

Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 9 December 2025

Tel: 01993 861000

e-mail: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Executive which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 17 December 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 - 16)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 November 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, 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 10 December 2025.
7. **Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**
To consider any matters arising from the Audit and Governance Meeting on 27 November 2025.

8. **Proposals for Devolution to a Mayoral Strategic Authority (Pages 17 - 30)**

Purpose:

For the Executive to consider and present views on the proposed Expression of Interest (EOI) to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who will submit an EOI to Government. This is in response to the Government's devolution policy and seeks to position our region in the next round of devolution for the purpose of creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions, and agree to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date;
2. Consider and present views on the proposed Expression of Interest (EOI) to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme;
3. Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority;
4. Agree that a further report will be brought to Executive prior to any final decision on the creation of a Strategic Authority;
5. Note the informal Devolution Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process; and
6. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to propose any final amendments to the EOI prior to submission to Government by OCC.

9. **Waste and Environmental Services Programme (Pages 31 - 48)**

Purpose:

To seek Executive approval for West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) to invest and participate in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP)

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Approve WESP participation in principle for an initial five-year term.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental Services, the Executive Member for Finance and the Director of Finance to:
 - i. Approve the WESP business case.
 - ii. Oversee programme implementation.
 - iii. Ensure governance, risk management, and benefits tracking are in place.

10. **Draft Budget 2026/27 version I** (Pages 49 - 70)
Purpose:
This report provides an update on the developing budget for 2026/27.
- Recommendation(s):
That the Executive resolves to:
1. Note the update on the developing budget for 2026/27.
11. **Quarterly Finance Review Q2** (Pages 71 - 94)
Purpose
To detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter Two 2025-2026
- Recommendation
That the Executive resolves to:
1. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter Two 2025-2026
12. **Quarterly Service Review Q2** (Pages 95 - 158)
Purpose:
To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2025-26 Quarter Two (Q2).
- Recommendation:
That the Executive Resolves to:
1. Note the 2025/26 Q2 service performance report.
13. **Local Plan Annual Monitoring 2024/25** (Pages 159 - 220)
Purpose:
To consider the Council's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- Recommendation:
That the Executive Resolves to:
1. Note the content of the report.
14. **Westhive - future hosting options** (Pages 221 - 230)
Purpose:
To provide an update on the progress of the Westhive scheme to date and to set out the options for future delivery.
- Recommendation(s):
That the Executive resolves to:
1. Enter into an agreement with Crowdfunder UK for a 3-year period to provide a funding platform.
2. Consider as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process making provision for platform hosting fees of £27,600 per year for a 3-year period.
3. Delegate the responsibility of working through the procurement of a new multi-year contract to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities.

15. **Asbestos Management Policy (Pages 231 - 258)**

Purpose:

Submit the Asbestos Management Policy to the Executive for approval.

Recommendation:

That the Executive resolves to:

- I. Approve the implementation of the attached Asbestos Management Policy.

16. **Public Spaces Protection Order; A40 between Witney and Burford (Pages 259 - 280)**

Purpose:

To approve the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order.

Recommendation:

That the Executive resolves to:

- I. Approve the Public Spaces Protection Order, Annex A, which prohibits the use of pony and trap carriage(s) for racing and time trials, as delineated on the plan of the Order in Annex A.

17. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

If the Executive wishes to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Executive to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities ((Executive Arrangements) Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

18. **Exempt Annex A for Item 9 - Waste and Environmental Services Programme (Pages 281 - 292)**

Exempt Annex A for Item 9 - Waste and Environmental Services Programme.

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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 **Thursday, 13 November 2025**

PRESENT

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

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive Officer), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance and Regulatory Services), Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director - Publica), Phil Martin (Director of Place), Maria Harper (Democratic Services Assistant), Mandy Fathers (Business Manager - Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Service), Astrid Harvey (Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer), Heather McCulloch (Community Wellbeing Manager), Philip Measures (Service Leader), Ana Prelici (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Mark Pritchard (Head of Communications and Corporate Strategy) and Mathew Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Councillors in attendance: Julian Cooper

414 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

415 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

416 Minutes of Previous Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes of the previous meetings held on 15 October 2025 and 22 October 2025.

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council.

Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

The proposal was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the previous meetings held on 15 October 2025 and 22 October 2025.

417 Receipt of Announcements

There were no announcements.

418 Participation of the Public

There was no participation of the public.

419 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 3 September 2025 to consider the work of the Youth Development Officer. The Committee had made four recommendations which were included in the agenda to the meeting on pages 21-22. The Executive thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their engagement and Officers for their work in this area. The Executive agreed to all of recommendations made.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also met on 11 November 2025 to consider the proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Committee had made three recommendations which were included as a supplement to the agenda for this meeting. The recommendations and Executive response were dealt with under Item 11 of the agenda.

420 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Executive.

421 Westhive update and consideration of future options

Councillor Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities presented the item, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the progress of the Westhive scheme to date and to set out the options for future delivery.

In her presentation Councillor Crouch made the following points:

- The report presented options for the future delivery of the Westhive scheme, however consideration of these options was intended to be reported to the Executive in December.
- Westhive was launched in October 2023. There had been four rounds of funding with twenty-eight projects that had successfully reached their project funding targets. Twelve of the projects had benefitted children and young people which was in accordance with Council priorities.

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- The total amount of funding secured to date using the platform was £948,172, of which the Council and Community Infrastructure Fund investment (CIF) combined had contributed £446,433.
- The platform had attracted a diverse range of groups and included those groups that may not ordinarily engage in Council schemes.
- Projects were reviewed and scored by Officers, before being considered by a panel that included the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities and other Executive Members. Award decisions were delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- The Council had a full-time Community Funding Officer the work of whom had been invaluable.
- Spacehive were the current host for the platform, the three-year contract with Spacehive was due to end 30 April 2026. The contract with Spacehive for hosting the platform was £30,000 annually.

The Officer responsible for the report was then invited to comment by Councillor Andy Graham. The Officer advised that round five of funding had recently been approved and included nine projects with a total of £120k granted in funding from the two funds. The Officer clarified that the report contained recommendations for budget setting for Westhive in addition to recommendations that concerned the start of work on future hosting. It was intended that a further report would be brought to the Executive in December to consider in full the options for future hosting for the scheme.

A Member highlighted that it was important to differentiate between Westhive and the UK Share Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund which also both issued funding through the platform but were not within the funding being considered at the meeting. It was stated that the use of the platform allowed the UK Share Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund to have increased transparency, and this was the reason for the use of the mechanism.

Councillor Crouch proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council seconded the proposal

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Executive:

1. Considered as part of the 2026/2027 budget setting process, the inclusion of a budget for 'one off' community grant funding, at £120k per year for a three year period from 2026-2029.

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2. Requested officers consider all feedback and platform hosting options, reporting back to Executive in December 2025.
3. Delegated the responsibility of working through the procurement of a new multi-year contract to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities.

422

Council tax support 2026/27

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the item the purpose of which was to consider and recommend to Full Council the revised Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2026/2027.

In his introduction Councillor Smith advised that:

- Councils were required to review their Council Tax Support (CTS) schemes each year.
- Annual wage growth was expected to be between 3% and 4% in Q4 of 2025 and remaining at a similar level during 2026. Therefore, without changes to the CTS scheme, this would result in more households being moved into a high-income band and as a result having to pay a higher share of the full Council Tax for their property.
- To continue to give support to households during the ongoing cost of living crisis, proposals were being made to increase income bands by 3.5% or in line with the inflationary increase in welfare benefits.
- In 2022/2023 the Council implemented a Hardship Fund to support those residents who were struggling financially. The fund was created with financial support from Oxfordshire County Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council. There remained in excess of £78,000 in the fund. It was recommended that any funding surplus be transferred into the financial year 2026/2027.
- The proposed changes increased the estimated cost of the CTS scheme by approximately £47,304 in the 2026/27 financial year which would be reflected in a decrease in the Council Tax base and Council Tax income. The decrease in income would be spread proportionately across the major precepting authorities and resulted in a loss of income the Council of £2,504.30. This loss of income would be considered as part of the 2026/2027 budget setting process.

Councillor Smith proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council seconded the proposal

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

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That Executive recommended to Full Council to:

1. Agree the increase to income bands from 1 April 2026 of 3.5% or the inflationary increase in welfare benefits, whichever is greater.
2. Agree that any surplus in the Hardship Fund is transferred over to 2026/2027.

423

Private Sector Housing and Caravan Sites policy review and update.

Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to renew the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and Caravan Sites Policy. Councillor Arciszewska asked the Officer present to give the relevant points to the Executive which raised the following:

- The report had updated existing policies and taken into account the recent legislative changes concerning caravan site regulation and the significant changes to private sector housing regulation. It also had considered the imminent Renters Reform Bill, due to pass in October. It was timely to adopt the policies being considered now as this would allow the Council to incorporate changes as a result of the Bill. The policies would be reviewed in twelve months, and every three years after.
- The policies had been aligned with the Council's priorities in its Housing Strategy, Enforcement Policy and Long-Term Empty Homes Strategy and set out commitments to: tackle poor conditions in private housing; work with partners to ensure homes met required standards; bring long-term empty properties back into use; and tackle unlicensed HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupancy).
- New requirements for mobile home sites had been introduced in 2020 that required sites to appoint a Fit and Proper Person, and the Council was now required to administer and enforce this requirement. The policy that was presented had accommodated this and other new provisions and had set out the approach to this work.
- Briefings on the Policies would be provided for Members in future that would include updates on changes in legislation, responsibilities on the Council and new powers.

In response to a question from a Member, the Officer advised that, as a result of the Renters Right Act, additional powers and responsibilities on the Council now included: investigatory powers and powers to require information; duties to investigate illegal evictions; and, in the future, a requirement to administer and enforce landlord databases.

A further question was raised around partner authorities and the degree of engagement that had taken place. The Officer advised that in the context of the policies "partners" had referred to the Publica Councils, in terms of the sharing of resources, and the Oxfordshire Authorities. Regular meetings had taken place with these partners to consider joint working on these matters, especially with LGR in mind, and also with regard to the stock conditions survey, where joint procurement could achieve savings.

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Councillor Arciszewska proposed accepting the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member Housing and Social Care, seconded the proposal and suggested that this was an important function of the Private Sector Housing Strategy and was key to ensuring that housing was safe and secure, which was a key responsibility of the Council.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. Approved the Private Sector Housing Strategy as set out in Annex A and the Mobile Homes Policy as set out in Annex B.
2. Recommended to Council to approve a new Stock Conditions Survey.
3. Instructed / authorised officers to schedule the next Stock Conditions Survey once budgetary provision has been made.

424

Local Government Reorganisation

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the item, the purpose of which was to provide the three full proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire, in response to the Government's formal invitation on the 5 February 2025.

Prior to considering the recommendations to the Executive, Councillor Graham thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their recommendations on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which were included as a supplement to the agenda for this meeting. Councillor Graham then invited comments on the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from the Executive which raised the following points:

- Recommendation 1 from the Committee was welcomed, in particular its reference to the need to strengthen the focus in the two unitary proposal on agriculture. It was noted that, as the two unitary proposal included Oxford City, there was a need to ensure the challenges faced by the rural and farming communities were recognised. It was also suggested that it was important to support transport for the rural food sector, including farmers. Part of the work of a new authority could include improvements in the use of fertilisers and nutrients in the farming sector.
- A Member commented that it would be beneficial to build on the work of the Community Safety Partnership with Thames Valley Police which was particularly important in rural areas.

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Councillor Graham concluded that the rural impacts of LGR were rightly highlighted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including impacts on farming, rural crime and food security. Councillor Graham proposed that the Executive accepted the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The proposal was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Councillor Graham informed the meeting that the Executive had invited Members of the Council, at their meeting on 12 November 2025, to consider and present views on the submission of a full proposal for a two unitary model based on one new unitary council covering the entire existing boundaries of West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils and Oxford City Council and a second new unitary covering the entire existing boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and West Berkshire Council. Councillor Graham read the comments made by the Council, which were included in a supplement to the agenda.

A Member noted that an observation that had been raised by Council but had been omitted from the supplement, was the need for a stronger emphasis on a bottom-up approach in a new authority in order to ensure groups that were disengaged with local politics were considered. This was noted by Councillor Graham and could be addressed by Officers.

Councillor Graham thanked the Council for their observations which had been very useful and reminded those present that not all councils considering such proposals had provided an opportunity for Members to comment. Councillor Graham proposed that the comments made by Council were noted and that Officers would use them as appropriate in the finalisation of the submission. The proposal was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

Councillor Graham then invited the Executive Members to comment on the proposals, which raised the following points:

- Members thanked Officers of the Council for their work on the proposal. The work on the proposals had been collaborative with other councils and this should be noted.
- All Members of the Executive favoured the two unitary option. However, some Members concluded that all proposals had valuable aspects in addition to potential issues along with areas that required work.
- It was suggested that it was difficult to compare aspects of the single unitary proposal with its counterparts because it did not include West-Berkshire. It was noted that the two and three unitary proposals had included West-Berkshire.
- A potential flaw in a single unitary option was that the diversity across the County made it difficult to argue that there was a continuous related geography.
- The creation of a boundary across the centre of the Oxfordshire Economic Area was suggested to be a potential issue with the two unitary proposal.

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- The merits of the three proposals in terms of a potential future Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) were discussed.
- With regard to economic development, it was suggested that a single unitary proposal may undervalue the contributions of the West and North of the County, while the two and three unitary models were more ambitious for these regions.
- The importance of local voices being heard within a new authority were highlighted.
- A number of Members commented that they considered the proposals as an opportunity to re-imagine, redesign and re-evaluate how councils provide services in order to make these better and more responsive. It was felt that the single unitary proposal did not achieve this and instead focussed on the absorption of the district councils into Oxfordshire County Council's existing structures.
- Financially the proposals delivered similar benefits. It could have been suggested that the two unitary proposal had a higher initial costs but this was a one-off.
- Members commented further on the lack of satisfaction with some current service delivery. Examples of feedback that had been received from their parishes and constituents were provided. Such experiences were suggested to be an illustration of how improvements were needed, and re-evaluation was required as part of a new structure.
- The two unitary proposal was suggested to create a structure that was large enough, in terms of both government criteria and economies of scale, gave financial resilience but still retained the engagement with the community that the Council currently provided.
- The two unitary proposal was suggested to be balanced as it included the city, rural communities and market towns. The inclusion of two rural districts would provide balance with the City of Oxford and ensured that these regions were represented in the new structure. The affinity many residents of the districts had felt with Oxford, many whom worked, travelled or studied there, was regarded as a positive aspect of the two unitary proposal.
- The Shared Waste and Environment Services Programme was provided as an example of successful collaborative working. This had involved many councils across the County. This collaboration could be used in the proposal as an example for other areas of work in a new authority, such as flood management and nature recovery.
- The two unitary proposal was considered to be the best vehicle to build on the existing good practices in Leisure. These included improved access, carbon reduction and increased investment.
- There was existing collaborative work with other Oxfordshire councils in climate and nature recovery, and it was hoped that this would be enhanced by a new authority.
- The two unitary proposal recognised the importance of the rural hinterland to Oxford, particularly regarding food supply chains.
- A Member noted that there was an interconnection of rivers and water flow between the districts involved in the two unitary proposal and Oxford City. All headwaters of the River Thames were in these districts. Therefore, the city relied on actions of those districts for flood protection and fresh-water provision.

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- The proposals were considered in terms of the number of electors per Councillor that they contained. The single unitary proposal appeared to be the least accessible in these terms. The three unitary proposal, whilst having more Councillors, was considered to have too strong of a focus on Oxford City. The two unitary model was considered to provide the best balance on number of electors per Councillor.
- The merits of the proposals in terms of planning were raised. The single unitary proposal had suggested it would have one planning committee which would mean the loss of local knowledge and input into decisions. The three-unitary model had an unrealistic housing target.

A Member present gave an example of the confusion that could arise with a two-tier authority and could be solved by a single authority.

The Chief Executive gave an update on the work on the proposal to date. The work had included collaboration across councils and the creative approach adopted for the two unitary proposal was evident in the work.

Councillor Graham proposed accepting the recommendations of the report and summarised by stating that all the proposals would deliver services, but the consideration of the proposals should include how well those services could be delivered by each. The two unitary proposal gave the opportunity to reshape and correct mistakes and not simply reconfigure the existing systems. It was important that the new larger structure did not suit only one of its constituent parts. The two unitary proposal made its case on the basis of evidence and met the Government criteria. Other proposals lacked the ambition of the two unitary proposal which maintained its community connection. Councillor Graham considered that the work undertaken on the proposal to date was the end of the beginning and reiterated that he hoped the Government would listen to the evidence when making its decision. Councillor Graham considered that the decision on a new authority was not just about money but also about quality of life for residents.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

This was voted on and approved unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:


1. Noted that since the statutory invitation to all councils in two tier areas, significant work has been undertaken by all Oxfordshire Councils and that West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils' officers have engaged with officers across Oxfordshire and West Berkshire.

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2. Noted that two other proposals will be submitted, one proposed by Oxfordshire County Council covering the Oxfordshire area and one from Oxford City Council covering the Oxfordshire and West Berkshire area.
3. Considered the views of Council at their meeting on the 12 November 2025 regarding the three unitary models.
4. Considered approving the submission of a full proposal for a two unitary model based on one new unitary council covering the entire existing boundaries of West Oxfordshire and Cherwell District Councils and Oxford City Council, with a working title of 'Oxford & Shires' and a second new unitary covering the entire existing boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils and West Berkshire Council, with the working title of 'Ridgeway'
5. Subject to approval, noted that Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council will jointly submit the full proposal directly to Government in line with the Oxfordshire invitation letter.
6. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any final amendments to the full proposal and associated documents for the 2 unitary model prior to submission to Government.

The Meeting closed at Time Not Specified

CHAIR

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|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE – 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>DEVOLUTION FOR OXFORDSHIRE</p> |
| <p>Wards affected</p> | <p>All,</p> |
| <p>Accountable member</p> | <p>Councillor Andy Graham - Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable officer</p> | <p>Giles Hughes – Chief Executive of the Council Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report author</p> | <p>Phil Martin – Director of Place Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p> | <p>For the Executive to consider and present views on the proposed Expression of Interest (EOI) to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who will submit an EOI to Government. This is in response to the Government's devolution policy and seeks to position our region in the next round of devolution for the purpose of creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – Expression of Interest (EOI)</p> |
| <p>Recommendation(s)</p> | <p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions, and agree to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date; 2. Consider and present views on the proposed Expression of Interest (EOI) to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme; 3. Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority; 4. Agree that a further report will be brought to Executive prior to |

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| | <p>any final decision on the creation of a Strategic Authority;</p> <p>5. Note the informal Devolution Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process; and</p> <p>6. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to propose any final amendments to the EOI prior to submission to Government by OCC.</p> |
| Corporate priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| Key Decision | YES |
| Exempt | NO |
| Consultees/ Consultation | <p>EOI was developed collaboratively, with input from local authority Leaders and Chief Executives.</p> <p>The EOI is a strategic step to initiate formal discussions with Government, with public and stakeholder engagement planned should the Government accept the Council onto the devolution programme.</p> <p>Devolution is a collaborative process which will require continuous engagement and collaboration between local authorities and with residents, public sector institutions including the NHS, Police and Fire Authorities, businesses, and further and high education providers and other key local organisations and businesses.</p> <p>It is also vital that residents are involved at the earliest opportunity to inform and shape the process. It will not be possible to carry out resident engagement prior to submitting an EOI but it is expected that resident engagement would begin after Government agrees to further discussions.</p> |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report provide information to the Executive to consider and present views on the proposed Expression of Interest (EOI) to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who will submit an EOI to Government. This is in response to the Government's devolution policy and seeks to position our region in the next round of devolution for the purpose of creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA).
- 1.2** By submitting the EOI (Annex A) Oxfordshire Councils are requesting the Secretary of State to engage with us on devolution of powers and functions. Our region aims to enter dialogue with Government to target economic growth working within a strategic partnership that focuses on promoting innovation, sustainability and prosperity. By providing collaborative regional governance this Council can provide a framework to promote inclusive growth for our area for the benefit and wellbeing of our residents.

2. DEVOLUTION TOWARDS EVOLUTION OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 2.1** The principle of devolution is well-established, with Government aiming to redistribute political, social and economic power across England. With ambition now focused on universal coverage of Strategic Authorities across England following the English Devolution White Paper and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, Leaders have been meeting across our region to explore the opportunity for devolution.
- 2.2** The Government's vision, as set out in the English Devolution White Paper, is for all parts of England to be part of regional Strategic Authorities led by a regional Mayor. These authorities will drive growth, shape public services, and deliver strategic leadership in areas such as economic growth and sustainability, planning, skills, employment, and transport.
- 2.3** This move to devolving power to regions signals a significant step change in how UK economic growth will be delivered. It places significant shift in how local government needs to develop and deliver its economic growth strategies. This will shift relations from central government to local regional strategic partnerships, working with an elected Mayor within a Strategic Authority. It will require council Leaders, supported by their Chief Executives, to form new strategic regional partnerships to drive our ambitions for place based all-inclusive growth.

