and any premium to be paid to the company in consideration for its issue.
- 25.2 This does not apply to shares taken on the formation of the company by the subscribers to the company's memorandum.

**26 Powers to issue different classes of share**

- 26.1 Subject to the articles, but without prejudice to the rights attached to any existing share, the company may issue shares with such rights or restrictions as may be determined by consent of at least seventy five (75) percent of the voting rights of shareholders.
- 26.2 The company may issue shares which are to be redeemed, or are liable to be redeemed at the option of the company or the holder, and the directors may determine the terms, conditions and manner of redemption of any such shares.

**27 Company not bound by less than absolute interests**

- 27.1 Except as required by law, no person is to be recognised by the company as holding any share upon any trust, and except as otherwise required by law or the articles, the company is not in any way to be bound by or recognise any interest in a share other than the holder's absolute ownership of it and all the rights attaching to it.

**28 Share certificates**

- 28.1 The company must issue each shareholder, free of charge, with one or more certificates in respect of the shares which that shareholder holds.
- 28.2 Every certificate must specify:
  - 28.2.1 in respect of how many shares, of what class, it is issued;
  - 28.2.2 the nominal value of those shares;
  - 28.2.3 that the shares are fully paid; and
  - 28.2.4 any distinguishing numbers assigned to them.
- 28.3 No certificate may be issued in respect of shares of more than one class.
- 28.4 If more than one person holds a share, only one certificate may be issued in respect of it.
- 28.5 Certificates must be executed in accordance with the Companies Acts.

## **29 Replacement share certificates**

- 29.1 If a certificate issued in respect of a shareholder's shares is:
- 29.1.1 damaged or defaced, or
  - 29.1.2 said to be lost, stolen or destroyed, that shareholder is entitled to be issued with a replacement certificate in respect of the same shares.
- 29.2 A shareholder exercising the right to be issued with such a replacement certificate:
- 29.2.1 may at the same time exercise the right to be issued with a single certificate or separate certificates;
  - 29.2.2 must return the certificate which is to be replaced to the company if it is damaged or defaced; and
  - 29.2.3 must comply with such conditions as to evidence, indemnity and the payment of a reasonable fee as the directors decide.

## **30 Share transfers**

- 30.1 Shares may only be transferred by shareholders to public bodies.
- 30.2 Shares may be transferred by means of an instrument of transfer in any usual form or any other form approved by the directors, which is executed by or on behalf of the transferor.
- 30.3 No fee may be charged for registering any instrument of transfer or other document relating to or affecting the title to any share.
- 30.4 The company may retain any instrument of transfer which is registered.
- 30.5 The transferor remains the holder of a share until the transferee's name is entered in the register of shareholders as holder of it.
- 30.6 The directors may refuse to register the transfer of a share, and if they do so, the instrument of transfer must be returned to the transferee with the notice of refusal unless they suspect that the proposed transfer may be fraudulent.
- 30.7 If title to a share passes to a transferee, the company may only recognise the transferee as having any title to that share.
- 30.8 But transferees do not have the right to attend or vote at a general meeting, or agree to a proposed written resolution, in respect of shares to which they are entitled, by reason of the holder's bankruptcy or otherwise, unless they become the holders of those shares.

## **DIVIDENDS AND OTHER DISTRIBUTIONS**

### **31 Procedure for declaring dividends**

- 31.1 The company may by ordinary resolution declare dividends, and the directors may decide to pay interim dividends.

- 31.2 A dividend must not be declared unless the directors have made a recommendation as to its amount. Such a dividend must not exceed the amount recommended by the directors.
- 31.3 No dividend may be declared or paid unless it is in accordance with shareholders' respective rights.
- 31.4 Unless the shareholders' resolution to declare or directors' decision to pay a dividend, or the terms on which shares are issued, specify otherwise, it must be paid by reference to each shareholder's holding of shares on the date of the resolution or decision to declare or pay it.
- 31.5 If the company's share capital is divided into different classes, no interim dividend may be paid on shares carrying deferred or non-preferred rights if, at the time of payment, any preferential dividend is in arrear.
- 31.6 The directors may pay at intervals any dividend payable at a fixed rate if it appears to them that the profits available for distribution justify the payment.
- 31.7 If the directors act in good faith, they do not incur any liability to the holders of shares conferring preferred rights for any loss they may suffer by the lawful payment of an interim dividend on shares with deferred or non-preferred rights.