3. A THAMES VALLEY MSA FOR COLLECTIVE REGIONAL GROWTH

- 3.1** Becoming a Mayoral Strategic Authority ('MSA') represents a significant opportunity for regions in England to drive inclusive growth and prosperity for communities and businesses. With new powers and investment, MSA's can address strategic economic challenges and opportunities, in collaboration with local Leaders, business leaders and investors, with Government and increasingly, with other Strategic Authorities as part of the Council of regions. This is a new and exciting platform in our regional and local government landscape, creating systems based on collaboration and collective action that can work at scale to make connections, drive innovation and support growth.

- 3.2 However, failing to pursue this opportunity carries real risks. Areas that do not secure an MSA risk missing out on funding, influence, the ability to set their own strategic direction, and deliver against regional priorities. In an increasingly devolved landscape, inaction could result in diminished competitiveness, slower growth, and reduced leverage in regional and national decision-making around investment.

4. REGIONAL ECONOMY

- 4.1 Thames Valley economy is one of the most dynamic and globally connected in the United Kingdom contributing billions in Gross Value Added to the national economy each year. On a per-person basis, it ranks second only to London, a reflection of the area's powerful concentration of high-value industries and skilled workforce.
- 4.2 The Thames Valley Region prosperity has its roots in knowledge and innovation, driven by digital technology, communications, life sciences, biotech, and health including creative and professional service sectors that have flourished thanks to the regions connectivity and proximity to London and Heathrow Airport. Global companies have long chosen to locate in the region with recognised hubs for technology and business services. This includes fast growing sectors in pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and digital.
- 4.3 This region's economy has a critical mass of science, learning, talent, intellect and inspiration. The region also has a culture of pushing boundaries, redefining leading edge, pioneering and entrepreneurship. The universities are powerhouses of knowledge and beacons of experimental excellence as indeed are many of the businesses located across the county.
- 4.4 The intellectual capacity of the region and talent emerging from the universities is driving the establishment of spin out businesses and the scale up of growing ones, contributing to an environment that promotes and nurtures commercialisation; a driving force for a new, science and knowledge led industrial revolution.

Regional Risk of Economic Decline

- 4.5 Despite a track record of success, the Thames Valley economy has not been immune to the decline in productivity across the UK in recent years, suffering from underinvestment and increased global competition. In addition, continued prosperity brings challenges, including housing affordability, infrastructure constraints, and uneven growth across localities.
- 4.6 There are considerable challenges for residents and businesses in generating a future proof transport infrastructure that supports the region's economic growth is showing signs of struggling to cope with increased demand. Education and skill need to be developed on a regional collaborative basis to power capacity for economic growth.
- 4.7 This means this region needs to take a lead in ensuring sustainable housing and transport, promoting green technology, repowering the economy, developing the regional connectively and attracting inward investment. The region could do much more to benefit from the advantages generated through strategic growth planning and collaboration at a much greater scale that can be currently delivered by individual councils.

- 4.8 This places the Thames Valley under threat of seeing economic decline as businesses and inward investment risks diverting to regions that have clear joined up regional Growth Plans and unfragmented governance arrangements, selling the regions benefits to sectors and investors.
- 4.9 Areas that can deliver regional transportation connectivity, housing growth and other business support infrastructure such as skills training and wellbeing are better placed to secure investment.

The Opportunity

- 4.10 There are substantial benefits in seeking devolution of powers. Devolved control over adult education and skills budgets allows authorities to better to align training provision with the needs of local industries from digital technology and life sciences to creative industries, helping retain talent and businesses whilst ensuring inclusive access to opportunities.
- 4.11 Devolved powers and responsibility over strategic transport, strategic housing and spatial planning will support planning at a wider regional level enabling authorities to better target investment in deprived or underperforming areas, address housing affordability, promote green infrastructure and ensuring growth benefits reach all communities. A regional transport strategy would future proof the regions rail links, while improving access to Heathrow and London. Coordinated investment in rail, bus, and sustainable transport would reduce travel times, improve productivity and support the net zero agenda.
- 4.12 An enhanced ability to attract private investment and innovation partnerships would support the development of the innovation ecosystem and key sectors such as IT to stem the current exodus of UK innovation overseas and help to attract more overseas investment to the region. A science partnership could form a knowledge-intensive growth region with a stronger national and international identity capable of competing with major European economic clusters.
- 4.13 As a key driver of the UK economy, an MSA has the potential to scale up rapidly and deliver significant regional and national economic growth. Establishing an MSA will function as catalyst for growth to target funding and skills programmes where they are needed most, helping to reverse productivity decline and remove barriers to economic development.
- 4.14 Stronger coordination through an agreed MSA regional growth plan, influenced and led by local authorities, will stimulate a larger, integrated economy that can carry more weight in negotiations with Government, securing devolved funding and national infrastructure investment. It would also present a more compelling 'investment ready' proposition to global investors seeking a region that combines cutting-edge research with commercial capability.

5. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST THAMES VALLEY VISION

- 5.1 The EOI emphasises the region's strengths in innovation and productivity and its readiness to enter discussions with Government for a possible MSA. Devolution will drive inclusive growth and unlock significant opportunities for local communities and the UK more broadly.
- 5.2 The Thames Valley EOI highlights:

- Economic rationale: The region has national excellence and/or international excellence in at least 5 of the 8 key business sectors highlighted in the Modern Industrial Strategy. The MSA would provide the framework that allows businesses to leverage those sectors across a wider geography and create jobs. Our intent is to restore growth to pre-Covid levels of prosperity.
- Collaborative governance: There is a commitment to partnership working across constituent councils, with clear terms of reference and for the EOI to mark the start of wider stakeholder engagement across the region.
- Strategic powers and funding: Powers over transport, skills, housing, and economic development and the ability to provide these within a business eco-system will lead to greater investment.
- Place-based leadership: Greater local control to deliver national policy objectives at local level has been shown to be successful in other established Strategic Authority areas. Adapting powers and functions to meet local needs strengthens local identity, accountability, and the ability to deliver tailored solutions for residents.

5.3 The EOI is the first stage towards devolution. Whilst it does not bind any Council to an MSA at this stage, it does indicate our readiness to engage further.

5.4 Oversight of the proposals will be through a Devolution Board made up of elected representatives from each participating Council.

6. NEXT STEPS

- Submission of the EOI (subject to approval) to Government by 19 December 2025, followed by further engagement and refinement based on feedback from Leaders, Chief Executives, and stakeholders.
- Ongoing governance and oversight via the Devolution Board, with regular updates to Executive and public consultation as the process evolves.
- Build the proposal through regular engagement, agreeing our geography and the size and scale of the MSA based upon criteria set out in the Devolution White Paper as follows:
 - Scale: Strategic Authorities should be of comparable size to existing institutions. The default assumption is for them to have a combined population of 1.5 million or above.
 - Economies: Strategic Authorities must cover sensible economic geographies with a particular focus on functional economic areas, reflecting current and potential travel-to-work patterns and local labour markets. It is likely that where travel to work areas are small and fragmented, Strategic Authorities will cover multiple travel to work areas.

- Contiguity: Any proposed geography must be contiguous across its constituent councils (either now or with a clear plan to ensure continuity in the future through agreed local government reorganisation).
- No 'devolution islands': Geographies must not create devolution 'islands' by leaving areas which are too small to go it alone or which do not have natural partners.
- Delivery: Geographies should ensure the effective delivery of key functions including Spatial Development Strategies, Local Transport Plans and Get Britain Working Plans.
- Alignment: The Government will seek to promote alignment between devolution boundaries and other public sector boundaries.
- Identity: A vital element of successful devolution is the ability for local residents to engage with and hold their devolved institutions to account – and local identity plays a key role in this.
- Stakeholder engagement with residents, businesses and public sector partners to explore devolution for our region.
- Finalise proposal with further decisions made at key points by Executive and Scrutiny.

7. ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1** The White Paper is clear that the Government intends that all of England be devolved by default and is committed to ending the deals-based approach. The Government will also legislate for a ministerial directive, which will enable it to directly create Strategic Authorities in any places where local leaders in that region have not been able to agree how to access devolved powers. Therefore the “do nothing” option could mean Government legislating on our behalf for devolution.
- 7.2** Opting to begin further discussions with Government on devolution would allow the Council to lead the definition of the MSA for our region. This will provide choice over the geography and the ability to determine the key priorities for our area.
- 7.3** Should this Council consent to an MSA at a future meeting, it would have a seat at the Council of Nations and the Regions influencing government policy and ensuring local community voice is heard.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** During the Budget setting process for 2025/26 the Council set aside earmarked reserves to cover the costs of LGR and devolution. To date the costs of devolution have been limited to the costs of the Programme Director role and consultants advising on the economic and finance analysis. These costs are shared amongst the Councils participating in discussions on devolution.
- 8.2** There are no direct financial implications arising from the submission of the EOI. As discussions with Government proceed the opportunity will arise to explore how growth in

our economy could create significant social and economic uplift for our area and indeed, for the whole country. The Thames Valley is a positive contributor to Treasury.

- 8.3** Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation offer an opportunity to reset local government finances. In this context, the EOI submission seeks discussions with Government on developing innovative fiscal solutions to support investment into the Thames Valley Region. This reference to investment funding will also look to develop a more self-sufficient strategic authority that is not reliant on revenue gainshare and seeks inward investment through the private sector and funding institutions, as part of any regional investment strategy.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** The submission of an EOI to open discussions with Government on devolution is an executive decision of Oxfordshire County Council as the upper-tier authority. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 allows for areas to collaborate to create new strategic authorities. The Act requires constituent councils to consent to devolution, which is defined in the Act as including only upper-tier councils. This Council has participated in all discussions regarding devolution for Oxfordshire and the wider region.
- 9.2** The Executive has the authority to formulate the Council's overall policy objectives and priorities, which permits it to make this decision.
- 9.3** The English Devolution White Paper sets out the Government's intention that where the geographies of new MSA's align with Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authorities, Mayors will, by default, be responsible for those services. Where those boundaries do not currently align Government has said that it will look to align public sector boundaries to strategic authority boundaries.
- 9.4** Through the English Devolution Bill, the Government will introduce a new bespoke duty for Strategic Authorities in relation to health improvement and health inequalities. Strategic Authorities will support partners in driving public service reform and the new devolution framework will set clearer expectations for Mayors' roles in local health systems and in improving population health.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1** Risks are considered in the report.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 11.1** There are no immediate equalities implications arising from this report. However, the purpose of forming an MSA is to bring an all-inclusive growth strategy to the Thames Valley Region. A strategy that ensures no one is left behind in the ambition to bring economic growth.
- 11.2** The expected benefits of devolution are to drive growth, enabling local leaders place more focus on inequality and living standards. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be developed against the different elements of devolution, as proposals progress.

12. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no immediate sustainability implications arising from these decisions.

Government has indicated it will give strategic authorities a meaningful role in planning for our future energy system, establishing heat network zoning in England and leading on local nature recovery. The detail of these various policies are to follow as the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill proceeds through Parliament.

12.2 As agreed with the climate team, the use of the Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool is not appropriate for the Expression of Interest set out in this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None

(END)

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Thames Valley Devolution EOI Letter

Dear Secretary of State,

We, the Leaders of the local authorities in the Thames Valley, are writing to you in your capacity as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding our desire for devolution and our inclusion on a future Devolution Programme.

We have carefully considered our rationale and case for devolution to this region and see a significant opportunity to drive growth and prosperity as a Mayoral Strategic Authority. Our £97 billion economy is already a core contributor to the national economy and will continue to add economic value through our highly productive and innovative businesses, constituting the sectors prioritised in the Modern Industrial Strategy and a large part of the Ox-Cam Corridor, a key national growth proposition. However, the region's post-pandemic recovery has been slower than the national trajectory, and our globally recognised clusters face increasingly strong competition. We will use the powers, investment and platform as an MSA to unlock constraints on growth, with the potential for the Thames Valley economy to be up to £18.7 billion a year larger by 2040, which corresponds to a £7 billion annual uplift in tax revenue contributions to the exchequer.

We have come together as strong local Leaders to pursue the significant opportunities of devolution for our communities. Whilst we acknowledge and respect our differing political and local priorities, together we recognise and collectively support the core economic rationale and strategic intention for delivering inclusive growth within a Thames Valley MSA. We stand ready with the strength of relationships, trust, track record, collective governance and ways of working required to work with Government and implement a successful MSA. We would like to work towards a first mayoral election in May 2027, in line with the current timeline for local government reorganisation.

Importance of the Thames Valley for the UK Economy

The Thames Valley serves as an innovation-driven and export-focused catalyst for UK economic growth, accounting for approximately 5% of England's total economy while comprising just 3.4% of its population. Our economy comprises world-renowned universities, respected research centres, and leading science parks filled with forward-thinking companies, driving innovation ecosystems that spur new ideas and growth across UK supply chains. Oxford University is a jewel in the UK's global research offer, and our partnerships with Reading University creates value for residents, businesses, and investors through key assets such as the Thames Valley Science Park, which hosts research facilities and archives for the Natural History Museum, British Museum and Kew Gardens. Our region is a globally compelling investment case, with major global companies such as Microsoft, Oracle, Redwood Technologies, Virgin, Vodafone, and Hewlett-Packard located in the UK's Silicon Valley along the M4 corridor, with direct links to London and Heathrow Airport. From the region that gave the world the Oxford–AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, the Ellison Institute of Technology in Oxford is now investing over £10 billion in research and development to facilitate further globally significant advancements in artificial intelligence, robotics, and life

sciences. Major investment in AI infrastructure has been secured across the region, with the second largest concentration of data centres in the world in Slough and the first AI Growth Zone in Culham. We have high-performance manufacturing capabilities along the M40 corridor, exemplified by Plant Oxford, home to BMW Mini, extending into Banbury and the UK Motorsports Valley into the Midlands. We are home to world-famous tourist attractions, from Windsor to the Cotswolds, Oxford, Blenheim Palace and Bicester Village. We are known world-over as a great place to visit, live, innovate and invest. Our investment proposition is already backed by Government, with continued global promotion of the Oxford-Cambridge corridor, of which we are a core part, investment in East-West Rail, high-profile support through the Oxford Growth Commission and recent investment in the Cowley branch line.

The industrial composition of the Thames Valley directly aligns with almost all the sector strengths outlined in the Industrial Strategy – our economy is anchored by professional and business services, with notable capabilities in digital technologies, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and a prominent finance sector. The strength of the region's visitor economy not only supports our foundational sectors but also positively impacts our creative industries, especially our growing film and television cluster around Shinfield Studios. Proposed visitor economy investments, including the Puy du Fou Bicester, together with significant heritage landmarks would remain substantial contributors to export growth. Importantly, the Thames Valley demonstrates a strong orientation towards export activities: approximately 48% of the workforce is employed in exporting industries, and 40% hold positions within tradable sectors, both figures exceeding national averages. Exceptional productivity and economic complexity facilitate the dissemination of innovation across key sectors and strengthen supply chains nationwide. Furthermore, growth in GVA and household income in the Thames Valley has surpassed national rates, thereby improving local living standards and contributing positively to Exchequer revenues.

Signs of risk and stagnation

Despite the Thames Valley's underlying strength, the region has not re-established its pre-pandemic growth path. Post-Covid productivity indicators show mixed fortunes, even as the UK aggregate edged up through 2023, evidence that recovery here has been shallower than the national trend. If the region were to return to the pre-pandemic growth trajectory from 2027 onwards the Thames Valley economy would be up to £18.7bn a year larger by 2040. This matters for residents: a weaker trajectory means fewer high-value job opportunities and slower wage progression than would otherwise have been the case. Slower growth in the Thames Valley reverberates through national supply chains and weakens spillovers to other regions, putting at risk delivery of the Industrial Strategy's IS-8 ambitions on productivity, exports and business investment. It limits the pace at which discoveries are commercialised, dampens the pipeline of high-value FDI into the UK, and slows diffusion of technologies across the wider economy. Crucially, restoring the Thames Valley's growth trajectory would result in an estimated £7 billion increase in tax revenue contributions from residents and

businesses, directly strengthening the Government's ability to fund essential services and invest in long-term national priorities.¹

Scale and agglomeration to drive growth

To address these risks and realise our full economic potential, we need to leverage our potential for scale and agglomeration across our economic geographies. While each authorities' economy is individually strong, travel-to-work analysis reveals largely self-contained labour markets with currently limited cross-boundary matching and knowledge transfer across the region. In this current fragmentation lies a clear opportunity: given the region's complementary sector strengths the absence of integrated governance and coordinated connectivity means the Thames Valley is under-leveraging innovation adoption and diffusion and the opportunity to create a more unified labour market to scale economic growth.

Establishing an MSA with a growth mission at its core

We propose the establishment of a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) as a decisive step towards realising inclusive growth across our region. By harnessing devolved powers, the MSA will transform thriving yet separate labour markets into a unified innovation economy, ensuring that prosperity is accessible to all communities. Through the implementation of a Local Growth Plan, we can extend and enhance the efforts of the Oxford Growth Commission to systematically address housing quantity, quality, and affordability across the Thames Valley, one of the key constraints on inclusive growth and a key driver of deprivation. MSA powers would enable accelerated delivery of affordable and social homes, around employment hubs. Integrated multi-modal, low carbon transport solutions could be expanded and expedited along the M4/M40 corridors, into Heathrow and across the Ox-Cam corridor, and critical investment in digital, water and energy infrastructure facilitated, strengthening connections between urban and rural residents and key economic growth nodes, and beyond. This infrastructure delivery would align with targeted skills and employment initiatives, developed with spatial awareness of our IS-8 strengths and a commitment to tackling deprivation and untapped potential within our communities. Enhanced collaboration and coordination enabled by the MSA would also position the region to more effectively address environmental priorities, including climate change and biodiversity.

Collectively, these measures would result in improved job opportunities, reduced commute times, and provide greater access to affordable housing for residents, supported by an aligned skills programme and transport system that matches talent to opportunity. For the UK, it means the Thames Valley driving national growth through faster innovation, stronger exports, and a bigger boost to the public purse.

We recognise the highly interconnected nature of the Thames Valley, with London, across the Ox-Cam Corridor and into the Midlands. A Thames Valley MSA will be a strategic


¹ This estimate is based off the ratio of GDP to national taxation (UK taxation as 37% of GDP) established by [Institute for Fiscal Studies](#) research

platform from which to go further and faster on pan-regional collaboration with our neighbours, including working on joint projects, spatial development and investment to drive wider economic growth. We are determined to use our Thames Valley partnership to further capitalise on economic scale and complementarity and compete across the globe.

If granted MSA status, the Thames Valley would be a fundamentally different kind of strategic authority – the largest by GVA outside of London, the MSA will be focused on unlocking constraints on an already high-performing economy so that all areas of the Thames Valley, and indeed beyond, benefit. We are therefore actively exploring innovative approaches to securing private investment and financing. Work is already underway to develop robust and viable propositions that match the scale and ambition for a Thames Valley MSA, and we look forward to working with Government to shape this more sustainable growth financing model.

Next steps

A Thames Valley MSA would unlock constrained, high-value growth, accelerate innovation diffusion across IS-8 sectors, and strengthen national fiscal headroom. We therefore ask that the Thames Valley be considered for inclusion in the next Devolution Programme, and we would welcome an early meeting to discuss this opportunity. We are ready to work in open dialogue with MHCLG and your officials to implement a new phase of devolution and make the best impact for our businesses, communities, and the country.

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE – 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme</p> |
| <p>Wards affected</p> | <p>All</p> |
| <p>Accountable member</p> | <p>Councillor Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment Email: lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable officer</p> | <p>Phil Martin, Director of Place Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report author</p> | <p>Si Pocock-Cluley, Environmental Services and Waste Transformation Lead Email: si.pocock-cluley@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p> | <p>To seek Executive approval for West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) to invest and participate in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP)</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>EXEMPT Annex A – Executive Summary</p> |
| <p>Recommendation(s)</p> | <p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve WESP participation in principle for an initial five-year term. 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environmental Services, the Executive Member for Finance and the Director of Finance to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approve the WESP business case. ii. Oversee programme implementation. iii. Ensure governance, risk management, and benefits tracking are in place. |
| <p>Corporate priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| Key Decision | YES |
| Exempt | <p>YES – Annexe A</p> <p>Oxfordshire – Waste & Environmental Services (WES) Programme Business case.</p> |
| Consultees/ Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Transformation Task & Finish Group • Councillor Lidia Arciszewska • Councillor Alaric Smith • Senior Council officers |

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I.1. This report seeks Executive approval to invest and participate in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP), a collaborative programme between local authorities in Oxfordshire designed to transform the delivery of waste and environmental services across the county. WESP sets a strategic course for transformative change in waste and environmental services, with participating Councils, including West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), actively shaping the outcomes to ensure they reflect shared priorities of a modern, fit for 21st century, uniform service that brings greater clarity for residents and delivers real benefits such as fleet decarbonisation and modern strategically located facilities.
- I.2. WESP is not a fixed set of operational changes but a strategic framework comprising eight interdependent mini business cases aimed at improving service efficiency, environmental outcomes, and financial sustainability.
 - a. **Waste Collection Harmonisation** – Aligning collection systems and frequencies to improve efficiency and resident experience.
 - b. **Circular Economy Acceleration** – Coordinated efforts to reduce waste and promote reuse, repair, and recycling.
 - c. **Joint Procurement** – Leveraging scale of economy to reduce costs and improve supplier performance.
 - d. **Infrastructure Development** – Creating a hub-and-spoke model for waste transfer and treatment.
 - e. **Fleet Maintenance Collaboration** – Sharing resources and expertise to reduce downtime and costs.
 - f. **HWRC Management** – Improving access, consistency, and cost-effectiveness of recycling centres.
 - g. **Paid-for Services** – Reviewing chargeable services (e.g. commercial, garden, and bulky waste collections) for effectiveness and efficiency.
 - h. **Streets & Grounds Maintenance** – Exploring alignment of services to improve public realm outcomes.
- I.3. The Programme responds to key challenges including rising operational costs, plateauing recycling rates, increasing environmental pressures, and anticipated structural changes from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It proposes a shift in operating model for waste collection, a mixed economy model for other services, and a hub-and-spoke infrastructure; centralised locations where major activities will take place alongside smaller satellite sites typically handling localised tasks, to support operational efficiency.
- I.4. The overall programme across all authorities is projected to deliver a net benefit of £98.9m over 10 years (£119m revenue, £20.1m cost).
- I.5. It is anticipated that, subject to full partner inclusion, an investment of £1.7m by WODC will realise benefits of circa £17.4m over the 10-year period.