## 32 Payment of dividends and other distributions

- 32.1 Where a dividend or other sum which is a distribution is payable in respect of a share, it must be paid by one or more of the following means:
  - 32.1.1 transfer to a bank or building society account specified by the distribution recipient either in writing or as the directors may otherwise decide;
  - 32.1.2 sending a cheque made payable to the distribution recipient by post to the distribution recipient at the distribution recipient's registered address (if the distribution recipient is a holder of the share), or (in any other case) to an address specified by the distribution recipient either in writing or as the directors may otherwise decide;
  - 32.1.3 sending a cheque made payable to such person by post to such person at such address as the distribution recipient has specified either in writing or as the directors may otherwise decide; or
  - 32.1.4 any other means of payment as the directors agree with the distribution recipient either in writing or by such other means as the directors decide.
- 32.2 In the articles, the "**distribution recipient**" means, in respect of a share in respect of which a dividend or other sum is payable:
  - 32.2.1 the holder of the share; or
  - 32.2.2 if the holder is no longer entitled to the share by reason of bankruptcy, or otherwise by operation of law, the transmittee.

### **33 No interest on distributions**

33.1 The company may not pay interest on any dividend or other sum payable in respect of a share unless otherwise provided by:

33.1.1 the terms on which the share was issued, or

33.1.2 the provisions of another agreement between the holder of that share and the company.

### **34 Unclaimed distributions**

34.1 All dividends or other sums which are:

34.1.1 payable in respect of shares, and

34.1.2 unclaimed after having been declared or become payable,

may be invested or otherwise made use of by the directors for the benefit of the company until claimed.

34.2 The payment of any such dividend or other sum into a separate account does not make the company a trustee in respect of it.

34.3 If:

34.3.1 twelve (12) years have passed from the date on which a dividend or other sum became due for payment, and

34.3.2 the distribution recipient has not claimed it,

the distribution recipient is no longer entitled to that dividend or other sum and it ceases to remain owing by the company.

### **35 Non-cash distributions**

35.1 Subject to the terms of issue of the share in question, the company may, by ordinary resolution on the recommendation of the directors, decide to pay all or part of a dividend or other distribution payable in respect of a share by transferring non-cash assets of equivalent value (including, without limitation, shares or other securities in any company).

35.2 For the purposes of paying a non-cash distribution, the directors may make whatever arrangements they think fit, including, where any difficulty arises regarding the distribution:

35.2.1 fixing the value of any assets;

35.2.2 paying cash to any distribution recipient on the basis of that value in order to adjust the rights of recipients; and

35.2.3 vesting any assets in trustees.

**36 Waiver of distributions**

- 36.1 Distribution recipients may waive their entitlement to a dividend or other distribution payable in respect of a share by giving the company notice in writing to that effect.

**PART 4**

**DECISION-MAKING BY SHAREHOLDERS**

**ORGANISATION OF GENERAL MEETINGS**

**37 Representatives of shareholders**

- 37.1 A public body shareholder may be represented at any general meeting of the company by any authorised councillor or officer for the time being of the public body as notified by the public body in question to the company in writing in advance of such individual attending as a representative (a “**Representative**”).
- 37.2 A Representative shall be deemed to have full authority to act on behalf of the public body shareholder in relation to any discussion or vote at a general meeting and shall be counted for voting and quorum purposes on behalf of such public body shareholder.

**38 Shareholder Forum**

- 38.1 The shareholders shall establish a forum, in which informal consideration of company matters by the Representatives shall take place.