- 1.6. Key drivers include:
1. **Circular Economy**
 2. **Cost Efficiency**
 3. **Environmental Impact**
 4. **Resident Friendliness**
- 1.7. The Programme is designed to be LGR-neutral, adaptable to any future governance structure in Oxfordshire, and includes a robust governance and benefits management framework to ensure WODC retains strategic influence.
- 1.8. By agreeing in principle, WODC secures a leadership role in shaping the programme without committing to full implementation until benefits are clear.

2. BACKGROUND

Current Contractual Arrangements

- 2.1. The current waste collection contractor for WODC is Ubico Ltd. In February 2023, the Executive and Council approved extending the Ubico contract by two years, from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2026.
- 2.2. Considering the current contract nearing expiry and other legislative changes that are due to come into force within the medium term, a report was commissioned in partnership with Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council to undertake a review of the future options for the authorities. The report outlined the opportunity and appetite to work collaboratively with other district Councils in Oxfordshire as well as with Oxfordshire County Council in its capacity as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA). It concluded that WODC is well placed to take a transformative approach to how it provides its waste and environmental services over the next few years.
- 2.3. For WODC, the realistic options for future service delivery once the Ubico contract ends could be;
1. Outsourcing the contract to a private sector contractor
 2. Continuing to deliver the services with Ubico
 3. Exploring alternative service delivery models
- 2.4. A report was presented to the Executive on 15 Jan 2025 where it was resolved to
- “endorse and support the principle of working collaboratively in the future with other local authorities in Oxfordshire on environmental and waste services” and
 - “to agree to support the creation of the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP).”

Development of Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP)

- 2.5. The scope of the Programme includes all major waste and environmental services: household, food, and garden waste collection; recycling centres and management; waste disposal and energy recovery; trade and hazardous waste; street cleaning; grounds maintenance; and associated support and commissioning services.
- 2.6. The Programme has been developed to respond to a growing set of strategic challenges facing local authorities in the delivery of waste and environmental services. These included rising operational costs, recycling performance plateauing, increasing environmental pressures, and the anticipated structural changes from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- 2.7. Other regulatory changes due to impact waste and environmental services include Simpler Recycling, Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR).
- 2.8. WESP has now produced a business case that sets out the case for the four authorities to work in partnership to deliver waste and environmental services in a co-ordinated and integrated way across the county to deliver improvements in operational performance; in environmental sustainability and biodiversity; and to deliver substantial savings and efficiencies. The proposals anticipate all the potential results of Local Government Reorganisation and consider all regulatory changes.

3. Case for Change

- 3.1. The business case identifies drivers for change, including the climate emergency, shared sustainability goals, financial pressures, performance gaps, and the need to address fragmentation in service delivery. The Programmes overarching key drivers are;
 - 1. **Circular Economy:** Promoting sustainable resource use by reducing waste, extending the life of assets, and keeping materials in high-value circulation.
 - 2. **Cost Efficiency:** Leveraging economies of scale through joint procurement and partnership working.
 - 3. **Environmental Impact:** Aligning with Net Zero through activities such as Fleet decarbonisation and biodiversity goals.
 - 4. **Resident Friendliness:** Ensuring a modern, fit for 21st century, uniform service that brings greater clarity for to residents.
- 3.2. An agreement in principle ensures WODC can influence programme design and governance while retaining flexibility should anticipated benefits not materialise.

3.3. The programme's primary outcomes are:

- a. To have improved the sustainability of our waste and environmental services
- b. To have improved the quality and efficiency of our waste and environmental management services
- c. To have reduced the cost of waste and environmental management services, and
- d. That successes will have been built upon an ambitious partnership

3.4. Despite relatively strong recycling performance (average county rate of 56.23% in 2024/25), progress has plateaued, and residual waste is increasing. This trend is environmentally and financially unsustainable, WESP is also designed to align with national policy reforms such as:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - a policy approach that makes manufacturers responsible for the environmental impacts of their products throughout their entire lifecycle, including end-of-life recovery and recycling. By shifting the cost and accountability away from local authorities and consumers, EPR incentivises producers to design products that are more durable, easier to repair, and fully recyclable, helping to reduce waste and support a circular economy.
- **Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)** - Under the ETS, Energy-from-Waste (EfW) plants are required to hold allowances for the carbon emissions they produce. As the cap on emissions tightens and the cost of allowances rises, EfW operators will face higher operational costs. These increased costs are expected to be passed on to local authorities and waste customers through higher gate fees or service charges, ultimately making residual waste treatment more expensive and strengthening the financial case for recycling, reuse, and waste reduction.
- **Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)** - places a refundable deposit on drinks containers, which consumers can reclaim when they return the empty container to a designated return point. For collection authorities, this means a significant portion of high-quality and therefore income generating recyclables, particularly aluminium cans and plastic bottles, will be removed from kerbside collections. As a result, authorities may see reduced volumes (and therefore reduced revenue) from these materials, alongside potential adjustments to collection services and contractual arrangements. However, lower contamination levels and reduced littering may also lead to operational savings in street cleansing and waste processing.
- **Simpler Recycling** - a policy approach that standardises the types of materials collected for recycling across all local authorities, ensuring households have a consistent, easy-to-understand recycling system. For collection authorities, this means adapting local services to meet national requirements, such as collecting the core set of materials (paper, card, plastics, metals, glass, and food waste), which may require changes to collection routes, containers, contracts, and processing arrangements. While this may involve upfront operational adjustments, it is intended to improve recycling performance, reduce confusion for residents, and create more efficient, streamlined services.

3.5. These reforms have the potential to significantly impact the cost and structure of waste services, and WESP positions Oxfordshire to respond proactively.

- 3.6. Importantly, the Programme anticipates the different potential outcomes of LGR and is structured to be adaptable to any of the three proposed models: a single Oxfordshire Council, two councils (e.g. Oxford & Shires and Ridgeway), or three councils (e.g. Greater Oxford, North Oxfordshire, Ridgeway). By acting now, WODC can ensure it retains strategic influence over the future direction of its waste services, rather than being subject to decisions made post-reorganisation.
- 3.7. The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) therefore represents a strategic, operational, and financial opportunity for the Council to be part of a strategic partnership shaping the future of waste and environmental services in the county reflecting the shared priorities of a modern, fit for 21st century, uniform service that brings greater clarity for residents and delivers real benefits such as fleet decarbonisation and modern strategically located facilities.

4. Transforming Waste Services – Key Initiatives

- 4.1. The Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Programme sets a strategic course for transformative change in waste and environmental services, with participating Councils actively shaping the outcomes to ensure they reflect shared priorities and deliver real benefits.
- 4.2. The WESP Programme addresses challenges through a comprehensive programme of works, structured around eight business cases. These projects target key service areas and as well as being designed to be interdependent, they form a cohesive and integrated programme of change.
- 4.3. The mini business cases comprise of:
- Paid-for Products – Standardising and expanding commercial services (e.g. commercial, garden, and bulky waste collections) to benefit residents and local businesses.
 - Procurement – Creating a programme-wide procurement function to take advantage of economies of scale.
 - Waste Collections – Harmonising resident friendly collection services and introducing Simpler Recycling.
 - Circular Economy – Driving behaviour change, seeking to minimise waste by keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, recycling, and sustainable design.
 - Waste Infrastructure – Developing a strategically located hub-and-spoke model with modern Eco Hubs to ensure services are operated from the most efficient location.
 - HWRCs – Reviewing sourcing delivery options for recycling centres.
 - Fleet Maintenance – Centralising fleet services to optimise fleet size and sustainability.
 - Streets & Grounds Maintenance – Optimising services and introducing biodiversity practices.

- 4.4. Collectively, these initiatives deliver a modern, fit-for-purpose service model, combining uniform standards with strategically located eco-hubs and low-emission fleets
- 4.5. As part of the Programme's implementation planning, a delivery options appraisal is proposed to identify the most effective vehicle for delivering the transformed services. WODC are actively working with current service partners, including Ubico, to assess and determine the optimum delivery model that aligns with strategic goals, operational efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1. In considering the future of waste and environmental services in West Oxfordshire, it is essential to evaluate the alternative options available to the Council. The WESP Programme presents a compelling case for transformation, but decision-makers must be confident that it offers the best route forward compared to other plausible approaches. The business case outlines three principal alternatives:

5.2. Do Nothing

This option involves maintaining the status quo and deferring any major decisions until the outcome of LGR is known. While this may appear prudent, it carries significant risks. The current service model is fragmented, inefficient, and increasingly costly. Waste volumes are rising, recycling rates have plateaued, and the financial pressures on local authorities are intensifying. The introduction of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in 2028 will add costs annually to incineration costs across Oxfordshire, the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) will reduce the value of items collected at the kerbside and inflationary pressures are also projected to increase costs.

Waiting for LGR would delay the realisation of benefits and reduce WODC's influence over future service design. It would also risk duplication of effort, missed funding opportunities (e.g. Extended Producer Responsibility payments), and loss of strategic momentum. The business case scores this option lowest in terms of strategic alignment and value delivery.

5.3. Independent Transformation by WODC:

This option would see WODC to pursue its own transformation programme outside of WESP. While this may offer greater control, it would be significantly more complex, costly, and less effective. The scale of change required, across infrastructure, procurement, service delivery, and behaviour change, is beyond the capacity of a single district council. Independent transformation would also forgo the economies of scale, shared expertise, and purchasing power that WESP offers.

Additionally, national policy reforms such as Simpler Recycling, EPR, and ETS require coordinated responses. Fragmented approaches risk non-compliance, inefficiency, and reputational damage. The business case highlights that outsourcing or independent procurement is not viable in the current climate due to market instability, regulatory uncertainty, and the scale of transformation required.

5.4. Agree in principle to proceed with WESP Ahead of LGR

This is the recommended option.

This option allows WODC to act decisively, secure early benefits, and retain strategic influence. The Programme is designed to be adaptable to any LGR outcome, whether Oxfordshire moves to a single unitary council, two councils (e.g. Oxford & Shires and Ridgeway), or three councils (e.g. Greater Oxford, North Oxfordshire, Ridgeway). Acting now ensures WODC helps shape the future rather than being shaped by it. This approach balances early influence with prudent risk management, allowing WODC to shape the programme without binding commitment until benefits are proven.

The Programme is ready to proceed, with the eight business cases developed, a programme governance model proposed, and anticipated benefits of £98.9m over 10 years. (£17m for WODC) It aligns with national policy, supports climate and biodiversity goals, and offers a robust financial case. Sensitivity analysis confirms resilience even under adverse conditions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.** In summary, the alternative options available to West Oxfordshire District Council either delay progress or fragment effort. Choosing to wait for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) risks missing out on substantial financial savings, strategic influence, and early alignment with national reforms. Pursuing independent transformation would be complex, costly, and less effective, lacking the scale, shared expertise, and purchasing power that a county-wide approach offers.
- 6.2.** By contrast, the WESP Programme presents a well-developed, evidence-based solution that is both strategic and scalable. By investing in a modern, fit-for-21st-century service model, WODC will deliver clarity for residents, environmental gains through fleet decarbonisation, and operational efficiency through strategically located facilities.
- 6.3.** WESP is projected to deliver significant benefits over 10 years, with a large Return on Investment (ROI), pay back within three years and a high Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR). Even under adverse conditions, the Programme remains financially viable.
- 6.4.** Importantly, the Programme recognises that while Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) introduces uncertainty, it does not prevent progress as it anticipates the three potential

models (single, dual, or triple unitary councils) and remains adaptable to each, ensuring that WODC retains strategic influence regardless of the outcome.

- 6.5. By investing for five years, the Council will be able to benefit from the options and initiatives that can commence as soon as the Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) is agreed, delivering early benefits and maintaining momentum. These include operational improvements, procurement activities, and preparatory work that are not contingent on governance changes. The five year term will allow further initiatives, such as infrastructure and Commercial Services development, to be strategically sequenced to commence following the LGR decision in mid-2026, ensuring alignment with future governance structures and maximising long-term benefits.
- 6.6. Although WESP will not fully launch until all partners have signed up and WODC's delegated decision is confirmed, agreeing in principle provides WODC with control and influence during programme development, while safeguarding against premature commitment. Committing to invest now guarantees influence over service design, accelerates benefits for residents, and positions WODC as a proactive, forward-thinking partner dedicated to sustainability, efficiency, and innovation. Acting promptly avoids the risks of delay, such as missed savings, diminished influence, and continued fragmentation.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The financial case for the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) is compelling, both in terms of the scale of projected benefits and the urgency of the pressures it seeks to address. Waste and environmental services currently represent a significant and growing cost for WODC, outpacing inflation and reflecting broader trends in rising operational costs.
- 7.2. Investing in the WESP Programme is projected to deliver significant net benefits over 10 years. The investment includes both capital and revenue expenditure, with the majority of investment front-loaded in the first three years to support programme mobilisation, infrastructure upgrades, and service transformation. The total programme, inclusive of all Oxfordshire Authorities, breaks even from year 3, where savings initiatives are a mixture of cost efficiencies through economies of scale and optimising income streams for commercial offerings.
- 7.3. The delivery of each of the mini business cases and the achievement of larger performance and financial benefits of the wider programme will require additional capital and revenue investment, circa £20m.
- 7.4. The table below shows the indicative total requirement (Revenue and Capital) of £1.7m over the 10-year timeline for WODC.

| | WEST OXFORDSHIRE - INDICATIVE WESP INVESTMENT REQUIREMENT | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | |
| | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | TOTAL |
| Revenue | 191 | 401 | 371 | 228 | 51 | 51 | 69 | 51 | 51 | 69 | 1,533 |
| Capital | 0 | 0 | 0 | 82 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 82 | 0 | 0 | 165 |
| TOTAL | 191 | 401 | 371 | 311 | 51 | 51 | 69 | 133 | 51 | 69 | 1,697 |

- The costs associated with the delivery of each initiative have been apportioned to partners based on the level of benefit that each individual authority will receive. The benefits and costs are indicative at this stage. There are several assumptions upon which the costs and benefits are based, as follows.
 - Some revenue costs are one-off, whilst others, such as the investment in behaviour change campaigns, will be on-going.
 - Programme and project management revenue support costs are included at a total cost of £6m across the first three years of the program.
 - Excluded from the spend above is the investment required in infrastructure and the capital receipts that the Programme may achieve from the sale of current sites.
- 7.5. These assumptions will continue to be developed and revised as each mini business case is worked through, with further papers being brought forward to seek additional funding, if the requirement cannot be contained within existing budgets.
- 7.6. The Programme also anticipates further financial opportunities through asset rationalisation, commercialisation, and improved contract management. These have not yet been fully quantified but are expected to enhance the overall financial return and will be evaluated once the overall programme is underway.
- 7.7. To underpin this commitment, a strict benefits management plan will be developed and implemented. This plan will track financial, environmental, and operational outcomes against agreed targets, enabling transparent reporting and timely intervention if benefits deviate materially from expectations.
- 7.8. To ensure West Oxfordshire District Council secures a return on investment, it is proposed that the Council commits to a minimum of a five-year term of participation in WESP. This timeframe aligns with the Programme's financial modelling and allows for the delivery of early benefits while maintaining flexibility for future governance decisions post-LGR.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The legal implications of West Oxfordshire District Council's (WODC) participation in the Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) are significant and must be carefully considered to ensure compliance, transparency, and resilience throughout the transformation process. The Programme proposes a new operating model that includes the establishment of a shared local authority company, the redesign of commissioning and other services that support Waste and Environmental services, and the potential reallocation of

service responsibilities, all of which require robust legal frameworks and governance arrangements.

- 8.2.** Establishment of a Shared Local authority Company: One of the central legal considerations is the creation of a shared Local authority company to deliver waste collection and potentially other environmental services. Under UK procurement law, specifically the Procurement Act 2023, contracts awarded to Local authority companies are exempt from competitive tendering if certain conditions are met. These include that the company is wholly owned by the contracting authorities, that it carries out at least 80% of its activities for those authorities, and that the authorities exercise control over the company similar to that which they exercise over their own departments
- 8.3.** The legal structure of the Local authority company must be carefully designed to ensure compliance with these conditions. This includes drafting Articles of Association, Shareholder Agreements, and Service Level Agreements that clearly define ownership, control, governance, and operational scope. Consideration must also be given to employment law, particularly in relation to TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, if staff are transferred into the new entity.
- 8.4.** An agreement in principle reduces immediate legal exposure and allows governance frameworks to evolve as the programme matures.
- 8.5.** Governance and Contractual Arrangements: The Programme will require new governance arrangements to oversee the Local authority company and the broader transformation. These arrangements must be legally sound and capable of adapting to future changes, including Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Options include joint committees under the Local Government Act 1972, shareholder boards, and delegated authority models. Each option carries different legal responsibilities and risks, particularly in relation to decision-making, liability, and transparency
- 8.6.** Contracts currently held by WODC and other authorities may need to be novated or renegotiated. This includes long-term service contracts, leases, and supplier agreements. Legal advice will be required to assess the feasibility and implications of contract novation, particularly where third-party consent is needed or where termination clauses may be triggered.
- 8.7.** Procurement and Commissioning Reform: The Programme proposes a consolidated procurement and commissioning function to improve value for money and strategic alignment. This function must operate within the framework of the Procurement Act 2023, which introduces new rules on transparency, competitive procedures, and contract management. Legal support will be needed to ensure that all procurement activities comply

with the Act and that any exemptions (e.g. Local authority arrangements) are properly documented and justified.

- 8.8. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):** The Programme is designed to be adaptable to LGR, which introduces additional legal complexity. Depending on the model adopted—single, dual, or triple unitary councils—there may be changes in statutory responsibilities, asset ownership, and service delivery structures. Legal advice will be essential to navigate these changes and ensure that WODC’s interests are protected during the transition
- 8.9. Risk and Liability:** Legal risk management will be critical throughout the Programme. This includes ensuring compliance with environmental regulations, data protection laws (e.g. GDPR), health and safety legislation, and employment law. The Programme’s risk register identifies legal risks and proposes mitigation strategies, including robust governance, stakeholder engagement, and contingency planning.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1.** The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) is a large-scale transformation programme involving multiple authorities, service areas, and delivery models. As such, it carries a range of strategic, operational, financial, and legal risks that must be actively managed to ensure successful implementation and long-term sustainability. The business case outlines a comprehensive risk management framework, including a programme-level risk register, mitigation strategies, and governance arrangements.
- 9.2. Strategic Risks**
- The most significant strategic risk is the potential misalignment of partner priorities, particularly in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). While four authorities are currently committed to the Programme, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have opted to pursue independent procurement routes. Their future participation remains uncertain, and any changes in political leadership or policy direction could affect the Programme’s cohesion and scope.
 - Mitigation: The Programme has been designed to be adaptable to any LGR outcome, including single, dual, or triple unitary models. Governance arrangements will be structured to accommodate new partners and ensure continuity of service delivery regardless of structural changes.
- 9.3. Operational Risks**
- Operational risks include delays in implementation, resistance to change, and capacity constraints. The Programme involves the consolidation of services, infrastructure upgrades, and the establishment of new delivery vehicles (e.g. a Local authority company). These changes require significant coordination, staff engagement, and technical expertise.

- Mitigation: A phased implementation plan has been developed, supported by a dedicated programme team and four interdependent workstreams. Each workstream will have its own project manager responsible for risk identification and mitigation. A Programme Risk Management Group will oversee risk reporting and escalation.

9.4. Financial Risks

- Financial risks include cost overruns, under-delivery of savings, and uncertainty around funding sources. The Programme is projected to deliver significant net benefits over 10 years, but this is contingent on successful implementation of the mini business cases and realisation of projected efficiencies and income growth.
- Mitigation: A detailed financial model has been developed, including sensitivity analysis and contingency planning. Even under adverse scenarios (e.g. 50% reduction in savings and 100% increase in costs), the Programme remains viable. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payments provide short-term funding to support mobilisation and early investment.

9.5. Legal and Regulatory Risks

- Legal risks include non-compliance with procurement regulations, employment law, and environmental legislation. The establishment of a Local authority company and the redesign of procurement functions must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and other statutory requirements.
- Mitigation: Legal advice will be sought throughout the Programme to ensure compliance. Governance documents (e.g. Articles of Association, Shareholder Agreements) will be developed to formalise roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. Regulatory changes (e.g. ETS, Simpler Recycling) will be monitored and incorporated into planning.

9.6. Reputational Risks

- Failure to deliver promised benefits or disruption to services could damage public trust and stakeholder confidence. This is particularly relevant given the Programme's visibility and its alignment with climate and sustainability goals.
- Mitigation: A robust communications and engagement strategy will be implemented, targeting elected members, staff, partners, and the public. Benefits realisation will be tracked through a dedicated framework, and lessons learned will be captured and shared across the Programme.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

10.1. See below

II. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Project Brief

The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Programme (WESP) is a bold, county-wide transformation programme designed to proactively tackle the current environmental, financial, and operational pressures facing our waste services based on the following principles: 1 - Circular Economy: Embedding sustainable resource use and waste minimisation. 2 - Cost Efficiency: Addressing high residual waste disposal costs, fragmented delivery models and utilising scale of economy. 3 - Environmental Impact: Responding to the climate emergency and aligning with Net Zero, Biodiversity and Environmental targets. 4 - Resident Friendliness: Ensuring services remain reliable, accessible, and responsive to local needs.

| Criteria | Score | Justification |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| Energy Use | 2 | The electrification of the fleet will reduce the use of fossil fuels. |
| GHGs | 2 | One of the key strategic drivers of the programme is to achieve Environmental and Net Zero targets. |
| Air quality | 2 | A collaborative approach towards fleet sustainability will lead to more efficient routes and reduce the overall amount of vehicles used. |
| Land use change | 0 | While there is an infrastructure mini business case included in the programme, it is likely to only affect brownfield sites |
| Soil and waterway health | 8 | Collaboration between Oxfordshire Authorities will decrease the use of pesticides in the drive to increase biodiversity. |
| Waste | 4 | A key driver for the programme is to move towards a Circular Economy and move as much waste as possible up the waste hierarchy. |
| Sustainable Transport | 2 | Meeting net zero targets will include the electrification of part of the fleet |
| Biodiversity | 4 | The Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Mini business case includes the increase of biodiversity within its benefits |
| Climate Change Adaptation | 0 | While any new infrastructure will be as environmentally friendly as possible, this is not clearly stated in the Business case |
| Sustainable Materials | 4 | The collaborative approach will allow greater control over the destination of collected recyclables. A key driver is the move towards a circular economy. |
| Food | 0 | The Programme will not have a direct effect on this. |
| Health | 4 | The move towards the electrification of the fleet and increased sustainability of all fleet activity will reduce the impact on air quality |
| Housing | 0 | The Programme will not have a direct effect on this. |
| Education | 0 | The Programme will not have a direct effect on this. |
| Built Community | 2 | The Infrastructure mini business case includes a "Hub & Spoke" model for strategic sites, placing services closer to where they are needed. |
| Cultural Community | 0 | The Programme will not have a direct effect on this. |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Accessibility | 2 | The Infrastructure mini business case includes a "Hub & Spoke" model for strategic sites, placing services closer to residents |
| Local Economy and Jobs | 2 | The collaborative approach will allow a wider range of Jobs and apprenticeships across the county |
| Safety | 2 | The service visits every property in the County each week, it will also maintain a presence in town centres, play parks etc increasing "eyes on the ground" |
| Democratic Voice | 2 | A key driver for the programme is customer satisfaction. Consultation through elected members will ensure meaningful engagement |
| Equity | 1 | Positive impact on groups with protected characteristics. |



12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1. The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- None.

12.2. These documents will be available for inspection online at www.westoxon.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.

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|---|---|
|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE - 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27</p> |
| <p>Wards affected</p> | <p>All</p> |
| <p>Accountable member</p> | <p>Cllr Alaric Smith Executive Member for Finance Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable officer</p> | <p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report authors</p> | <p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance Email: georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p> | <p>This report provides an update on the developing budget for 2026/27.</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Annex B – Draft Capital Programme</p> |
| <p>Recommendation(s)</p> | <p>That the Executive resolves to: I. Note the update on the developing budget for 2026/27.</p> |
| <p>Corporate priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| <p>Key Decision</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Exempt</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Consultees/ Consultation</p> | <p>Meetings with Directors, Heads of Service, Business Managers and key stakeholders</p> |

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Council will approve the budget for 2026/27 on 25th February 2026. This first draft of the revenue budget for 2026/27 has been compiled in advance of the announcement of the government funding settlement in December and therefore is subject to change.
- 1.2** This report provides details of the assumptions made for both the revenue budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including the current drivers of growth.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The focussed work has been done on the revenue part of the budget i.e. the cost of providing services, with the funding element based on provisional modelling subsequent to the results of the consultation on the Government's Fairer Funding review.
- 2.2** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have confirmed that 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 5% in year one i.e. 2026/27 and then a cash flat allocation in years two and three.
- 2.3** Financial modelling undertaken by Pixel, who provide support and advisory services to local government focussing on funding analysis, indicates a £943,000 loss of income over the three-year period from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This is a better outcome than we have been forecasting, but it is not confirmed and it must be stressed that due to the complexity of the new funding formula, transitional arrangements, the business rates reset and a national business rate revaluation all coming into force on 1st April 2026, the funding estimated in the MTFS should be viewed as indicative only at this stage.
- 2.4** 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.
- 2.5** The MTFS will be updated when the local government funding settlement is published in the week commencing 15th December.
- 2.6** The MTFS has been prepared without incorporating any potential impacts from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). At this stage, it is not possible to provide credible financial projections until the Government has reviewed the proposals and confirmed which will be implemented. Consequently, the MTFS assumes that the Council will continue to operate as usual and meet its financial obligations for the foreseeable future, irrespective of any future LGR decisions.
- 2.7** This initial draft of the budget indicates a requirement for a £21,447 contribution from the General Fund to achieve a balanced position prior to considering any growth proposals. However, several significant figures are not yet available for inclusion, such as Council Tax income, retained Business Rates, and government funding allocations.

- 2.8** While the reserves position for the Council is currently relatively healthy, there remains a financial gap from the estimated impact of changes to the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) and the end of the current leisure contract in 2027 with a £1.4m reduction in income. Added to the as yet unknown cost of LGR, our general fund reserve will probably be exhausted over the life of this MTFS.
- 2.9** The use of reserves to manage short term fluctuations in the Council's financial position is necessary but cannot be sustained over the longer term – reserves can only be spent once.
- 2.10** The financing of the Capital Programme will look to use internal borrowing, grants and capital receipts as far as the Council is able in order to delay, for as long as possible, the requirement to take on external borrowing. Borrowing is not inherently bad and is a responsible way to finance capital projects, as long as the revenue budget can afford to service the debt. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates are currently at a higher rate than the Council would want to take out borrowing. In another year, as the Bank of England base rate falls, PWLB borrowing should be at a more palatable level.

3. 2026/27 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

- 3.1** The 2026/27 budget setting process has been informed by the key drivers of the financial performance in the current year, discussions with budget holders and takes into account the requirement for the Council to produce a balanced budget and to evidence financial sustainability over the life of the MTFS.
- 3.2** The table below shows the key changes to the budget from a £91,280 contribution to General Fund Reserves in 2025/26 to a balanced budget in 2026/27 with an estimated contribution from General Fund of £21,447 excluding growth and a contribution from General Fund of a minimum of £372,184 when all growth requests are taken into account with the change in the growth spend being included in the second draft of the budget presented to the Executive in January 2026.
- 3.3** In January, a schedule of Fees & Charges for 2026/27 will be taken to the Executive for approval. As a minimum we will ensure that fees fully recover the cost of providing charged for services.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| 2024/25 budget surplus | (91,280) |
| Budget Movements | £ |
| <u>Changes in expenditure</u> | |
| Reversal of one off items from 25/26 | (335,900) |
| Disposal of Between Towns Road | (157,826) |
| Publica Contract - New Cost Model | (1,401,035) |
| Retained Staff | 1,326,496 |
| Take out secondary Pension contribution | (635,039) |
| Provisional Ubico contract inflation | 319,784 |
| New Temporary Accommodation | (28,212) |
| Business Rates and Council Tax on Council Assets | 76,462 |
| Business Manager Review | 224,385 |
| Outsourcing of Markets | (27,000) |
| Private Sector Housing condition survey | 60,000 |
| | (577,885) |
| <u>Changes in income</u> | |
| Investment Property income | (207,128) |
| Development Management Income | (190,000) |
| Trade Waste income | (250,000) |
| End of Rural Crime project and funding | 33,100 |
| | (614,028) |
| <u>Changes in funding</u> | |
| Provisional Business Rates Reset | 4,324,384 |
| Provisional Funding Settlement | (3,554,710) |
| Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) | 192,960 |
| Movements to/from earmarked reserves | 1,009,853 |
| Extended Producer Responsibility Grant increase | (652,216) |
| Council Tax from taxbase growth | (53,554) |
| Interest on long term borrowing | 37,924 |
| | 1,304,641 |
| 2026/27 DRAFT BUDGET | 21,447 |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Growth Requests | £ |
| Permanent | |
| Building Maintenance Officer | 43,460 |
| Sovereign Posts | 155,546 |
| Nature Recovery Officer FTC to Permanent | 39,756 |
| Temporary Emergency Accommodation Lead | 45,503 |
| Town Centre footfall system | 21,000 |
| Shared Senior Officer - Pollution Services | 16,565 |
| Shared Tenancy Relations Officer | 13,998 |
| Shared Senior Officer - Private Water Supplies | 14,909 |
| | 350,737 |
| 2026/27 DRAFT BUDGET inc Growth | 372,184 |

3.4 The key changes to the budget from 2025/26 to 2026/27 are as follows:

Changes To Expenditure

- The reversal of one-off growth items from 2025/26 includes the £300,000 budget for the estimated one-off costs for Phase 2 of the Publica Review and the estimate of costs for the leisure contract options appraisal approved as a one-year growth item in 2025/26. The actual one-off costs for the Publica Review were £174,554.

Publica Review Costs

| Costs £ | Phase 1 £ | Phase 2 £ | Total £ |
|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| One Off | 218,281 | 174,554 | 392,835 |
| Enduring | 213,147 | 111,351 | 324,498 |
| Total | 431,428 | 285,905 | 717,333 |

- Between Towns Road – part of our Investment Property portfolio, this office property in Oxford has been vacant since November 2023 when Oxfordshire County Council moved out. Various options for its continued use were assessed

with the optimum outcome being a recommendation to sell on the open market. Council approved this recommendation in the summer of 2025 with the sale completion expected in January 2026. This sale provides a revenue budget saving of £157,826 which reflects the Business Rates liability and the cost of securing the building. In addition, the sale provides the Council with a capital receipt which will be used to help fund the capital programme, thereby reducing the Council's need to borrow externally.

- The Publica contract – this saving has two elements, firstly the reduction in contract sum due to the TUPE of staff back into the Council on 1st July 2025 (£624,478) and the new cost model, the principle of which was agreed between all partners as part of the phase 2 Publica Review (£776,557). At the time of writing partners are in the process of agreeing the revised cost model.
- Retained staff – this figure needs to be viewed together with the Publica saving as it represents the employment costs of staff TUPEd back to the Council on 1st July 2025.
- Secondary Pension - historically, the Council has paid both a primary and secondary pension contribution. The primary contribution is the amount paid monthly through payroll and the secondary contribution is an additional cash sum paid to make sure that the Council can meet the future obligations of the pension scheme from employing staff in the past.
- The secondary contribution was introduced in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash which resulted in near zero bond yields and caused a funding deficit in the pension scheme. Now that the scheme returns have pushed the scheme into a notional asset rather than liability (before the inclusion of the Asset Ceiling), the secondary contribution (£746,000) has been withdrawn and the primary contribution raised from 17.6% to 20% (£110,961). The net saving is therefore £635,039.
- Ubico contract - discussions are underway with Ubico to agree a contract sum for 2026/27. It takes a protracted amount of time each year due to the complicated nature of the contract deliverables. The initial growth request from Ubico is £319,784, driven predominantly by an increase in vehicle repair costs, wages inflation, and vehicle hire. A final Ubico contract sum will be included in the second draft of the budget, presented to Executive in January 2026.
- Emergency Accommodation - the Council committed to the purchase of an additional 30 emergency accommodation beds in this financial year to add to our existing 22 hostel spaces. So far, the purchase of 1 property has been completed with a further 5 properties on track to complete in January, in total these 6

properties will provide 21 beds for single households. A purchase of 1 further property is likely to complete before the end of the financial year, providing an additional 8 beds of family accommodation for 4 households.

- A programme of reconfiguration and refurbishment for all 6 properties has begun with an estimated handover of the first property early in 2026. The provision of an additional 29 beds is estimated to reduce the net cost to the Council for emergency accommodation by £350,000 a year.
- Business Rates and Council Tax - the Council has liability for Business Rates on its operational buildings and Council Tax for some temporary accommodation. The increase in these costs for 2026/27 is estimated at £71,962 for Business Rates and £4,500 for Council Tax. It should be noted however that there will be a national Business Rates reset and revaluation for 1st April 2026 and it is possible that our Business Rates liability will increase.
- Business Manager review – this summarises a large volume of small adjustments across all the Council service areas which are not significant on their own. Included in this figure are amounts for publishing Planning Applications in local newspapers, licences for the tablets used by Building Control whilst they are onsite, inflationary increases for external contractors working on behalf of the Home Improvement Service, electricity costs, membership of the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership, professional subscriptions, the annual contribution to Better Homes Better Health, printing costs, etc.
- Markets - the management of the markets in Witney and Chipping Norton was outsourced in August 2025 to a commercial operator for an initial period of 2 years. The saving included in the budget relates to the costs associated with Ubico collecting the waste as this activity is no longer required.
- Housing Condition Survey - the Council has a statutory responsibility to undertake periodic housing condition surveys across the District. This review is due to take place in 2026 with an associated one-off budget of £60,000 that will be reversed in 2027/28.

Changes To Income

- Investment Property – this income fluctuates year on year as tenancies end, new tenancies begin, properties come into charge from an initial rent-free period and rent reviews come into effect. In 2026/27 the total amount of income from Investment Property is budgeted to be £3,104,376.

- Marriotts Walk – this is not classified as an Investment Property but does generate income. The managing agents will provide an updated cashflow forecast for 2026/27 in the next few weeks, with any change in income forecast being included in the second draft of the budget presented to Executive in January 2026.
- Development Management - income from Planning Applications has been particularly volatile over the last 2 years. In the current financial year, the Council has received some major applications which has resulted in a forecast year end position of £321,000 above target. Budget discussions with the Head of Planning and the Development Manager have resulted in an agreed increase in fee income for 2026/27 of £230,000 partially offset by additional expenditure of £40,000 for temporary staff needed for specialist advice as the expertise is not available in house and is not needed in a full-time capacity.
- Trade Waste - the budget for Trade Waste income has been increased by £250,000 in line with current year forecasts reported at the end of Q2. The exceptional performance of the service can be attributed to very active customer management and efficiencies in invoicing and income collection by the Publica Trade Waste team.

Changes To Funding

- Retained Business Rates - it has long been reported to Members that the Business Rates system was going to be reset by the Government as part of the Fairer Funding Review, with the aim of ensuring that local government funding reflects current assessments of need and resources, rather than historic allocations. This is because the system has not been fully reset since its introduction in 2013, meaning disparities have grown over time. By updating Baseline Funding Levels (BFLs) and Business Rates Baselines (BRBs), the government can redistribute resources more fairly across councils based on relative need.
- The figures included in the revenue budget and MTFS should be viewed as indicative only at this stage. They are based on the financial modelling undertaken by Pixel but are by no means certain. The government will announce the final funding settlement details the week commencing 15 December 2025.
- The budget will be updated with any impact from this announcement including any transitional arrangements which are designed to cushion the impact of the funding reforms.

- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is a statutory requirement to recognise the use of our fixed assets over time requiring a charge to revenue over the useful life of that asset i.e. vehicles over 7 years and property over a maximum of 50 years. The movement in MRP year to year is due to the level of expenditure estimated in the Capital Programme and the inclusion of finance leases in the balance sheet for the first time in 2024/25 subsequent to the adoption of the Accounting Standard IFRS16.
- Earmarked reserve movements – this is calculated every year and is the sum of movements both in and out of reserves. Movements out are matched to expenditure on posts and projects that have been agreed by the Executive to further Council Priorities. Examples of earmarked reserves funding expenditure are homelessness prevention and support, project management and climate change.
- The Council has been allocated significant funding from the Extended Producer Responsibility Grant, amounting to £2,852,839 in 2025/26 and £2,990,216 in 2026/27. There will be a timing difference between the receipt of this grant and expenditure against it, therefore it is budgeted to be moved into Earmarked Reserves and may be used to buy new recycling vehicles and to fund elements of the Waste and Environmental Services project (WESP).
- Taxbase – the taxbase for 2026/27 will be presented in the January 2026 version of the draft budget. The taxbase as reported to the Government through the CTBI return in October 2025 showed that the taxbase at that time was 413.93 Band D equivalents higher than the estimate made in January 2025. This equates to growth of £53,554 before including any growth in the taxbase to the end of March 2027. It is recommended that Council Tax increases by the maximum of £5 to bring the district precept to £134.38 per Band D equivalent for 2026/27.
- Interest for external borrowing has been included in the Capital Programme on the assumption that the Council may have to fund £1.7m of waste vehicles mid-way through the 2026/27 financial year.

3.5 Inflationary Pressures

- Pay award – over the last few years, the approval of the national pay award has been agreed later in the year and after the Council budget is approved. The pay award for 2025/26 was approved in July 2025 at 3.2%, in line with the base budget assumption of 3% pay inflation for both Publica and retained employees.
- Initial discussions on the 2026/27 National Joint Council (NJC) pay award are taking place in December and January with a pay offer by the LGA expected to be made to

the Unions before the end of the current financial year. It is hoped that agreement will be reached earlier than in previous years, but it will be after the budget is considered by Full Council in February 2026. In the absence of any better information, a pay award of 3% has been included in the 2026/27 budget.

- Contract inflation – this is applied to individual contracts i.e. Ubico, Publica, Danfo (Public Conveniences) and Jade Security (Cash collection) based on their specific contract terms or agreed forecast expenditure, not as a generic percentage.
- General inflation – the rate of Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is reported to be at 3.6% in October, down from 3.8% in September. Inflation impacts the cost of supplies and services i.e. building maintenance, external legal fees and fuel which tend to be higher than the CPI level. The MTFS approved in February 2025 assumed a level of inflation of 2.5% for 2026/27 something which looks unlikely for at least the first half of the year.
- The Bank of England base rate fell to 4% in August with a further 0.25% reduction this financial year predicted by our Treasury Advisors. This is consistent with the advice we have received over the past 12 months but there remains some uncertainty given that the rate of CPI inflation is sitting at 3.6% as of the end of October. Any rate cut will reduce the return we receive on our investments but will make any external borrowing the Council enters into cheaper.

3.6 Items to be Reported in January

Due to the timing of this first draft of the budget, there are some items that cannot be included here and instead will be reported in January 2026. These items include

- Council Tax Base – the district has seen sustained growth in the Council Tax Base over the last decade. Early indications are that there will be an increase of around 1.5% for 2026/27 which would equate to an additional £288,000 of income, over and above the £53,544 already included in the Budget Movements table above.
- Capital Programme – revision of the Capital Programme is underway in consultation with Business Managers and Senior Management. The level of capital expenditure must be balanced against the availability of cash reserves and the cost of external borrowing.
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) – there is a statutory requirement for the Council to recognise the use of their fixed assets over time that will charge a cost to revenue over the useful life of that asset i.e. vehicles over 7 years and property over

a maximum of 50 years. The final movement in MRP year to year is directly linked to the final Capital Programme.

- External Borrowing – the level of external borrowing is dictated by the estimated level of expenditure in the Capital Programme offset against any capital receipts, grants or internal borrowing used to fund capital expenditure.
- Retained Business Rates – the estimate of Retained Business Rates is submitted to MHCLG every year on 31st January in the form of NNDR 1. Permission to submit the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) 1 form will be included in the January budget papers. At this stage it is not possible to estimate what the Business Rates income for 2026/27 is likely to be.
- Government Funding – an indicative figure for the movement in government funding has been included in the MTFS in advance of the announcement of the Local Government Funding Settlement in December, based on the information provided through the Fairer Funding Review consultation process during 2025 and Pixel modelling.