**39 Calling and holding a general meeting**

- 39.1 The directors or shareholders may call a general meeting at any time.
- 39.2 General meetings must be held in accordance with the provisions regarding such meetings in the Companies Acts.
- 39.3 A person who is not a shareholder shall not have any right to vote at a general meeting of the company; but this is without prejudice to any right to vote on a resolution affecting the rights attached to a class of the company's debentures.
- 39.4 Article 39.3 shall not prevent a shareholder's proxy or Representative from voting at a general meeting of the company.

**40 Attendance and speaking at general meetings**

- 40.1 A person is able to exercise the right to speak at a general meeting when that person is in a position to communicate to all those attending the meeting, during the meeting, any information or opinions which that person has on the business of the meeting.
- 40.2 A person is able to exercise the right to vote at a general meeting when:
- 40.2.1 that person is able to vote, during the meeting, on resolutions put to the vote at the meeting, and

40.2.2 that person's vote can be taken into account in determining whether or not such resolutions are passed at the same time as the votes of all the other persons attending the meeting.

40.3 The directors may make whatever arrangements they consider appropriate to enable those attending a general meeting to exercise their rights to speak or vote at it.

40.4 In determining attendance at a general meeting, it is immaterial whether any two or more shareholders attending it are in the same place as each other.

40.5 Two or more persons who are not in the same place as each other attend a general meeting if their circumstances are such that if they have (or were to have) rights to speak and vote at that meeting, they are (or would be) able to exercise them.

#### **41 Quorum for general meetings**

41.1 No business other than the appointment of the chairman of the meeting is to be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum is present. The quorum of a general meeting shall be Representatives of three quarters of the shareholders.

#### **42 Notice of a general meeting**

42.1 Notice of a general meeting must indicate:

42.1.1 its proposed date and time;

42.1.2 where it is to take place;

42.1.3 if it is anticipated that members participating in the meeting will not be in the same place, how it is proposed that they should communicate with each other during the meeting;

42.1.4 an agenda specifying in reasonable detail the matters to be raised at the meeting; and

42.1.5 copies of any papers to be discussed at the meeting.

42.2 Notice of a general meeting must be given to each director and shareholder or Representative (where notified to the company in accordance with article 37.1), but need not be in writing.

#### **43 Chairing general meetings**

43.1 If the directors have appointed a chairman, the chairman shall chair general meetings if present and willing to do so.

43.2 If the directors have not appointed a chairman, or if the chairman is unwilling to chair the meeting or is not present within ten minutes of the time at which a meeting was due to start:

43.2.1 the directors present, or

43.2.2 (if no directors are present), the meeting,

must appoint a director or shareholder to chair the meeting, and the appointment of the chairman of the meeting must be the first business of the meeting.

- 43.3 The person chairing a meeting in accordance with this article is referred to as **"the chairman of the meeting"**.

#### **44 Attendance and speaking by directors and non-shareholders**

- 44.1 Directors may attend and speak at general meetings, whether or not they are shareholders.

- 44.2 The chairman of the meeting may permit other persons who are not:

44.2.1 shareholders of the company, or

44.2.2 otherwise entitled to exercise the rights of shareholders in relation to general meetings,

to attend and speak at a general meeting.

#### **45 Adjournment**

- 45.1 If the persons attending a general meeting within half an hour of the time at which the meeting was due to start do not constitute a quorum, or if during a meeting a quorum ceases to be present, the chairman of the meeting must adjourn it.

- 45.2 The chairman of the meeting may adjourn a general meeting at which a quorum is present if:

45.2.1 the meeting consents to an adjournment, or

45.2.2 it appears to the chairman of the meeting that an adjournment is necessary to protect the safety of any person attending the meeting or ensure that the business of the meeting is conducted in an orderly manner.

- 45.3 The chairman of the meeting must adjourn a general meeting if directed to do so by the meeting.

- 45.4 When adjourning a general meeting, the chairman of the meeting must:

45.4.1 either specify the time and place to which it is adjourned or state that it is to continue at a time and place to be fixed by the directors, and

45.4.2 have regard to any directions as to the time and place of any adjournment which have been given by the meeting.

- 45.5 If the continuation of an adjourned meeting is to take place more than 14 days after it was adjourned, the company must give at least 7 clear days' notice of it (that is, excluding the day of the adjourned meeting and the day on which the notice is given):

45.5.1 to the same persons to whom notice of the company's general meetings is required to be given, and



- 45.5.2 containing the same information which such notice is required to contain.
- 45.6 No business may be transacted at an *adjourned general meeting* which could not properly have been transacted at the meeting if the adjournment had not taken place.

## **VOTING AT GENERAL MEETINGS**

### **46 Voting: general**

- 46.1 A resolution put to the vote of a general meeting must be decided on a show of hands unless a poll is duly demanded in accordance with the articles.

### **47 Errors and disputes**

- 47.1 No objection may be raised to the qualification of any person voting at a general meeting except at the meeting or adjourned meeting at which the vote objected to is tendered, and every vote not disallowed at the meeting is valid.
- 47.2 Any such objection must be referred to the chairman of the meeting, whose decision is final.

### **48 Poll votes**

- 48.1 A poll on a resolution may be demanded:
- 48.1.1 in advance of the general meeting where it is to be put to the vote, or
  - 48.1.2 at a general meeting, either before a show of hands on that resolution or immediately after the result of a show of hands on that resolution is declared.
- 48.2 A poll may be demanded by:
- 48.2.1 the chairman of the meeting;
  - 48.2.2 the directors;
  - 48.2.3 two or more persons having the right to vote on the resolution; or
  - 48.2.4 a person or persons representing not less than one tenth of the total voting rights of all the shareholders having the right to vote on the resolution.
- 48.3 A demand for a poll may be withdrawn if:
- 48.3.1 the poll has not yet been taken, and
  - 48.3.2 the chairman of the meeting consents to the withdrawal.
- 48.4 Polls must be taken immediately and in such manner as the chairman of the meeting directs.

## **49 Content of proxy notices**

- 49.1 Proxies may only validly be appointed by a notice in writing (a "**proxy notice**") which:
- 49.1.1 states the name and address of the shareholder appointing the proxy;
  - 49.1.2 identifies the person appointed to be that shareholder's proxy and the general meeting in relation to which that person is appointed;
  - 49.1.3 is signed by or on behalf of the shareholder appointing the proxy, or is authenticated in such manner as the directors may determine; and
  - 49.1.4 is delivered to the company in accordance with the articles and any instructions contained in the notice of the general meeting to which they relate.
- 49.2 The company may require proxy notices to be delivered in a particular form, and may specify different forms for different purposes.
- 49.3 Proxy notices may specify how the proxy appointed under them is to vote (or that the proxy is to abstain from voting) on one or more resolutions.
- 49.4 Unless a proxy notice indicates otherwise, it must be treated as:
- 49.4.1 allowing the person appointed under it as a proxy discretion as to how to vote on any ancillary or procedural resolutions put to the meeting, and
  - 49.4.2 appointing that person as a proxy in relation to any adjournment of the general meeting to which it relates as well as the meeting itself.

## **50 Delivery of proxy notices**

- 50.1 A person who is entitled to attend, speak or vote (either on a show of hands or on a poll) at a general meeting remains so entitled in respect of that meeting or any adjournment of it, even though a valid proxy notice has been delivered to the company by or on behalf of that person.
- 50.2 An appointment under a proxy notice may be revoked by delivering to the company a notice in writing given by or on behalf of the person by whom or on whose behalf the proxy notice was given.
- 50.3 A notice revoking a proxy appointment only takes effect if it is delivered before the start of the meeting or adjourned meeting to which it relates.
- 50.4 If a proxy notice is not executed by the person appointing the proxy, it must be accompanied by written evidence of the authority of the person who executed it to execute it on the appointor's behalf.