3.7 Initial Growth Requests

- Building Maintenance Officer – with the acquisition of 8 new properties for Temporary Accommodation, the Assets team will need additional resource to take on day to day repairs and maintenance that would otherwise have to be contracted out at a much higher cost than employing someone directly.
- Sovereign Posts - discussions are currently underway in relation to making a small number of posts sovereign in addition to the posts transferred back to the Council on 1st July 2025. Further information about these posts will be included in the second draft of the budget in January 2026. This will add additional capacity to help support the Local Plan, deliver infrastructure, and respond to LGR.
- Nature Recovery Officer - The Council's ability to deliver its Nature Recovery Plan and meet legal obligations relies on the specialist Nature Recovery Officer role. Making this post permanent would ensure continuity for key projects, partnerships, and biodiversity duties while strengthening the Ecology Team's capacity amid growing environmental demands. Without a permanent officer, the Council risks losing expertise, delaying progress, and missing funding opportunities—making this a cost-effective investment in long-term ecological and climate commitments

- Temporary Emergency Accommodation Lead - the Council currently operates The Old Courthouse in Witney and Horsefair in Chipping Norton as temporary emergency accommodation for 22 homeless single people. In a few months, the Council will be operating 10 properties housing 43 homeless singles and 4 households with children. A Temporary Emergency Accommodation lead will be required to join the existing team to properly manage these additional properties.
- Town Centre Footfall system - we are actively developing strategies across the district to attract more visitors, enhance the visitor experience, and deliver a sustainable boost to the local economy. Investment in an enhanced town centre data system will provide data that will underpin strategic planning, event evaluation, investment justification, and policy development, helping to deliver more responsive and evidence-based town centre management.
- Shared Senior Officer Pollution Management and Shared Senior Officer Private Water Supplies – both posts are requested to stop the reliance on external contractors to fill resource gaps, both posts would be funded equally by WODC, Cotswold and Forest of Dean.
- Shared Tenancy Relations Officer – this position is recommended as a result of the Renters Rights Act which has just received royal assent. The Act will impose new statutory duties on local authorities and introduce new protections for tenants. This will increase the demand on the Private Sector Housing team in Publica and will require a new shared specialist officer to conduct an enforcement and prevention role as a statutory duty for local authorities. The role will also work with the Housing Team to help prevent homelessness as part of their enforcement role. The Government have confirmed an allocation of £32,353 New Burdens funding to deliver this new statutory requirement.

3.8 Budget Risks

- Interest Rates – interest rates are now slowly starting to come down which for the Council is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it will make any external borrowing that the Council enters into more affordable, but falling interest rates adversely impact the returns we make from our cash balances.
- Over the last three years and the year to date, Treasury Management short term investing has produced income returns far higher than budget due to prevailing global economic conditions and the high rate of return from the Money Market Funds and Debt Management Office (DMO). As interest rates fall back, so do these income returns.

- Level of Reserves – General Fund balances are currently healthy when compared to cost of services, however, the MTFS shows that unless we are able to plug the funding gap identified from 2027/28 onwards, General Fund reserves will be almost exhausted by 2030. If LGR were to be delayed for any reason, the Council would need to implement a significant savings programme in order to continue to produce a balanced budget past the life of the current MTFS.

4. FAIRER FUNDING REVIEW

- 4.1 The Government's proposals for the reform to local government funding went out for consultation earlier this year. Following on from this consultation, initial proposals were announced by MHCLG in July and final proposals were announced in November.
- 4.2 The Government is proposing service-specific formulas (e.g. adult social care, children's services, highways) and a general "Foundation Formula" for other services.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 There will be no phasing for the Business Rates reset which will be in effect for 1st April 2026 and it has been confirmed that New Homes Bonus will not be payable after 2025/26, but instead this funding will be redirected into needs-based formula.
- 4.5 The reset of the Business Rates system takes the Council back to a new Baseline and will effectively take out the growth over baseline achieved over the last decade that has made it beneficial to be a member of the Business Rates Pool. The Pool is therefore likely to close at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.
- 4.6 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 cut of 5% to Core Spending Power in year one i.e. 2026/27 and a cash flat settlement for the other two years. Core Spending Power is the sum of Government Grants, Council Tax income and Retained Business Rates.
- 4.7 With the return to multi-year settlements the Council can plan budgets and the MTFS with a lot more confidence as much of the volatility is taken out of the process. Having known figures enables the Council to better manage reserves and mitigate financial shocks.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY ASSUMPTIONS

- 5.1 The MTFS assumes a general inflationary increase of between 2% and 2.5% will apply to the cost of services from 2027/28 onwards, excluding contracts where the actual inflationary increase is known i.e. Ubico contract, salary inflation, Publica contract and some software licence agreements.

- 5.2 Salary inflation over the last 3 years has been higher than we have historically estimated. For 2026/27 there is an assumed 3% increase, but this is expected to fall back over the life of the MTFS.
- 5.3 Over the last few years, the Council has deliberately built-up earmarked reserves by 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. This policy should ensure the viability of our provision of front-line services until the end of the MTFS period in 2030/31. This is important, not just for West Oxfordshire District Council and our residents, but also for the new Unitary Authority that will take over from us.
- 5.4 For a number of years, the Council has paid both a primary and secondary pension contribution. The primary contribution is the amount paid monthly through payroll and the secondary contribution is an additional cash sum paid to make sure that the Council can meet the future obligations of the pension scheme from employing staff in the past.
- 5.5 The Actuaries undertake an exercise to value the pension scheme every three years to look at how much money is in the pension fund (assets) and how much is needed to pay all current and future pensions (liabilities).
- 5.6 They use assumptions about life expectancy, investment returns, inflation, pay growth and compare the assets against the liabilities to assess if the scheme is fully funded i.e. has enough money to fund its obligations. Based on the results, the actuaries recommend how much the Council needs to pay into the scheme over the next three years to keep it sustainable.
- 5.7 The next triennial period starts on 1st April 2026 and the Actuaries have advised that the Council can stop paying a secondary pension contribution and raise the primary contribution from 17.6% to 20%. This has resulted in an MTFS saving of £635,039.
- 5.8 Treasury Management activities have provided the Council with significant investment returns over the last three years through the placement of cash reserves into short term investments i.e. the Debt Management Officer (DMO) and the Money Market Funds. This activity provided £625,889 of interest income over and above the budget of £1,156,230 in 2024/25 and is forecast to deliver a significant amount of additional income, above budget, (set at the same level as the previous year), in 2025/26. As interest rates fall, we will no longer benefit from this additional income and so the base budget for investment income in 2026/27 will be kept as is.
- 5.9 Council Tax is assumed to increase by £5 for a Band D equivalent, the higher of the increases allowed without triggering a referendum – being either an increase of 2.99% on the Band D in 2025/26 of £129.38 or £5.
- 5.10 The Asset Management Strategy (AMS) was approved by Executive in November 2024. The Strategy and the detailed option plans for individual properties provide clear guidance for future decision making and investment in the Council's land and property assets. A rolling 5 year repairs and maintenance programme, informed by the Asset Management Strategy feeds into the Capital Programme to identify both expenditure and financing requirements.

5.11 The MTFS is based on the most reasonable forecasts of income and expenditure that can be inferred at this point in time but are subject to change as we move through the budget setting process and more information and facts come to light.

6. FEES AND CHARGES

6.1 Fees and charges are set on three separate bases.

- Fees that are set centrally over which the Council has no control i.e. premises licences and penalty notices.
- Fees that are set on a cost recovery basis i.e. Building Control, taxi licences and Street Trading. The Council is required to make sure that fees are set at a level that does not generate a profit compared to the cost of providing the service.
- Fees that are discretionary where the Council has full control. These are the commercial services that operate where the Council is in competition with the private sector i.e. Pre Application (Planning) advice, trade waste and bulky waste.

6.2 Fee increases in 2026/27 for services provided on a cost recovery basis have been increased in line with the estimated pay award of 3% and any proven increase in direct expenditure.

6.3 Discretionary fees have been reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with budget holders, taking into account the commercial viability of the service and opportunities to maintain or grow market share.

7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

7.1 The review of the Capital Programme is ongoing with the final proposal being put forward in January 2026.

7.2 Historically the Council has funded the Capital Programme through internal borrowing (use of cash balances), capital receipts, grant or S106 funding. Given the scale of capital expenditure in 2026/27 & 2027/28 i.e. waste vehicle fleet replacement, Leisure Centre Improvement Programme, proactive maintenance of our property portfolio and the provision of affordable housing it is possible we will need to call on external borrowing to fund elements of the Capital Programme from 2026/27.

7.3 The financial impact of external borrowing is in the revenue account where the MTFS already shows a significant funding gap in future years. This impact includes the cost of borrowing i.e. interest and MRP – the charge we must make to represent the use of the asset over its life. For vehicles this would be borrowing with the associated costs for 7 years, for land and property it would be a maximum of 50 years.

- 7.4** The PWLB interest rates are still high but should fall gradually over the next 12 months in line with the expected trajectory of the Bank of England Base Rate. There are however other options for borrowing other than PWLB i.e. Local Authority to Local Authority lending. The Treasury Management Strategy will be updated with a framework for future external borrowing.
- 7.5** Additional capital receipts are achieved through the disposal of assets where the income can then only be used to fund capital expenditure, not to support the provision of services. The Asset Management Strategy helps to inform decision making on the disposal of the Council's assets where it is shown to be more advantageous to have a capital receipt to avoid external borrowing and MRP costs than to retain the asset for its capacity to generate revenue income.
- 7.6** The Council may wish to cash in an element of Pooled Funds in the future to finance capital expenditure if it proves to be more cost effective than to take on long term debt. However, interest generated from the Pooled Funds is instrumental in supporting front line Council services so any decision to release cash from long term investments should be carefully weighed against the impact on the MTFS in the longer term.
- 7.7** Further details about the way we fund the Capital Programme will be included in the revised Treasury Management, Capital and Investment Strategy papers, which will be considered by the Audit & Governance Committee at the 22 January 2026 meeting and included in the February 2026 budget papers.
- 7.8** An initial draft of the Capital Programme is in Annex B but as always, inclusion in the Capital Programme does not mean that the expenditure is authorised. Identifying the possible spend, and including it in the Capital Programme, ensures that potential borrowing requirements are identified. In most cases, a business case would still need to be prepared and brought forward for review.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION

- 8.1** As stated in the body of this report, the budget and MTFS have been produced without incorporating any potential impacts from LGR due to the impossibility of providing any credible financial projections, but LGR will have an impact on the delivery of Council services and our financial position up until when the new Unitary Authority is established on 1st April 2028.
- 8.2** Once the Government announces their decision for Oxfordshire, expected in Summer 2026, there will undoubtedly be the need for a substantial resource commitment to a transition programme. During this time, we cannot fail to maintain our level of service provision to the residents of West Oxfordshire or to meet our financial obligations.

9. BUDGET CONSULTATION

- 9.1** The Council's budget consultation, via the online engagement platform CitizenLab, went live on 10 November 2025 and will run to 19 December 2025.
- 9.2** The Council has used a wide range of communication channels to promote the consultation including media engagement, social media, website, stakeholders and newsletters.
- 9.3** Feedback from the consultation will be presented to the Executive in January 2026.

10. BUDGET REVIEW TIMETABLE

- 10.1** The next draft of the budget, including the LGFS will be taken to the Executive on 14 January 2026.
- 10.2** There is an All-Member Briefing on 8 January 2026.
- 10.3** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the budget at a meeting on 4 February 2026.
- 10.4** A final budget will be presented to the Executive on 11 February 2026.
- 10.5** The Final Budget will be debated at Full Council on 25 February 2026.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1** There are continued uncertainties and cost pressures, as detailed in this report, which will have an impact on the 2026/27 budget and the MTFS.
- 11.2** This report contains the first draft of the 2026/27 budget. The LGFS expected in late December, the feedback from Executive meetings and the budget consultation process will provide inputs into the final budget.
- 11.3** The Council will need to set realistic budgets, balancing current need and future financial stability, to ensure that adequate reserves are maintained over the medium term.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1** There are no financial implications arising from this paper as it outlines the approach and context of the 2026/27 budget setting process.

13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1** Apart from the statutory duties and obligations set out in this report, with regards to budget setting process, there are no further implications.

14. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 14.1** None required as a result of the content of this report.

15. EQUALITIES IMPACT

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

16. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

16.1 None.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

(END)

Medium Term Financial Strategy Updated November 2025

Annex A

| | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Inflation | 2.5% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% |
| Taxbase | 1.016 | 1.014 | 1.014 | 1.013 | 1.013 |
| Base | 18,231,214 | 17,270,185 | 19,612,259 | 20,172,321 | 20,872,168 |
| Inflation - Generic | | 345,404 | 392,245 | 403,446 | 417,443 |
| Inflation - Publica | (1,401,035) | 195,669 | 201,539 | 207,585 | 213,813 |
| Inflation - Retained Staff | 1,326,496 | 197,616 | 203,544 | 209,651 | 215,940 |
| Secondary Pension contribution saving | (635,039) | | | | |
| Ubico contract | 319,784 | | | | |
| New Temporary Accommodation | (28,212) | | | | |
| Leisure Contract Income | | 1,390,578 | | | |
| Disposal of Between Towns Road | (157,826) | | | | |
| MRP/RCCO movement | 192,960 | 333,010 | (76,431) | 40,000 | (121,187) |
| Investment Property Rent | (207,128) | | | | |
| External Borrowing | 37,924 | 29,798 | (10,835) | (10,835) | (10,835) |
| One-off growth - reversal of prior year | (335,900) | | | | |
| Service Area Review | 333,847 | | | | |
| Fees & Charges | (406,900) | (150,000) | (150,000) | (150,000) | (150,000) |
| Target Budget (NOE) | 17,270,185 | 19,612,259 | 20,172,321 | 20,872,168 | 21,437,342 |
| Financed by: | | | | | |
| Revenue Support Grant | (6,400,150) | (5,049,739) | (3,721,757) | (3,815,474) | (3,911,886) |
| Business Rates Share | (2,360,000) | (2,407,200) | (2,455,344) | (2,504,451) | (2,554,540) |
| Renewables | (302,976) | (302,976) | (302,976) | (302,976) | (302,976) |
| Potential Damping | 0 | (572,478) | (1,460,552) | 0 | 0 |
| Extended Producer Responsibility (Waste) | (2,990,216) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Government Grants & Business Rates | (12,053,342) | (7,759,915) | (6,480,077) | (6,622,901) | (6,769,402) |
| Investment Income - Pooled Funds | (1,156,227) | (1,040,604) | (988,574) | (968,803) | (949,427) |
| Contribution to/(from) earmarked reserves | 2,454,585 | (1,942,574) | (2,073,545) | (2,500,000) | (2,000,000) |
| Collection Fund | (133,916) | (120,000) | (115,000) | (110,000) | (100,000) |
| Council Tax | (6,359,837) | (7,004,605) | (7,357,465) | (7,707,413) | (8,064,960) |
| Total Funding | (17,248,737) | (17,867,698) | (17,014,660) | (17,909,117) | (17,883,789) |
| Use of GF reserves | 21,448 | 1,744,561 | 3,157,661 | 2,963,052 | 3,553,553 |
| TaxBase | 49,562 | 50,255 | 50,959 | 51,596 | 52,241 |
| Band D | 134.38 | 139.38 | 144.38 | 149.38 | 154.38 |
| Tax increase | 3.86% | 3.72% | 3.59% | 3.46% | 3.35% |


Draft Capital programme November 2025

Annex B

| Scheme | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 | 2031/32 | Total |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| IT Provision - Systems & Strategy | 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 600,000 |
| Council Buildings Maintenance Programme | 300,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 250,000 | 1,550,000 |
| Purchase of Temporary Accommodation | 1,200,000 | | | | | | 1,200,000 |
| IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 40,000 | 240,000 |
| Improvement Grants/Disabled Facilities Grants | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 5,280,000 |
| Investment Property Repairs | 1,000,000 | 500,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 2,100,000 |
| Replacement dog and litter bins | | | | | 25,000 | | 25,000 |
| Leisure Centre Improvement Programme | 1,501,550 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 25,000 | | | 3,526,550 |
| Shop Mobility - Replacement stock | 10,000 | | | | 10,000 | | 20,000 |
| Replacement waste and recycling fleet WESP | 3,401,266 | | | | | | 3,401,266 |
| | 8,432,816 | 2,770,000 | 2,420,000 | 1,445,000 | 1,455,000 | 1,420,000 | 17,942,816 |

| Capital Financing | 2026/27 | 2027/28 | 2028/29 | 2029/30 | 2030/31 | 2031/32 | Total |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Revenue Contributions | 450,000 | 390,000 | 390,000 | 390,000 | 390,000 | 390,000 | 2,400,000 |
| Earmarked Reserves | | | | | | | |
| Investment Property Reserve RES091 | 500,000 | | | | | | 500,000 |
| External Contributions: | | | | | | | |
| OCC Better Care Grant Funding (for DFGs) | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 880,000 | 5,280,000 |
| Extended Producer Responsibility Grant | 1,700,633 | | | | | | 1,700,633 |
| Borrowing | | | | | | | |
| Internal Borrowing | 500,000 | 500,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 1,600,000 |
| External Borrowing | 1,700,633 | | | | | | 1,700,633 |
| Capital Receipts | | | | | | | |
| Capital Receipts general fund | 2,701,550 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 25,000 | 35,000 | - | 4,761,550 |
| | 8,432,816 | 2,770,000 | 2,420,000 | 1,445,000 | 1,455,000 | 1,420,000 | 17,942,816 |

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|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE - 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26 QUARTER TWO</p> |
| <p>Wards affected</p> | <p>All</p> |
| <p>Accountable member</p> | <p>Cllr Alaric Smith Executive Member for Finance Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable officer</p> | <p>Madhu Richards, Director of Finance Email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report Author</p> | <p>Georgina Dyer, Head of Finance Email: georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – Detailed Revenue Budget Comparison Annex B – Capital Spend against Budget</p> |
| <p>Purpose</p> | <p>To detail the Council's financial performance for Quarter Two 2025-2026</p> |
| <p>Recommendation</p> | <p>That the Executive resolves to: 1. Note the Council's Financial Performance for Quarter Two 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 second quarter of the 2025/26 financial year from 1 April 2025 to 30th September 2025.
- 1.2. The report considers the significant variances in revenue income and expenditure against the approved revenue budget set by Full Council on 26th 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 a forecast revenue position at year end. This forecast should be viewed as indicative only at this stage of the financial year.

2. MAIN POINTS

Financial Performance Revenue Budget Monitoring - Summary

- 2.1. At quarter 2 (Q2) there is an overall cost of service underspend of **£272,063** against the profiled budget for the period. The key factors driving this revenue position are additional income from Trade Waste and Development Management, both of which have been exceptional in the first half of the year. Development Management income is 75% up on the same period last year due to the receipt of major applications and Trade Waste is up 52.7%.
- 2.2. There are no significant overspends to report for Q2, but any variance to the profiled budget that is over £10,000 has been included in this report.
- 2.3. Investment income through our Treasury Management activity is again performing significantly above budget, due in the main to interest rates falling more slowly over the last year than anticipated at the time of setting the 2025/26 budget. Our Treasury Management Advisors believe that there is likely to be one more interest rate cut of 0.25% this financial year. The year end forecast of an additional £375,000 of Investment interest above budget is prudent.
- 2.4. The table below sets out the summary revenue monitoring position for the 30th September 2025 against profiled budget by service area.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - Budget Monitoring

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/26 - Quarter 2, 1st April to 30th September 2025

| | Quarter 2 | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Original Budget 2025/26 | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Service Area | | | | | |
| Democratic and Committee Services | 1,412,297 | 810,189 | 822,529 | 12,340 | 13,108 |
| Environmental & Regulatory Services | 784,557 | 381,658 | 400,714 | 19,056 | 36,188 |
| Environmental Services | 8,285,567 | 3,118,182 | 3,046,027 | (72,156) | (166,458) |
| Finance, Human Resources & Procurement | 1,062,851 | 1,436,435 | 1,442,628 | 6,193 | 6,193 |
| ICT, Change & Customer Services | 2,230,097 | 2,093,081 | 2,101,259 | 8,178 | 8,178 |
| Land, Legal & Property | 841,492 | 549,903 | 539,421 | (10,481) | 962 |
| Leisure & Communities | 555,410 | (776,530) | (757,252) | 19,277 | (40,455) |
| Planning & Strategic Housing | 1,383,153 | 669,016 | 372,382 | (296,633) | (329,819) |
| Revenues & Housing Support | 1,592,014 | 414,429 | 446,315 | 31,885 | 28,169 |
| Investment Property and Retained Services | 682,434 | 669,073 | 679,352 | 10,279 | (14,888) |
| Total cost of services | 18,829,872 | 9,365,437 | 9,093,374 | (272,063) | (458,823) |
| <u>Plus:</u> | | | | | |
| Investment income receipts | (1,156,228) | (578,114) | (811,060) | (232,946) | (375,000) |
| Cost of services before financing: | 17,673,644 | 8,787,323 | 8,282,314 | (505,009) | (833,823) |

Significant Variances

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

Environment & Regulatory Services

2.5. Markets

A commercial operator now manages the markets in Witney & Chipping Norton. The outsourcing is designed to revitalise the markets with income to the Council increasing over time. At the point of transfer, income was at 50% of the budgeted target, a £17,000 overspend. The income target will be reviewed as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process to take account of the new operating model.

Environmental Services

2.6. Green Waste

Green Waste licence income has achieved £1.655m at the end of Q2, which represents 95.8% of the target for the year. Work is ongoing with Ubico to make sure that the contract sum is split accurately across Waste, Recycling and Cleansing so that the Council can have assurance that commercial elements of waste collection and recycling are, at the very minimum, covering their costs.

2.7 Trade Waste

Trade Waste is invoiced in April & September with payment taken by Direct Debit. In Q2 income is £197,000 above target. This is partially offset by expenditure of £29,000 on bins and boxes and an additional £13,000 for tipping the increased volume of waste from the growth in customer base. The forecast year end position is an underspend of £250,000. The budget for 2026/27 will be adjusted to consider the positive performance of the Trade Waste service and the contribution to service delivery. The exceptional performance of the Trade Waste service can be attributed to very active management of the customer base, invoicing and income collection by the Publica Trade Waste team in consultation with the Council's Waste team and Ubico.

2.8. Household Waste

There is an overspend from the external consultant work procured for an options appraisal of the Waste and Environmental Strategic Partnership (WESP). The intention was this should be funded through the Projects Reserve, but as there is a significant underspend in Environmental Services, it is prudent to retain this overspend in revenue.

Leisure and Communities

2.9. Communities Revenue Grant

There is an error in the base budget, which is causing an overspend of £8,510 at Q2 and forecast to increase to a £17,020 overspend at year end. This error will be corrected in the 2026/27 budget.

2.10. Recreational Facilities Development

There is a £16,000 overspend relating to the repayment of an unused portion of grant funding from Sports England. This was not known until after the 2024/25 year end and therefore it was not accrued for. The remainder of the expenditure is within the existing base budget.

2.11. Contract Management

The budget includes £50,000 for legal advice relating to the negotiations of the new leisure contract for 2027. This advice is more likely to be incurred in the second half of the year and is an underspend of £14,000 in Q2. Unbudgeted for spending includes £9,975 for the installation of energy saving showers at Carterton Leisure Centre. There are also a number of minor overspends for the appraisal of the Carterton Leisure Centre roof repairs and professional advice on the specification of the Solar PV installed. The annual contract sum is increased by CPI inflation mid year and could bring the year end contract sum to £100,000 more than budget.

Planning & Strategic Housing

2.12. Development Management

Planning Application income is £321,000 above target at Q2 due to the receipt of two major applications, offset by £63,000 of expenditure on agency staff. This income is an increase of £404,000 on the same period last year, an indication of the volatility of application income and

the difficulty in setting an appropriate budget. The income budget will be revised upwards for 2026/27 in line with advice from the Development Manager and the Head of Planning.

2.13. Development Management Appeals

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 end of January 2026 and may be revised accordingly.

Retained Services

2.14. External Audit Fees

The fees for the audit of the 2025/26 financial year will not be published until the end of November. The base budget includes £158,000 for the audit of the Statement of Accounts and a further £50,000 for the audit of the Housing Benefit system, both of which are statutory requirements. There will also be an additional cost for the increased audit assurance requirements after the adoption of a new Accounting Standard IFRS 16 Leases.

2.15. Investment Property

As a whole, Investment Property and Industrial Estates are £38,575 underspent at the end of Q2. Within the portfolio there are individual properties that are performing well above or below targets i.e. Talisman income is £64,500 better than budget due to the base budget not taking into account the end of a rent-free period in the first quarter of the financial year. This underspend is expected to increase to around £118,000 by year end.

At the other end of the scale, Carterton Industrial Estate is £34,000 overspent due to costs to keep Units 1 – 3 secure and for preparations in advance of the construction of the new roof, including repairs to the rolling shutters, electricity supply works, surveys and inspections. The forecast for year-end assumes a continuation of security measures until the construction phase has been completed.

2.16 Marriotts Walk

This was purchased by the Council in January 2023 when it was showing the effects of an institutional landlord who was not motivated to invest in the site to make it a vibrant shopping destination. This was evident in the number of long-term vacant units and tenants who felt unsupported.

In only the third year of Council ownership the situation of the shopping centre has completely turned around and is nearing full occupancy, with only 1.62% of space empty as at the end of October 2025, compared to 4.74% at the end of Q1. New tenants have moved in and existing tenants, who had expressed their intention to either vacate at the end of their lease or exercise their break clause, have instead renewed.

In spring 2026, significant and creative improvements to the public areas are scheduled, to improve seating and planting and make the space more flexible for uses such as the annual markets. Combining this with a calendar of events at Christmas, the half term holidays, Easter and the summer holidays the Council is demonstrating its commitment to making Witney an attractive destination.

We are actively developing strategies to ensure Marriotts, Woolgate, Witney High Street, and Witney Market work together as a unified destination to attract more visitors, enhance the

visitor experience, and deliver a sustainable boost to the local economy. As a Council asset, Marriotts is not only key to the strategic plans for the economy of Witney but is also budgeted to contribute £464,582 towards the provision of front-line services in this financial year.

Budget Setting 2026/27

- 2.16. Meetings with budget holders have been running throughout September and October to discuss any budgetary implications from their Service Plans for 2026/27, staffing, inflationary increases in existing contracts and growth requests. Growth requests will, in the first instance go through SLT before being included in the budget working papers going forward to Executive for approval.
- 2.17. The first draft of the budget for 2026/27, the updated MTFS and Capital Programme will go to Executive on 17th December 2025 and to Overview & Scrutiny on 7th January 2026.
- 2.18. The second draft of the budget will go to Executive on 14th January for approval of the Fees & Charges Schedule, Council Taxbase for 2026/27 and permission to submit the NNDR I form by the 31st January statutory deadline.
- 2.19. Council Taxbase must be approved by 31st January under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Fees & Charges across all Council services are reviewed every year and it is necessary that all fee earning services at least break even, with commercial services expected to make a surplus to help fund core services.
- 2.20. The final version of the budget, MTFS, Capital Programme and Strategy Papers for Investments, Capital and Treasury Management will go to full Council on 25th February.
- 2.21. It was expected that details of the Local Government finance settlement would be available earlier than normal this year but the delay of the Chancellor's Budget Announcement until the end of November has delayed the Local Government settlement announcement to just before Christmas. As reported in the Q1 budget monitoring report, 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.

Capital Programme

- 2.22. At the end of Q2 capital expenditure is £1,965,568 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.

Capital Programme 2025/26

| Scheme | Funded By | 2025/26 Total Budget | Q2 Actual |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Asset Repairs | Borrowing | 1,500,000 | 192,381 |
| Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs | Borrowing | 4,721,266 | |
| 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 | |
| CCTV - Upgrading | Capital Receipts | 255,635 | 142,180 |
| Improvement Grants (DFG) | Grant | 880,000 | 549,254 |
| UK Rural Prosperity Fund | Grant | 0 | 33,378 |
| Witney Leisure Centre PSDS | Grant/Borrowing | 1,584,841 | |
| Carterton Leisure Centre Solar PV Installation | Grant | 0 | 256,800 |
| Chipping Norton Leisure Centre PSDS | Grant/Borrowing | 2,643,926 | |
| IT Provision - Systems & Strategy | Revenue Contribution | 100,000 | 15,261 |
| Council Buildings Maintenance Programme | Revenue Contribution | 250,000 | 110,968 |
| IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc | Revenue Contribution | 40,000 | |
| Chipping Norton Creative | S106 | 0 | 21,805 |
| Windrust Place Public Art | S106 | | 2,976 |
| Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106) | S106 | 39,500 | 984 |
| Developer Capital Contributions | S106 | 0 | 639,581 |
| | | 16,165,168 | 1,965,568 |

- 2.23. The Witney PSDS project is now in the construction phase with an estimated completion date of the end of February 2026. The Leisure, Assets, Finance and Climate teams are working together to deliver the project and are working in conjunction with GLL to mitigate any operational issues caused by the construction works. 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.
- 2.24. The Council contribution includes a contingency against any additional costs that may arise during the construction phase that were not anticipated as part of the Investment Grade Proposal. The project must be completed by 31st 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.
- 2.25. The Council is set to complete on the purchase of a property in Witney in the first week of November which will provide 5 temporary emergency accommodation beds, the first property completion in a programme providing 30 additional emergency accommodation beds before the end of the financial year.
- 2.26. The programme is on track to deliver all 30 beds, with legal work currently in progress to complete on a further 6 properties by the end of Q3 and a final property in Q4. The properties will provide accommodation for both single people and families. Most of the properties will require modest to moderate refurbishment and re-configuration works which will take a little time to procure and therefore at this stage an estimated date for occupation is difficult to determine. Progress will be reported in the Q3 budget monitoring report.
- 2.27. 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. There are some key areas of optimism at the end of Q2 and these have been highlighted in the body of this report. There are no significant overspends in the first half of the year with the forecast for year-end a significant cost of service underspend, combined with Investment income from Treasury Management activity of around 32% above budget.
- 3.2. The forecast is extremely encouraging, but we must look ahead and prepare to fund the cost of the next stage of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution. There is currently no indication that there will be any funding from central government to help with these costs which are likely to be significant. Whilst the outcome of LGR for Oxfordshire will not be known until Q1 of 2026/27, it would be prudent to set aside funds as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process.
- 3.3. 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 Q2 Budget Monitoring

| | Q2 position | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Democratic Services | | | | |
| DRM001-Democratic Representation | 205,754 | 206,118 | 365 | 365 |
| DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies | 251,456 | 255,075 | 3,619 | 3,619 |
| ELE001-Registration of Electors | 119,322 | 119,554 | 232 | 1,000 |
| ELE002-District Elections | 3,000 | 3,373 | 373 | 373 |
| ELE004-Parliamentary Elections | 104,899 | 105,034 | 135 | 135 |
| ELE005-Parish Elections | 0 | 4,869 | 4,869 | 4,869 |
| ELE006-County Elections | 48,000 | 50,660 | 2,660 | 2,660 |
| ELE008-Police & Crime Commissioner Elections | 0 | 3,658 | 3,658 | 3,658 |
| SUP001-Administration | 77,759 | 74,188 | (3,571) | (3,571) |
| Total - Democratic Services | 810,189 | 822,529 | 12,340 | 13,108 |

Environmental & Regulatory Services

| | Q2 position | | | |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work | 51,633 | 56,947 | 5,314 | 5,314 |
| BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning Work | 1,702 | 2,824 | 1,122 | 1,122 |
| EMP001-Emergency Planning | 8,795 | 10,803 | 2,008 | 2,008 |
| ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt & Supp Serv | 52,009 | 52,009 | (0) | (0) |
| PSH002-Private Sector Housing-Condition of Dwellings | 1,500 | 0 | (1,500) | (1,500) |
| REG001-Environmental Health General | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| REG002-Licensing | 13,090 | 6,722 | (6,368) | (6,368) |
| REG009-Environmental Protection | 120,378 | 121,119 | 741 | 741 |
| REG011-Authorised Process | (6,000) | (3,796) | 2,204 | 2,204 |
| REG013-Pollution Control | 60,766 | 63,914 | 3,148 | 3,148 |
| REG016-Food Safety | 72,761 | 71,167 | (1,594) | (1,594) |
| REG021-Statutory Burials | 2,500 | 2,795 | 295 | 295 |
| STC011 - Abandoned Vehicles | 0 | (650) | (650) | (650) |
| TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets | 2,525 | 16,860 | 14,335 | 31,467 |
| Total - Environmental & Regulatory Services | 381,658 | 400,714 | 19,056 | 36,188 |

TAC309 - The markets in Witney and Chipping Norton are now managed by a commercial operator. As the new model develops and attracts more traders to the revitalised markets, income is expected to grow over time. The income target will be reviewed as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process.

Finance, Human Resources & Procurement

| | Q2 position | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| SUP003-Human Resources | 124,435 | 128,423 | 3,988 | 3,988 |
| HLD319 - New Initiatives | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SUP009-Accountancy | 217,997 | 219,097 | 1,100 | 1,100 |
| SUP010-Internal Audit | 116,594 | 119,821 | 3,227 | 3,227 |
| SUP011-Creditors | 20,218 | 19,861 | (357) | (357) |
| SUP012-Debtors | 28,683 | 26,833 | (1,850) | (1,850) |
| SUP013-Payroll | 27,289 | 27,289 | 0 | 0 |
| SUP019-Health & Safety | 17,412 | 17,495 | 83 | 83 |
| SUP020-Training & Development | 15,128 | 15,128 | 0 | 0 |
| SUP033-Central Purchasing | 19,810 | 19,810 | 0 | 0 |
| SUP035-Insurances | 5,081 | 5,081 | (0) | (0) |
| Total - Finance, Human Resources & Procurement | 1,436,435 | 1,442,628 | 6,193 | 6,193 |

ICT, Change & Customer Services

SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research
 SUP005-ICT
 SUP008-Reception/Customer Services
 TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment

Total - ICT, Change & Customer Services

| Q2 position | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 1,875 | 0 | (1,875) | (1,875) |
| 655,744 | 661,804 | 6,059 | 6,059 |
| 306,201 | 304,661 | (1,540) | (1,540) |
| (8,627) | (3,093) | 5,533 | 5,533 |
| 2,093,081 | 2,101,259 | 8,178 | 8,178 |

| | Q2 position | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Land, Legal & Property | | | | |
| ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop) | 4,354 | 1,784 | (2,569) | 0 |
| ADB302-Guildhall | (718) | (6,028) | (5,310) | (5,310) |
| ADB303-Woodgreen | 168,694 | 169,783 | 1,089 | 1,089 |
| ADB304-Elmfield | (60,000) | (59,701) | 299 | 299 |
| ADB305-Corporate Buildings | 426,359 | 428,662 | 2,303 | 2,303 |
| ADB306-Depot | 26,061 | 27,264 | 1,203 | 1,203 |
| FIE346-Marriotts | (385,436) | (379,154) | 6,282 | 6,282 |
| LLC001-Local Land Charges | (28,000) | (23,209) | 4,790 | 20,000 |
| SUP004-Legal | 162,305 | 150,901 | (11,404) | (11,404) |
| TAC303-Swain Court | 236,284 | 229,119 | (7,165) | (13,500) |
| Total - Land, Legal & Property | 549,903 | 539,421 | (10,481) | 962 |

LLC001 - fee income has been consistent over the year but is below budget. The forecast for year end is a £20,000 income shortfall with expenditure falling within the existing budget.

SUP004 - employee costs for the shared service are underspent due to 2 vacancies at the beginning of the year that were recruited to in Q2

TAC303 - rental income is above budget with the forecast for year end relating to a further increase in income due to the base budget being too prudent. The income target will be reviewed as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process.

| Q2 position | | | |
|----------------|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| £ | £ | £ | £ |

Leisure & Communities

| | | | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|----------|----------|
| CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction) | 176,766 | 180,891 | 4,125 | 4,125 |
| CCR002-Building Safer Communities | (10,507) | (11,172) | (665) | 0 |
| CCR301 - Communities Revenue Grant | 159,000 | 167,510 | 8,510 | 17,020 |
| CCT001-CCTV | 60,261 | 57,553 | (2,708) | (2,708) |
| CSM001-Cultural Strategy | 44,684 | 42,541 | (2,143) | (2,143) |
| CUL001-Arts Development | (110,162) | (112,762) | (2,600) | (2,600) |
| ECD001-Economic Development | 81,136 | 78,260 | (2,876) | (2,876) |
| ECD010 – SPF Community and Place | (541,975) | (541,975) | 0 | 0 |
| REC001-Sports Development | 101,873 | 108,768 | 6,895 | 6,895 |
| REC002-Recreational Facilities Development | 28,146 | 44,365 | 16,219 | 16,219 |
| REC003-Play | 43,329 | 50,595 | 7,266 | 7,266 |
| REC301-Village Halls | 7,535 | 7,535 | 0 | 0 |
| REC302-Contract Management | (989,990) | (1,001,083) | (11,093) | (80,000) |
| SUP016-Finance - Performance Review | 56,348 | 56,348 | 0 | 0 |
| TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion | 55,066 | 53,412 | (1,654) | (1,654) |

Total - Leisure & Communities

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| (838,491) | (819,213) | 19,277 | (40,455) |
|-----------|-----------|--------|----------|

CCR301 - there is an error in the base budget which has created an overspend in Q2 of £8,510, this will increase to £17,020 by year end. This will be corrected in the 2026/27 budget.

REC002 - the overspend is a repayment to Sports England prior year unused grant money that was not spent as the project came in under budget. This was not known until after the year end 2024/25 so it was therefore not accrued for. The remainder of expenditure is within existing budget.

REC302 - The budget includes £50,000 for external legal advice related to the negotiation of the new leisure contract for 2027. This legal advice is likely to be needed in the second half of the year and is an underspend of £14,000 in Q2. Unbudgeted spend includes £9,975 for the installation of energy saving showers at Carterton LC. There are also number of minor overspends for the appraisal of Carterton LC roof repairs and professional advice on the specification of Solar PV installed. The annual contract income is increased by CPI inflation mid year and could bring the year end contract sum to a forecast of c£100,000 in excess of budget.

Environmental Services

| | Q2 position | | | |
|--|----------------|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| CCC001-Climate Change | 93,238 | 94,315 | 1,077 | 1,077 |
| COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility | 8,936 | 8,335 | (601) | 0 |
| CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street | 165,468 | 162,146 | (2,412) | (2,412) |
| ENI002-Grounds Maintenance | 306,384 | 307,307 | 923 | 923 |
| ENI303-Landscape Maintenance | 39,212 | 36,989 | (2,223) | (2,223) |
| FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage | 84,097 | 85,163 | 1,066 | 1,066 |
| REG004-Dog Warden | 25,000 | 26,230 | 1,230 | 5,000 |
| REG019-Public Conveniences | 90,469 | 94,282 | 3,813 | 6,000 |
| REG023-Environmental Strategy | 41,455 | 40,877 | (578) | (578) |
| RYC001-Recycling | 1,153,779 | 1,159,959 | 6,179 | 6,179 |
| RYC002-Green Waste | (1,035,599) | (970,528) | 65,071 | 65,000 |
| RYC003-Food Waste | 538,337 | 534,486 | (3,851) | (3,851) |
| STC004-Environmental Cleansing | 473,504 | 471,164 | (2,340) | (2,340) |
| TRW001-Trade Waste | (53,068) | (207,457) | (154,389) | (250,000) |

| | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| TRW002-Clinical Waste | (250) | 0 | 250 | 250 |
| WST001-Household Waste | 1,063,869 | 1,087,319 | 23,451 | 23,451 |
| WST004-Bulky Household Waste | 9,124 | (2,211) | (11,336) | (20,000) |
| WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney | 114,229 | 116,742 | 2,513 | 6,000 |
| Total - Environmental Services | 3,118,182 | 3,045,117 | (72,156) | (166,458) |

RYC002 - income is at 96% of budget for the year. The income target will be reviewed as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process.

TRW001 - Trade Waste income is £197,000 ahead of target for the first half of the year, partially offset by £29,000 of expenditure on replacement bins and a £13,000 overspend on tipping charges - due to the higher volume of waste being collected. Invoices for September to March were raised in Q2, with the year end income position at least £295,000 above target. The year end forecast also includes additional expenditure on replacement bins and boxes.

WST001 - The overspend is due to external consultancy work undertaken by Activist on behalf of the Council to investigate options for a transformational waste strategy with Countywide partnership working.

WST004 - Bulky Waste income is £12,000 above target in Q2 and forecast to increase in the second half of the year

| | Q2 position | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Planning & Strategic Housing | | | | |
| DEV001-Development Control - Applications | (212,898) | (475,997) | (263,099) | (305,000) |
| DEV002-Development Control - Appeals | 108,254 | 71,079 | (37,175) | (20,000) |
| ENA001-Housing Enabling | 74,992 | 72,431 | (2,561) | (2,561) |
| ENI301-Landscape Initiatives | 29,596 | 28,716 | (880) | (880) |
| HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning) | (26,695) | (26,525) | 170 | 170 |
| PLP001-Planning Policy | 511,515 | 519,421 | 7,906 | 0 |
| PLP004-Conservation | 135,732 | 136,184 | 452 | 452 |
| PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv | 48,520 | 47,074 | (1,446) | (2,000) |
| Total - Planning & Strategic Housing | 669,016 | 372,382 | (296,633) | (329,819) |

DEV001 - Income is £321,000 above target due to major applications that have been received. This is offset by £63,000 of agency staff and a number of minor underspends.

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

| | Q2 position | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Retained Services | | | | |
| COR002-Chief Executive | 243,507 | 248,650 | 5,143 | 6,500 |
| COR003-Corporate Policy Making | 37,665 | 37,280 | (385) | 0 |
| COR004-Public Relations | 204,861 | 208,373 | 3,513 | 0 |
| COR005-Corporate Finance | 404,957 | 410,516 | 5,559 | 5,559 |
| COR006-Treasury Management | 13,350 | 12,600 | (750) | (1,500) |
| COR007-External Audit Fees | 104,156 | 129,000 | 24,844 | 25,000 |
| COR008-Bank Charges | 39,250 | 34,618 | (4,632) | (10,264) |
| COR012 - Publica Review | 176,932 | 176,932 | (0) | 0 |
| COR302-Publica Group | 123,370 | 130,060 | 6,690 | 5,000 |
| FIE341-Town Centre Properties | (204,709) | (201,248) | 3,461 | 5,000 |
| FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties | 42,194 | 32,253 | (9,942) | 0 |
| FIE343-Talisman | (609,513) | (677,047) | (67,535) | (118,000) |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| FIE344-Des Roches Square | (215,745) | (219,288) | (3,543) | (5,000) |
| FIE345-Gables at Elmfield | 0 | 5,415 | 5,415 | 5,415 |
| NDC001-Non Distributed Costs | 408,000 | 417,399 | 9,399 | 18,799 |
| TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate | (85,710) | (84,072) | 1,638 | 3,277 |
| TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate | (14,144) | 19,859 | 34,004 | 50,000 |
| TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate | (4,100) | (6,173) | (2,073) | (4,147) |
| TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs | 4,751 | 4,224 | (527) | (527) |
| Total - Retained Services | 669,073 | 679,352 | 10,279 | (14,888) |

COR007 - fees for the audit of the 2025/26 financial year will not be published until the end of November. The base budget includes £158,000 for the audit of the Statement of Accounts and a further £50,000 for the audit of our Housing Benefit system, both of which are statutory requirements. There will also be an additional cost for the increased audit assurance requirements subsequent to the adoption of IFRS 16 Leases.