## **51 Amendments to resolutions**

- 51.1 An ordinary resolution to be proposed at a general meeting may be amended by ordinary resolution if:

- 51.1.1 notice of the proposed amendment is given to the company in writing by a person entitled to vote at the general meeting at which it is to be proposed not less than 48 hours before the meeting is to take place (or such later time as the chairman of the meeting may determine), and
- 51.1.2 the proposed amendment does not, in the reasonable opinion of the chairman of the meeting, materially alter the scope of the resolution.
- 51.2 A special resolution to be proposed at a general meeting may be amended by ordinary resolution, if:
  - 51.2.1 the chairman of the meeting proposes the amendment at the general meeting at which the resolution is to be proposed, and
  - 51.2.2 the amendment does not go beyond what is necessary to correct a grammatical or other non-substantive error in the resolution.
- 51.3 If the chairman of the meeting, acting in good faith, wrongly decides that an amendment to a resolution is out of order, the chairman's error does not invalidate the vote on that resolution.

## **52 Irregularities**

- 52.1 The proceedings at any meeting or on the taking of any poll or the passing of a written resolution or the making of any decision shall not be invalidated by reason of any accidental informality or irregularity (including any accidental omission to give or any non-receipt of notice) or any want of qualification in any of the persons present or voting or by reason of any business being considered which is not referred to in the notice unless a provision of the Companies Acts specifies that such informality, irregularity or want of qualification shall invalidate it.

## **53 Written resolutions**

- 53.1 Subject to article 53.5, a written resolution of the company passed in accordance with this article 53 shall have effect as if passed by the company in general meeting:
- 53.2 A written resolution is passed as an ordinary resolution if it is passed by a simple majority of the total voting rights of eligible shareholders.
- 53.3 A written resolution is passed as a special resolution if it is passed by shareholders representing not less than 75% of the total voting rights of eligible shareholders. A written resolution is not a special resolution unless it states that it was proposed as a special resolution.
- 53.4 In relation to a resolution proposed as a written resolution of the company the eligible shareholders are the shareholders who would have been entitled to vote on the resolution on the circulation date of the resolution.
- 53.5 A shareholders' resolution under the Companies Acts removing a director or an auditor before the expiration of his or her term of office may not be passed as a written resolution.
- 53.6 A copy of the written resolution proposed to be passed must be sent to every shareholder together with a statement informing the shareholder how to signify their

agreement to the resolution and the date by which the resolution must be passed if it is not to lapse. Communications in relation to written notices shall be sent to the company's auditors in accordance with the Companies Acts.

- 53.7 A shareholder signifies their agreement to a proposed written resolution when the company receives from that shareholder an authenticated document identifying the resolution to which it relates and indicating his or her agreement to the resolution.
- 53.8 If the document is sent to the company in hard copy form, it is authenticated if it bears the shareholder's signature.
- 53.9 If the document is sent to the company by electronic means, it is authenticated if it bears the shareholder's signature or if the identity of the member is confirmed in a manner agreed by the directors or if it is accompanied by a statement of the identity of the member and the company has no reason to doubt the truth of that statement or if it is from an email address notified by the shareholder for the purposes of receiving documents or information by electronic means.
- 53.10 A written resolution is passed when the required majority of eligible shareholders have signified their agreement to it.
- 53.11 A proposed written resolution lapses if it is not passed within twenty eight (28) days beginning with the circulation date.

## **PART 5**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **54 Means of communication to be used**

- 54.1 Subject to the articles, anything sent or supplied by or to the company under the articles may be sent or supplied in any way in which the Companies Act 2006 provides for documents or information which are authorised or required by any provision of that Act to be sent or supplied by or to the company.
- 54.2 Subject to the articles, any notice or document to be sent or supplied to a director in connection with the taking of decisions by directors may also be sent or supplied by the means by which that director has asked to be sent or supplied with such notices or documents for the time being.
- 54.3 A director may agree with the company that notices or documents sent to that director in a particular way are to be deemed to have been received within a specified time of their being sent, and for the specified time to be less than 48 hours.