FIE343 - Rental income for Unit 13 has been incorrectly excluded from the base budget for 2025/26, this error will be corrected for the 2026/27 budget but will cause a £107,000 underspend in the current financial year. There is also £11,000 of service charge income that relates to 2024/25 giving a Q2 underspend for rental income of £64,500.

TAC305 - the overspend relates to expenditure to secure the vacant units 1 - 3 in advance of the construction of the new roof, including repairs to the rolling shutters, electricity supply works, surveys and inspections. The forecast for year end assumes a continuation of security measures until the construction phase has been completed.

Revenues & Housing Support

| | Q2 position | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Current Budget | Actual Exp | Variance (under) / over spend | Forecast to Year End |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| HBP001-Rent Allowances | 192,543 | 195,855 | 3,312 | 0 |
| HOM001-Homelessness | 76,145 | 80,730 | 4,585 | 9,171 |
| HOM004-Refugees | 0 | 185 | 185 | 0 |
| HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accommodation | (1,995) | (137) | 1,858 | 5,000 |
| HOM006 - The Old Court | 22,520 | 31,068 | 8,548 | 8,548 |
| HOM007-Afghan Resettlement Programme | (168,193) | (168,193) | 0 | 0 |
| HOM008-Homes for Ukraine | 16,840 | 16,840 | 0 | 0 |
| LTC001-Council Tax Collection | 212,750 | 218,734 | 5,984 | (5,000) |
| LTC011-NNDR Collection | 66,497 | 64,826 | (1,672) | (5,000) |
| PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants | 25,798 | 26,248 | 450 | 450 |
| PSH004-Home Improvement Service | (28,475) | (19,842) | 8,633 | 15,000 |
| Total - Revenues & Housing Support | 414,429 | 446,315 | 31,885 | 28,169 |

PSH004 - the overspend is due to the cost of external contractors we use to conduct minor adaptations to residents homes i.e. installing external hand rails and internal grab rails. This budget will be reviewed for 2026/27.

Annex B

Capital Programme 2025/26

| Scheme | Funded By | 2025/26 Total Budget | Q2 Actual |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Asset Repairs | Borrowing | 1,500,000 | 192,381 |
| Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs | Borrowing | 4,721,266 | |
| 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 | |
| CCTV - Upgrading | Capital Receipts | 255,635 | 142,180 |
| Improvement Grants (DFG) | Grant | 880,000 | 549,254 |
| UK Rural Prosperity Fund | Grant | 0 | 33,378 |
| Witney Leisure Centre PSDS | Grant/Borrowing | 1,584,841 | |
| Carterton Leisure Centre Solar PV Installation | Grant | 0 | 256,800 |
| Chipping Norton Leisure Centre PSDS | Grant/Borrowing | 2,643,926 | |
| IT Provision - Systems & Strategy | Revenue Contribution | 100,000 | 15,261 |
| Council Buildings Maintenance Programme | Revenue Contribution | 250,000 | 110,968 |
| IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc | Revenue Contribution | 40,000 | |
| Chipping Norton Creative | S106 | 0 | 21,805 |
| Windrush Place Public Art | S106 | | 2,976 |
| Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106) | S106 | 39,500 | 984 |
| Developer Capital Contributions | S106 | 0 | 639,581 |
| | | 16,165,168 | 1,965,568 |


a

b

c

d

- a. Expenditure relates to the works on the roof of The Old Court, Chawley Park dilapidations and The Downs Road Depot. The replacement roofing works at Units 1-3 Carterton Industrial Estate and Station Lane are moving to the construction phase in November for completion in Spring 2026. These works will fully exhaust the £1,500,000 in the capital programme by the end of the financial year.
- b. 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.
- c. Completion on a property in Witney is due in the first week of November. This property will provide 5 bedrooms and requires only modest works before tenants can move in. Negotiations are at an advanced stage on a further 6 properties suitable for temporary emergency accommodation, both for single people and families. These properties will however require reconfiguration and upgrading.
- d. The Witney PSDS project began the construction phase in September and has an estimated completion date of the end of February 2026.

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and Date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE – 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025-26 QUARTER TWO</p> |
| <p>Wards Affected</p> | <p>ALL</p> |
| <p>Accountable Member</p> | <p>Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable Officer</p> | <p>Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report author</p> | <p>Alison Borrett – Senior Performance Analyst. Email: alison.borrett@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Purpose</p> | <p>To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2025-26 Quarter Two (Q2).</p> |
| <p>Annex</p> | <p>Annex A - Council Priorities report Annex B - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex C - Performance indicator report</p> |
| <p>Recommendation.</p> | <p>That the Executive Resolves to: I. Note the 2025/26 Q2 service performance report.</p> |
| <p>Corporate Priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| <p>Key Decision</p> | <p>NO</p> |
| <p>Exempt</p> | <p>NO</p> |
| <p>Consultees/ Consultation</p> | <p>Publica Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.</p> |

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** The new Council Plan was adopted in January 2023 and the Action Plan, setting out how the priorities within the Council Plan will be delivered, then followed. Additionally, following on from the external audit report in August 2023 which included a recommendation to review performance management to match the Council Plan and measure performance, a new performance framework has been developed. 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 Q2 include:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was formally adopted by Full Council on 1 October. An implementation plan is now being developed, with the levy scheduled to take effect from 31 January 2026.
- Following the successful September Executive on Tour event held in Carterton, initial engagement with residents began for the Carterton Area Strategy through a focus group session, helping shape early priorities for the emerging strategy. A key milestone was the formal launch of the Economic Regeneration Lead, who will work with Cllr Sumner to drive the strategy forward.
- New commercial operators took over the management of Witney and Chipping Norton markets from 1 August, bringing a fresh approach that has revitalised the atmosphere and increased footfall. Meanwhile, specialist markets at Marriotts Walk continue to attract visitors and add vibrancy to the local offer.
- West Oxfordshire became the first district in Oxfordshire to endorse the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), following Executive approval on 10 September. Officers continue to play an active role in partnership forums and working groups to support biodiversity net gain across the district.
- Ecological surveys were completed across five council-owned sites over the summer, as part of the Council's commitment to enhancing biodiversity. The consultant's reports are now under review, with recommendations for habitat improvements and nature-based enhancements to be implemented in 2026.
- A communications strategy has been developed to support the Coronation Community Orchard Scheme, with monthly meetings between the Nature Recovery team and Communications officers to oversee delivery. Two management workshops, on tree pruning and wildflower grassland (orchard understory) management, are planned for early 2026.

- Construction is underway at Windrush Leisure Centre through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The project will significantly reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency across the site.

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

3.1 The Council's overall performance remains positive, with continued progress in key areas. Revenue collection for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates is ahead of expectations, planning determination times remain well above target and customer satisfaction continues to be exceptionally high. Leisure services also performed strongly, with sustained engagement in gym memberships and leisure centre visits and the delivery of affordable homes significantly exceeded quarterly expectations. However, some challenges persist. Processing times for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit change events, while improving, remain above target due to the cumulative nature of the metric and operational complexities linked to Universal Credit migration. Freedom of Information response times dipped below the target and performance in Land Charges searches were affected by staffing pressures late in the quarter. Environmental performance also faces ongoing challenges, with household recycling rates impacted by seasonal factors and wider national trends.

3.2 Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (58.99% against a target of 58%)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected (60.59% against a target of 58%)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims (19.16 days against a target of 20 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.12% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (98.27% against a target of 90%)
- Building Control Satisfaction (100% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (81.82% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (98.21% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (97.33% against a target of 80%)
- Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (202 against a target of 138)
- 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) (89.58 against a target of 90)
- Missed bins per 100,000 (41.02 against a target of 120)
- (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (5,749 memberships against a target of 5,023 memberships)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres (226,202 visits against a target of 189,446)

3.3 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (9.23 days against a target of 5 days) and Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (7.8 days against a target of 4 days)

The Council saw a reduction in processing times for both Council Tax Support (CTS) change of events and Housing Benefit (HB) changes of circumstances compared to Q1. However, cumulative averages remain above the respective targets of 5 days for CTS and 4 days for HB, with CTS changes averaging 9.23 days and HB changes averaging 7.8 days.

The improvement in CTS processing times was largely driven by automation enhancements and the clearance of a backlog during Q1. Around 85% of income-related changes were batch processed during the quarter, significantly accelerating turnaround times. Notably, the average CTS processing time for July to September was just 2.71 days, well within target.

While further improvements are anticipated, the cumulative nature of the metric means it is unlikely to fall within target before the end of the financial year.

Housing Benefit continues to present challenges. The team are prioritising Full Claim Reviews mandated by the DWP, which are often complex and subject to delays in receiving full supporting evidence.

The HB caseload now primarily consists of pension-age claimants and temporary accommodation cases, following the migration to Universal Credit. With fewer HB changes occurring, any delay has a more pronounced impact on average processing times.

To support residents and strengthen financial resilience, the Council continues to deliver targeted initiatives through the Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT). Campaigns include:

- **Benefit Maximisation:** Identifying households not receiving their full entitlement, such as Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, and Council Tax Support.
- **Income Deficit Support:** Targeting households in financial deficit to provide tailored advice and assistance.
- **Pension Credit Campaign:** Letters sent to 233 pension-age households resulted in 68 successful claims, unlocking over £250,000 in financial support.
- **Warm Homes Campaign:** Promoting eligibility for the Warm Home Discount among low-income households with high energy costs.

These initiatives are helping to reduce financial vulnerability and ensure residents receive the support they are entitled to.

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days (83.16% against a target of 90%)

During Q2, the Council responded to 83.16% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the 20-day timeframe, a decline from 89.1% in Q1 and below the target of 90%. The majority of requests continue to be directed toward Development Management, Environmental Services (ERS), Revenues and Benefits, and Housing, reflecting sustained public interest in these areas.

To strengthen transparency and improve FOI performance, the Council is taking a proactive approach to reviewing internal processes and identifying opportunities for improvement. This includes exploring ways to streamline request handling, enhance coordination across high-volume service areas, and reinforce awareness of statutory response times. By embedding best practices and promoting a culture of responsiveness, the Council aims to restore compliance with national standards and ensure residents continue to receive timely access to information.

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (38.46% against a target of 30%)

As of the end of Q2, the cumulative percentage of planning appeals allowed stands at 38.46%, exceeding the Council's internal target of no more than 30%. Between 1 July and 30 September 2025, five appeals were determined, with one upheld in favour of the applicant, resulting in a Q2-specific allowance rate of 20%.

Of these five appeals:

- Three were Upland applications, none of which were allowed (0% allowance rate).
- Two were Lowlands applications, with one allowed (50% allowance rate).

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. Currently, West Oxfordshire is below the threshold for both major and non-major appeals, sitting at around 7.9% and 1.1%, respectively.

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (82.09% against a target of 90%)

The Council's performance against the 10-day target for completing official Land Charges searches declined in Q2, falling from 98.67% in Q1 to 82.09%, below the 90% target.

Performance remained strong through July and August, consistently exceeding target (97.78%), but a sharp drop in September impacted the quarterly average. This was primarily due to the long-term absence of a Land Charges team member, which reduced resilience across the service. Despite these challenges, the average turnaround time for searches was only 7.25 days, remaining below the 10-day target.

To address this, additional support has been deployed from the Customer Service and Support Service Team, enabling specialist staff to focus on completing searches. These measures are expected to stabilise performance and improve continuity going forward.

Percentage of household waste recycled (56.23% against a target of 62%)

During Q2, the Council recorded a decline in its household recycling rate of around 2.5% 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.

Nationally, recycling rates continue to face challenges, and West Oxfordshire is no exception. During the summer months, the district experienced unusually dry weather, which led to a 25% drop in garden waste tonnages compared to the same period last year. Because garden waste

represents a significant share of the recycling stream, this seasonal decline has had a noticeable impact on overall recycling performance.

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 10 December 2025. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to the 17 December 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. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) is not required because it is a quarterly review report for the Executive to note.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRIORITIES REPORT
July – September 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 surveys and focus groups, alongside feedback from 177 parents. The assessment revealed significant challenges, including the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, social lives, and access to services.

Following a review of the findings in October 2023, the Council committed to strengthening youth engagement and approved the recruitment of a full-time Youth Development Officer in February 2024. Since taking up the role, the officer has engaged with over 29 community groups, four secondary schools, and multiple town and parish councils. Six thematic priorities have been identified: developing new youth provision, sustaining existing services, improving safety and wellbeing, supporting work and skills, promoting volunteering, and amplifying youth voice.

Key initiatives include:

- Supporting the revival of youth clubs in areas with limited provision, such as Eynsham and Stonesfield.
- Facilitating partnerships to address anti-social behaviour and mental health, including work with Witney Town Council and Thames Valley Police.
- Promoting youth-friendly employment and exploring a Youth Assembly to engage young people in climate action and local democracy.

To support youth-led innovation, the Council allocated £20,000 from its COMF budget to fund initiatives through Westhive, its civic crowdfunding platform. As of Spring 2025, 12 projects have been successfully funded, with over £412,000 pledged and a dedicated £20,000 ringfenced for youth-led ideas. The Council continues to pledge up to £12,000 per project, encouraging young residents to shape their communities.

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 initiative provides shared accommodation and tailored support for single individuals under 35 on out-of-work benefits. In July 2024, the Executive approved a two-year funding extension to continue the programme until October 2026, recognising its success in supporting young people into employment, education, and independent living.

In parallel with other strategic initiatives, the Council remains actively involved in shaping the future of local government through the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process. The government intends to replace the current two-tier system of district and county councils with new unitary authorities and has invited councils to submit proposals that meet national criteria.

In response, five councils, including West Oxfordshire, have collaborated on a proposal to create 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 South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, and West Berkshire.

These names are working titles and may change. The aim is to establish financially sustainable, locally accountable councils that deliver high-quality services while maintaining strong community connections. The proposal also ensures continuity of key services—such as social care—by retaining existing arrangements from Oxfordshire County Council and West Berkshire Council, avoiding costly disaggregation.

The proposal focuses on improving service delivery, economic development, infrastructure, environmental protection, and addressing local priorities such as housing and flooding. A public engagement exercise ran from 4 June to 16 July 2025, with results expected in late November. Residents were invited to share their views via twocouncils.org and attend local events.

While this two-unitary model is one of three options under consideration, Oxfordshire County Council has submitted a competing proposal for a single countywide unitary authority, arguing it would offer stronger, simpler services and greater financial resilience. A third option proposes three unitary councils, including a standalone Greater Oxford authority.

The government is expected to make a final decision in 2026, with implementation likely in 2028.

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. Following the commissioning of new viability evidence in March 2023 and an eight-week public consultation in August–September 2024, West Oxfordshire District Council formally submitted its updated CIL Charging Schedule for independent examination in March 2025. A public hearing was held on 10 June 2025.

The independent examiner approved the Draft Charging Schedule in July 2025, 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. The Council formally adopted the Charging Schedule on 1 October 2025, with implementation confirmed for 31 January 2026. From that date, 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. A proportion of CIL receipts will also be passed directly to the relevant town or parish council to support locally determined priorities.

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 Council's revised Net Zero Carbon Development policy was found sound by the Planning Inspector in August 2025, subject to several modifications. A six-week public consultation on the proposed modifications opened on 3 October 2025, allowing stakeholders to comment before final adoption. It will close on 14 November 2025. The modifications aim to improve clarity and practicality, and once adopted, will position Salt Cross as a leading example of sustainable placemaking in the UK. The first homes are still expected around 2029–2030.

The Carterton Area Strategy remains a central focus of West Oxfordshire's Local Plan 2041. A key milestone was reached during the Executive on Tour event in Carterton, which featured a dedicated focus group session with residents. This session provided an important opportunity for early public engagement, helping to shape the direction of the emerging strategy and offering insights into local priorities and aspirations.

The event also marked the formal launch of the newly appointed Economic Regeneration Lead, who will play a pivotal role in driving the strategy forward. Working closely with Cllr Sumner, the Lead will ensure Carterton's growth is sustainable and aligned with broader district objectives. To build on this momentum, further consultation is planned to deepen community involvement and refine the strategic focus. An Outcomes Framework will be developed to guide implementation, track progress, and ensure the strategy delivers tangible benefits for the town.

Key themes identified for Carterton's future include:

- Enhancing the town centre and public realm.
- Supporting business growth and inward investment.
- Improving transport and connectivity.
- Aligning housing development with employment opportunities.
- Strengthening links with RAF Brize Norton and the wider industrial base.

A dedicated Carterton Area Strategy Officer is still expected to be appointed in early 2026, with a full strategic blueprint anticipated by 2028.

The Carterton and Surrounding Area LCWIP was formally approved by Oxfordshire County Council on 9 October 2025. The plan outlines a 10-year strategy to improve walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure, aiming to reduce car dependency and promote active travel. It was shaped by public consultation and will guide future funding bids and infrastructure delivery across Carterton and nearby communities.

Eynsham LCWIP entered public consultation on 29 September 2025, with the consultation closing on 27 October 2025. The draft plan proposes improvements to active travel routes and infrastructure, including traffic-free paths and heritage-sensitive wayfinding. Both LCWIPs support the Council's climate goals and ambitions for healthier, more connected communities.

The proposed upgrades to Witney High Street and Market Square — including resurfacing, new seating, tree planting, and better accessibility — are under review following the close of a statutory consultation on 17 October 2025. If objections were raised, a report will be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Highway Management later this year.

One issue already flagged is the reduction in taxi rank spaces, which has prompted a closer look at the design to ensure it meets the needs of all users while supporting the town's regeneration goals. The Council is reviewing feedback to ensure the final design reflects the needs of all users and supports the town's long-term regeneration.

Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife



Actions we are taking

West Oxfordshire District Council has completed the Preferred Policy Options consultation for its emerging Local Plan 2041. This stage outlines the strategic direction for managing growth and development across the district, including updated objectives and preferred approaches to housing, transport, climate, economy, infrastructure, and wellbeing. It does not include specific site allocations; a separate consultation focused on development locations is expected later in 2025. The consultation ran from 26 June to 8 August 2025, hosted online via the Council's engagement platform, with hard copies available at Council offices and libraries. A series of public drop-in events were held across the district, alongside online sessions, enabling residents and stakeholders to engage directly with planning officers. Feedback gathered will inform the next stage of plan preparation.

The Council continues to develop its evidence base, including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Phase I Water Cycle Study, building on the Environment Agency's 'Spheres of Influence' pilot. Site assessments are underway, evaluating factors such as flood risk and foul water capacity to inform future allocations. Additional central government funding has been secured to support the Regulation 18 stage, and developer contributions are being captured through the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth.

The Council is actively progressing its Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy. A flagship initiative is the habitat bank at Pudlicote Farm, where low-productivity farmland is being restored to wildflower meadows, wetlands, and native woodlands. This project, developed in partnership with landowners and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, will generate biodiversity units for developers and contribute to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Most Council-owned land is unsuitable for BNG delivery due to either small amenity grassland patches or existing high ecological value, so the focus is shifting to LNRS implementation.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy was endorsed by the Executive on 10 September 2025, making West Oxfordshire the first district council in Oxfordshire to do so. Publication by Oxfordshire County Council is expected in November 2025. The Council's Nature Recovery Team meets monthly with Communications officers to implement a new communications strategy. Two management workshops—on tree pruning and wildflower grassland management—are planned for early 2026, with a contingency training programme in place should funding not be fully spent by March.

Ecological consultants have surveyed five sites over the summer, with reports now under review. Recommendations for biodiversity enhancements and revised management practices will be implemented in 2026. The Council continues to explore investment in farmer-led woodland planting schemes to support carbon sequestration and climate resilience.

The Council is also supporting the Windrush in Witney project, a landscape-scale initiative to restore floodplains through grazing, floral enhancement, and willow pollarding. Although the initial funding bid scheduled for August was missed, the Council's nature recovery team continues to support the Wychwood Forest Trust, with a revised bid now planned for November 2025. A workshop day is being organised to finalise the application.

Other ongoing initiatives include the Coronation Community Orchard Scheme, which has funded 17 orchards to date and has been extended to March 2026, and the Deer Park South Access Project, which has delivered improved public access and environmental education. A habitat survey has been completed, and land management plans are being developed.

The Council continues to facilitate the Evenlode Catchment Partnership and is engaging with the Windrush Catchment Partnership to explore further collaboration. Climate resilience was discussed at the last quarterly meeting, and the Principal Ecologist now sits on the newly established steering group.

The Nature and Health Inequality project is ongoing, with officers running sessions in Witney and Chipping Norton. Collaborative working has enabled engagement with YouMove families, in partnership with the Community Physical Activity Officer, and with researchers from the University of Oxford.

Finally, Ubico has submitted a business case to compost material at the Station Lane depot, aiming to reduce the need for purchased compost. The Council is also reviewing its capacity to manage County-owned verges, with the aim of enhancing biodiversity through revised maintenance practices.



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 ambition is being delivered through the Climate Change Strategy 2025–2030, approved in July, alongside the Carbon Action Plan 2024–2030 and the West Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Plan. Together, these documents outline coordinated actions to reduce emissions, enhance biodiversity, and build climate resilience.

The Council has made significant progress in decarbonising its estate. Heat decarbonisation plans for Elmfield Council Offices, Welch Way, and the Old Court House were completed in March 2024. Solar PV installation at Elmfield is now operational, enabling tenants to benefit from renewable energy while allowing the Council to recover costs through recharges or power purchase agreements.