#### **55 Right to inspect accounts and other records**

- 55.1 Each shareholder and its authorised representatives shall have the right, in accordance with any arrangements made between the shareholders and on giving to the company reasonable advance notice, during normal business hours to inspect the books and records of the Company and any subsidiary of the Company.

## DIRECTORS' INDEMNITY AND INSURANCE


### 56 Indemnity

- 56.1 Subject to article 56.2, a relevant director of the company or an associated company may be indemnified out of the company's assets against:
- 56.1.1 any liability incurred by that director in connection with any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the company or an associated company;
  - 56.1.2 any liability incurred by that director in connection with the activities of the company or an associated company in its capacity as a trustee of an occupational pension scheme (as defined in section 235(6) of the Companies Act 2006);
  - 56.1.3 any other liability incurred by that director as an officer of the company or an associated company.
- 56.2 This article does not authorise any indemnity which would be prohibited or rendered void by any provision of the Companies Acts or by any other provision of law.
- 56.3 In this article:
- 56.3.1 companies are associated if one is a subsidiary of the other or both are subsidiaries of the same body corporate; and
  - 56.3.2 a **"relevant director"** means any director or former director of the company or an associated company.

### 57 Insurance

- 57.1 The directors may decide to purchase and maintain insurance, at the expense of the company, for the benefit of any relevant director in respect of any relevant loss.
- 57.2 In this article:
- 57.2.1 a **"relevant director"** means any director or former director of the company or an associated company;
  - 57.2.2 a **"relevant loss"** means any loss or liability which has been or may be incurred by a relevant director in connection with that director's duties or powers in relation to the company, any associated company or any pension fund or employees' share scheme of the company or associated company; and
  - 57.2.3 companies are associated if one is a subsidiary of the other or both are subsidiaries of the same body corporate.

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 <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2025</b>
Subject	<b>DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY POWERS: UBICO GROWTH OPPORTUNITY</b>
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:Andy.Graham@westoxon.gov.uk">Andy.Graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Officer Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To report to the Executive on a decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer under urgency powers.
Annexes	Annex A – Urgent Decision Notice Exempt Annex B – Urgent Decision Report
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: I. Note the decision taken as set out in Annex A.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting Residents First</li> <li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The urgent decision was taken in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Executive Member for Environment, the Director of Finance and the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services.

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** This report is to notify the Executive of a decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer using urgency powers. The decision taken was to agree a to a Ubico growth opportunity.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The Council's Constitution (Part 5G) sets out the arrangements for key decisions to be taken in cases of special urgency. The Council Procedure Rules at Part 5A, Rule 30 require that:

“Every such decision shall be reported to the next available Ordinary Meeting of the Council, Executive or the Committee that would normally have taken the decision.”

- 2.2** In this case the decision would have ordinarily been a decision for the Executive.

## **3. URGENT DECISION**

- 3.1** The urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive Officer, including the reasons for it and why it was treated as urgent, are set out in the decision notice attached at Annex A.

## **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.** The alternative options considered are set out in the decision notice at Annex A.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The Financial Implications were set out in the decision report attached as Annex B.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** The Legal Implications were set out in the decision report attached as Annex B.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1** The risk assessment was set out in the decision report attached as Annex B.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 9.1** There are no equality implications arising from this urgent decision.

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

- 10.1** The climate and ecological emergencies implications were set out in the decision report attached as Annex B.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1** None.

(END)



## Annex A: Decision Notice

This form is used to record any delegated decision which has been taken by officers under delegated authority.

Decision title	Ubico Growth Opportunity
Decision date	15 July 2025
Decision maker	Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service - Giles Hughes
Source of delegation (resolution or Constitution – please reference)	<p>Constitution Part 5A RULE 30: Business of an Urgent Nature</p> <p>If having consulted both the Chief Financial Officer and the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive is of the opinion that urgent action is required, in accordance with the Scheme of Officer Delegations, before a decision could be taken by Council, the Executive or a Committee that has the appropriate authority, they may take the decision in accordance with their urgency power as set out in the Part 4A of the Constitution (Officer Scheme of Delegations).</p> <p>... If the decision is one which would normally be taken by the Executive, the Chief Executive will consult with the Leader...</p>
Decision taken	<p>I. To confirm approval to enter into a Written Resolution at the appropriate time (likely to be December 2025) to approve the matters detailed within the business case</p>
Reasons for the decision	<p>West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), as a shareholder of Ubico Ltd, is asked to approve the business case for admitting a new council as an equal shareholder. This follows a 2024 review by the prospective council and shareholder agreement in principle at the July 2024 forum. Ubico has since been invited to formally submit a bid for the council's services, with a decision due by December 2025.</p> <p>Ubico's growth strategy focuses on opportunities that align geographically and operationally, offering shared benefits across the partnership. Expert legal advice based on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) plans have confirmed the current model is suitable for expansion.</p> <p>Five options were considered. Option 4.1 – Equal Shareholder is recommended as it meets all seven critical success factors, including improved resilience, cost efficiency, and long-term growth. Other models were discounted due to complexity, cost, or risk.</p>



	Benefits to WODC include: Enhanced capacity through TUPE of skilled staff, strengthened leadership and Long-term financial benefit, including a joining fee and increased Teckal headroom.
Alternative options considered	<p>Option 1 – Do Nothing</p> <p>This option maintained Ubico’s existing shareholding structure, excluding the new Council from joining. It avoided any change, cost, or risk, allowing the company to focus entirely on current shareholders. However, it also meant forgoing the opportunity to expand services, increase resilience, or realise efficiencies through growth. As a result, while it offered short-term stability, it limited long-term strategic potential and was rejected.</p> <p>Option 2 – Regional Model</p> <p>Under this model, the new Council would have joined via a regional subsidiary, with existing shareholders retaining control of a parent company. Although this preserved the current shareholder group, it introduced complex governance arrangements, increased administrative costs, and reduced control. With Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) expected to simplify structures, this model would quickly become outdated and was therefore rejected.</p> <p>Option 3 – Joint Venture Teckal (JVT)</p> <p>This option involved creating a new joint venture between Ubico and the new Council, allowing growth without altering Ubico’s core governance. While it offered a clear pathway for expansion, it carried significant setup and ongoing costs and required early investment before any contract award was secured. In light of the high risk and diminishing rationale post-LGR, this option was rejected.</p> <p>Option 4.1 – Equal Shareholder</p> <p>The new Council would join Ubico as an equal shareholder, paying a royalty fee to reflect the value of joining an established Teckal company. This model met all seven critical success factors, offering operational efficiencies, economies of scale, improved resilience, and long-term growth. Although adding a ninth shareholder will create short-term governance complexity, this will be resolved through LGR. This option is the most sustainable and strategically aligned and is therefore recommended.</p>



	<p>Option 4.2 – Differentiated Shareholder</p> <p>This model allowed the new Council to join with ‘B’ shares that excluded rights to external trading profits, preserving income for existing shareholders. While it protected commercial returns, it disconnected financial benefit from decision-making power, making the new Council less likely to support investment in growth. This misalignment undermined the partnership model and limited Ubico’s ability to scale commercial activity, so the option was rejected.</p>
Key or non-key?	No
Subject to urgency rules?	Yes
Affected wards	None
Details of consultation undertaken	<p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>Executive Member for Environment</p> <p>Director of Finance</p> <p>Director of Governance and Regulatory Services</p>
Lead officer	Si Pocock-Cluley, Environmental Services and Waste Transformation Lead
List of documents considered	Decision report titled “Ubico Growth Opportunity”

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