At Windrush Leisure Centre, the £1.6 million PSDS Phase 3c decarbonisation project is on target, with contractors on-site and construction progressing as planned. A change in project management has not affected programme or cost delivery.

However, the PSDS Phase 4 project for Chipping Norton Leisure Centre has been cancelled following a decision by SLT and Members not to utilise the £2.2 million grant funding. This will significantly impact the Council's ability to meet its 2030 carbon neutrality target. Similarly, the lack of grant funding for Carterton Leisure Centre (PSDS 3b) means that while solar PV has been installed, the centre continues to produce high levels of carbon emissions, limiting the effectiveness of decarbonisation efforts.

Energy efficiency measures at 3 Welch Way are progressing, with funding for low-carbon heating and solar PV to be included in the 2026/27 budget.

The Council continues to expand its electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with 76 EV charging points now operational across Council-owned car parks. Participation in the Oxfordshire Local EV Infrastructure (OxLEVI) programme is ongoing, with preferred suppliers appointed and plans to triple public EV provision by 2025.

A Waste Environmental Services Programme (WESP) business case is being drafted with partners. However, it currently lacks consideration of infrastructure needs such as net zero depots and fleet decarbonisation. A fleet review has been completed, and procurement is underway for four electric food waste vehicles, with further electrification planned for vehicles due for replacement.

The Council remains a key partner in CAPZero, a community energy plan covering eight parishes. Work continues to accelerate domestic and commercial retrofit, using Arup's preliminary retrofit report to identify priority actions. The Council is promoting ESOX assessments and grant funding for commercial retrofit.

The Greenlight online hub continues to support community-led climate action, with recent updates including a retrofit competition, funding information, and expanded resources. The Council is also engaging with town and parish councils, catchment partnerships, and external stakeholders to support climate mitigation and resilience. Youth networks are being identified to improve climate awareness and empower younger generations.

The Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool (SIAT) is now mandatory for all Council decisions, with staff and members trained to assess climate and nature impacts across projects and policies.

In the private housing sector, the Council is preparing to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for privately rented homes. Reported breaches will be investigated and enforced. A report was submitted to the Executive in April 2025 to secure funding for an Asset Management Strategy, which will include carbon efficiency assessments of tenanted buildings.

Through the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2), 15 homes received funding in Year 1 to improve energy efficiency. Eligibility has expanded to households with incomes up to £39,000 and EPC ratings of D or below. The Council is working with Welcome the Warmth and Oxfordshire County Council to deliver insulation, solar PV and low-carbon heating systems.

A countywide energy baseline and modelling exercise is nearing completion, with Executive approval granted to progress to a district-level Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). Local Plan energy policies are under review ahead of the Regulation 19 submission.

West Oxfordshire was named the top-performing rural district in the UK in the 2025 Council Climate Action Scorecards, reflecting strong strategic planning and community engagement. Key initiatives contributing to this recognition include the Better Housing Better Health programme, Coronation Community Orchard Scheme, and ongoing carbon literacy training.



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 extending key projects into the 2025/26 funding year, with final allocations of £327,146 (UKSPF) and £214,829 (REPF) confirmed.

The Council has launched several new business support schemes, including the West Oxfordshire Business Boost Grant, offering up to £5,000 for capital investment projects that promote growth, innovation, and sustainability. This scheme complements existing grants such as:

- Shop Front Improvement Grants – up to £1,000
- Visitor Economy Grants – up to £10,000
- Rural Enterprise Growth Grants – up to £20,000

Applications for these closed in July 2025, and delivery partners remain on track. Six-month impact reporting begins in October.

The Westhive civic crowdfunding platform continues to be a flagship initiative. By the end of Round 4 (July 2025), 28 projects were supported with a combined value of £948,172. A detailed report is due to go to the Executive on 12 November 2025.

Recent highlights include:

- Youth Development Officer initiatives inspiring youth-led projects in Stonesfield, Freeland, and Eynsham.
- Youth Partnership established with Witney Town Council and Thames Valley Police, focusing on exploitation and inclusion.
- YouMove programme now supports over 500 families, offering free and low-cost access to leisure activities.
- Leisure Cards scheme under the GLL contract provides free access to leisure centres for participants experiencing poor mental health.

The Council continues to engage with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) through forums in major settlements and biannual Health and Wellbeing Alliance meetings. In 2024/25, £273,682 in UKSPF funding was distributed to VCS groups via Westhive.

New initiatives include:

- Recruitment of a Food Action Plan Officer to support delivery of the West Oxfordshire Food Action Plan.
- Launch of the Community Activity Grant (CAG) scheme, with decisions due in October 2025, offering £500–£1,000 for small-scale community action projects.
- Introduction of the Community Insight Profile Grant Scheme, funded by OCC Public Health, to support VCS groups in Witney Central. Decisions are expected in November 2025.

The Carbon Action Fund has performed strongly, supporting SMEs to reduce their carbon footprint. It has been submitted for consideration for an LGC Award. Meanwhile, the Tools for Tomorrow initiative is addressing gaps in local construction trade provision.

An additional £60,000 has been invested in the Westhive Community Infrastructure Fund, supporting projects focused on inclusion, mental health, and youth engagement.

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Corporate Strategy Action Tracker

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| 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 2 Update | Start Date | Date Due | Status | Executive Member | Link Officer |
|-----|-------------------------|---|---|---|------------|------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| I.I | Putting Residents First | <p>The Council will listen and act in the best interests of residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being an outward facing, accessible, inclusive and open Council, improving our use of technology to increase understanding and access to what we do, how we work and the decisions we take -Providing easy to use platforms for public consultations that are effective, accessible and timely so that the voice of residents can be heard in planning and other Council decisions -Positively engaging with and listening to locally elected representatives on Town and Parish Councils -Actively seeking the voice of the seldom heard, including those of young people, to understand their particular needs and ensure that the Council is taking decisions that meet these needs. | Explore how the Council leads Youth Engagement, ensuring youth are engaged across the wide range of activity it undertakes. | Youth Dev Officer liaising with internal colleagues inc Climate, Economic Development and Communications. | | | On Target | Rachel Crouch | Heather McCulloch |
| | | | Customer Experience Improvement Programme | Completed | 01/07/2020 | 01/01/2024 | Complete | Andy Graham | Giles Hughes |

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| I.2 | Putting Residents, Young and Old, at the Heart of What We Do | The Council will act with outstanding levels of transparency and accountability, with high standards of governance and trustworthiness. | <p>Proposal to implement a robust system and process for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > the allocation of matters to the councils' forward plans > report preparation, consultation and approval > transparency and publication of decision making; and > decision tracking. | Completed | 01/05/2021 | 31/12/2023 | Complete | Andy Graham | Giles Hughes |
| I.3 | | The Council will actively manage Council budgets, delivering good levels of service through the wise and efficient use of funds available as well as enabling those budgets to grow so that the Council can take action towards the priorities of this Council Plan. | Procurement: Publica-wide project to embed climate, ecological and social value considerations in procurement processes to maximise the use of sustainable suppliers and support local businesses. | The Procurement Act 2023 came into effect in February, introducing new processes based on contract value. These changes are now reflected in our updated contract procedure rules, which apply to all purchases across Publica and our partner councils. To support officers, we've launched a new Procurement Toolkit—a step-by-step guide with templates and legal/policy requirements for each stage. Toolkit training will be available in December, and the Procurement Team remains on hand to support procurements over £30,000. | | | In Progress | Alaric Smith | Ciaran O'Kane / Phil Martin |
| | | Ensure the timely provision of built and green infrastructure which meets the needs of existing and incoming residents and that supports health and care to enable physical and mental well-being, community cohesion and delivers a high quality of life. | Adopt and implement CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). | The Council's CIL charging schedule was formally adopted by Full Council on 1 October. An implementation plan is currently being developed based on a CIL effective commencement date of 31 January 2026. | 01/11/2019 | 31/08/2024 | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Hugo Ashton | Giles Hughes / Chris Hargraves |
| | | | Commission (Sport England) Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) through Max Associates to inform a West Oxfordshire Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Strategy which will define a more holistic leisure provision offer (inc. arts, culture, entertainment and sport). The SOPM will also inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (and Local Plan Review) and Town Centre regeneration plans. | Completed | 01/09/2023 | 20/11/2024 | Complete | Tim Sumner | Rachel Biles |

2.1

Enabling a
Good Quality
of Life for All

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| Explore opportunities for green investment for strategic development areas eg through the Carterton Masterplan and also through the Pan-Regional Partnership. | The Pan-Regional Partnership concluded in May 2025. A joint Officer and Oxford Growth Commission event, hosted with PGC Chair Neale Coleman, included a tour of strategic growth sites showcasing green investment opportunities, particularly at Salt Cross Garden Village. Further initiatives are progressing through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in collaboration with the Low Carbon Hub and Green Fund, helping businesses develop energy action plans and secure funding for sustainable infrastructure. Looking ahead, the Carterton Area Strategy will gain momentum with the appointment of a new Economic Development Lead. | 01/01/2023 | 31/08/2025 | On Target | Tim Sumner, Andrew Prosser | Sam Stronach |
| Explore how the Local Plan can address the issue of securing long term maintenance of green infrastructure on large SDAs. | Good progress continues to be made on the emerging Local Plan with a spatial options consultation taking place from 3 November to 22 December 2025. The updated timetable for the Local Plan indicates that the final draft plan will be published in May 2026. This will address a broad range of policy topics including the provision and maintenance of green infrastructure on strategic sites. | 31/08/2022 | 31/08/2025 | On Target | Andrew Prosser | Chris Hargraves |
| Consideration of community stewardship and maintenance of Strategic Development Areas – how do we enable this? | Good progress continues to be made on the emerging Local Plan with a spatial options consultation taking place from 3 November to 22 December 2025. The updated timetable for the Local Plan indicates that the final draft plan will be published in May 2026. This will address a broad range of policy topics including the provision and maintenance of green infrastructure on strategic sites. | 31/08/2022 | 31/08/2025 | On Target | Andrew Prosser | Chris Hargraves |

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| 2.2 | | Work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to increase the opportunity for residents to travel around and beyond the District on foot or by bike, or on public transport, to reduce car dependence and benefit from the health and economic benefits of doing so. | | Carterton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Project (LCWIP) will be submitted to OCC's Cabinet Member Decision for Transport on 9 October for formal adoption. Eynsham LCWIP is underway. | 10/09/2021 | | In Progress | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | Explore the scope for alternative means of delivering the range of homes in the District that meet the diverse needs of our communities, such as investment in tenures and sizes of homes that the market does not currently deliver enough of. | Strategic Housing Project: Internal management and modelling – proposals to be presented to Executive in paper compiled by 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 |
| | | | 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 |
| | | | 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. A recent example is partnership working with an RP to appraise, commission and develop a Council land asset at Woodford Way. This approach protects the Councils interests, offers protection from financial and resource risk, and it also provides clarity on the desired outcome. | 01/04/2023 | | On Target | Geoff Saul | Giles Hughes |

2.3

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

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.

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| 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 current Business Case and block plan drawings for Woodford Way demonstrates that a housing scheme can feasibly be developed which integrates sufficient car parking whilst retaining the existing EVPC provision. The proposed parking solution includes the car parking capacity available at the Marriotts multi-storey car park in close proximity to the site. The recent car parking strategy makes this position clear, but even more, further work is being done to quantify this. | 01/04/2023 | | On Target | Geoff Saul | 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 |
| Emergency accommodation – Acquisition of - consider the balance – single/couple and family accommodation). | A total of 28 bedspaces have been identified in the pipeline for acquisition. These are predominantly to meet the needs of single persons which is the overriding demand from the housing register. Each property transaction is at varying stages of surveys, legal work in preparation for completion and exchange of contracts. | | | In Progress | Geoff Saul | Jon Dearing |
| Completion of housing development at Walterbush Road, Chipping Norton. | Longstop date for development partner extended to 1st December 2025. Development partner has now confirmed that the sale to them is unlikely to proceed due to inability to secure funding. Officers are working on alternative option to bring forward. | 01/10/2021 | 31/07/2023 | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Geoff Saul | 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. | Complete | 01/04/2023 | 31/09/2024 | Complete | Geoff Saul | 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. | Carterton Strategic Plan now underway and being led by Phil Martin - Director of Place. Strong inter-relationship with the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043. | | | In Progress | Duncan Enright | Chris Hargraves |

2.4

health and wellbeing and ensuring equal access to opportunity for all.

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| Strategy and plan for reinvigorating the District's Charter Markets | <p>Since 1 August, Cotswold Markets have taken over the charter markets in Chipping Norton and Witney, creating a fresh atmosphere that's boosted public engagement and positive feedback. We'll monitor progress and seek opportunities to grow the market offer.</p> <p>Local traders report increased footfall and renewed competition on market days. Councillor Duncan Enright has filmed a segment at the markets, due for release soon.</p> <p>Income from the markets will help support start-up businesses with stalls, while specialist markets will continue at Marriotts Walk throughout the year. Market operators will also help shape Public Realm improvements to ensure markets thrive alongside new developments.</p> | | | Complete | Duncan Enright | 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 |
| 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. | <p>We are progressing work to secure Section 106 funding for a wayfinding signage project in Witney, with an executive report drafted and stakeholder engagement underway.</p> <p>Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), we are delivering a Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme with Planning, and several businesses have already applied for funding. We have launched the Rural Enterprise Growth Grant and West Oxfordshire Business Boost Grant, and are supporting the Tourism Team with the Visitor Economy Grant Scheme, due to conclude in Q3. A programme of Business Breakfast Briefings is now in place, featuring sector speakers to provide support and gather feedback on the local economy. We continue to support town partnerships and share updates regularly through Chamber of Trade meetings.</p> | 01/12/2022 | 31/05/2025 | On Target | Duncan Enright | Sam Stronach |
| Oxfordshire County Council improvements to Witney Town Centre linked to Marriotts Walk redevelopment where appropriate. | Proposed High Street and Market Square improvements are back out for consultation, concluding later in October 2025. The County Council will review the responses and, if necessary (i.e. if objections are received) prepare a report to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Highway Management at a meeting scheduled for later in 2025. | | | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Duncan Enright | Sam Stronach |

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| 2.5 | | | Guide the future delivery of Salt Cross new garden village and associated infrastructure to enable delivery of Salt Cross Science Park. | Area Action Plan policy. Planning Inspector's decisions have been received by WODC finding the Net Zero policy 2 to be legally sound subject to modifications. Modifications have been agreed with the Inspector and sustainability appraisal updated. 6 week public consultation will follow 3rd October - 14 November 2025. Inspector's final report due December 2025 & opportunity for WODC to adopt the AAP. The 2020 outline planning application (OPA) is being reviewed in light of the examined AAP & in preparation of AAP adoption. A programme has been agreed with GDL & planning performance agreement is being updated for WODC & OCC. | 01/01/2018 | 31/12/2034 | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Duncan Enright | 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 12 lease completed and fitout in progress. Unit 6 Agreement for Lease completed and planning permission granted, landlord fitout in progress. Terms agreed with prospective tenant for Unit 14a. Public Realm designs and costings in train. | | | On Target | Duncan Enright | 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 successful Executive on Tour event in Carterton, residents engaged in a focus group to help shape the emerging Carterton Area Strategy and share early priorities. The event also marked the launch of the new Economic Regeneration Lead, who will drive the strategy with Tim Sumner to ensure sustainable growth aligned with district objectives. Next steps include further consultation and development of an Outcomes Framework to guide delivery and measure progress. The Economic Regeneration Lead will focus on key themes: improving the town centre and public realm, supporting business growth and investment, enhancing transport and connectivity, aligning housing with jobs, and strengthening links with RAF Brize Norton and the wider industrial base. | 01/02/2022 | 31/05/2025 | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Alaric Smith, Hugo Ashton, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner | Sam Stronach |
| | | 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. | Ongoing, Ubico have submitted a business case to compost material at the Station Lane depot to reduce the need to purchase. Currently reviewing capacity to take on the management of County owned verges to encourage biodiversity. Wildflower meadows at Woodgreen have been managed. No use of Glyphosate at Woodgreen also agreed. | 01/04/2025 | 01/03/2026 | On Target | Lidia Arciszewska | Si Pocock-Cluley |

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| 3.1 | Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife | 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. | Ecological consultant has been surveying and assessing the 5 sites over the summer and their report has been submitted. This is being reviewed over the winter period and a set of recommendations for changes to management and other biodiversity enhancements will be agreed for implementation during 2026. Roadside verge nature reserves are also in discussion with the Ubico contract managers to facilitate a change in management regime. | 01/02/2022 | 01/03/2026 | On Target | Lidia Arciszewska | Si Pocock-Cluley / Hannah Kenyon |
| | | 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. | Meeting attended with the landscape recovery project officers to discuss Biodiversity Net Gain considerations with WODC Principal Ecologist and Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment on 17th September 2025. Support was given to the project and further meetings and discussed will be needed in due course. | | | 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. | August 2025 submission of bid was missed. Ongoing support being provided to Wychwood Forest Trust by WODC nature recovery team - Principal Ecologist is liaising regularly with WFT CEO. It is likely that this will be refreshed in January 2026 with a project team meeting to discuss the way forward and agree next steps. WFT CEO is adamant that they do not want to submit a bid application that is not robust and cannot be fully supported. It also needs to be updated in light of recent policies, including the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and staffing changes at the Lower Windrush Valley Project. | 01/05/2022 | 01/03/2025 | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | Coronation Community Orchard Scheme | A communications strategy has been produced. The Nature Recovery team meet monthly with Comms officers to discuss implementation of the strategy. Two management workshops are being organised for delivery early in the new year - one on tree pruning and the other on wildflower grassland management (orchard understory). Contingency plan in place if money is not spent by end of March 2026 (training programme during summer/autumn 2026), which has been agreed with Defra. | 01/11/2023 | 21/03/2025 | On Target | Andrew Prosser/Lidia Arciszewska | Hannah Kenyon |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--|--|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3.2 | The Council will be a progressive custodian of our environmental resources, supporting a healthy natural landscape and functioning ecosystem which is rich in wildlife and habitats that are enjoyed by and benefit | 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. | Continue to explore potential investment in farmer-led woodland planting schemes for carbon sequestration. | | | In Progress | Lidia Arciszewska, Andrew Prosser | Chris Jackson / Hannah Kenyon |
| 3.3 | | Help people to connect with nature by improving understanding of and public access to green spaces and the countryside. | Deer Park South Access Project – Infrastructure improvements to enhance public access to woodland adjacent to strategic development area. | Completed. Habitat survey has been received. | 01/12/2022 | 31/05/2025 | Complete | Duncan Enright | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | | Tackling inequalities in nature | Nature and Health Inequality project is continuing. With officers attending and running sessions in both Witney and Chipping Norton. Collaborative working has allowed connection with the YouMove families, working with the Community Physical Activity Officer. Officers are continuing to work with local charities and councils, as well as researchers from the University of Oxford. | | | On Target | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon / Heather McCulloch |
| 3.4 | | Be an active participant in the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and contribute to the production of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to establish priorities and map proposals for action to drive nature's recovery, achieve Biodiversity Net Gain and provide wider environmental benefits specific to West Oxfordshire. | Officer group to convene with Local Nature Partnership - maintain relationship with LNP and work with partners to develop workstreams. | LNRS went through full Executive on the 10th of September and the publication (by Oxfordshire County Council) was endorsed. West Oxfordshire were the first district council in Oxfordshire to do so. Ongoing involvement with the LNP, including invitation to attend the annual partnership forum meeting on 12th November 2025 (for LNRS launch), and involvement with policy and BNG working groups. | 01/07/2022 | 01/07/2025 | On Target | Lidia Arciszewska, Duncan Enright | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | | Explore the potential for the Council to acquire land for Biodiversity Net Gain and nature-based carbon sequestration. | Most of council land probably unsuitable for BNG either due to small-patches of amenity grassland in housing estates which would be difficult to enhance and manage in the long term, or sites that already have high ecological value. This will be considered further after the site management plans have been reviewed as the potential for BNG will be understood better after the baseline has been confirmed (5 priority sites only). Perhaps this KPI should be changed to relate more specifically to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as there has been a lot of work on this over last few months and it will be published in November, so the priority is shifting towards its delivery. | 8/12/2024 | 31/03/2026 | On Target | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|--|---|---|------------|------------|------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 3.5 | all. | 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). | Facilitating the Evenlode Catchment Partnership through the SLA and attendance at meetings. Discussed climate resilience at the last quarterly meeting. Principal Ecologist sits on the newly established steering group. In discussions with the Windrush Catchment Partnership as to how the Council can support this partnership more. | | | On Target | Lidia Arciszewska, Andy Graham | 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. | Good progress continues to be made on the emerging Local Plan with a spatial options consultation taking place from 3 November to 22 December 2025. The updated timetable for the Local Plan indicates that the final draft plan will be published in May 2026. This will address a broad range of policy topics including the water environment within site allocations. | 01/06/2022 | 31/12/2024 | On Target | Hugo Ashton | Chris Hargraves / Hannah Kenyon |
| | | Drive down carbon emissions from Council operations including leisure, waste and street cleansing and running of the Council's estate, and in so doing lead by example to inspire others to take action to collectively reduce the overall carbon emissions of the District. | Decarbonisation of council owned buildings, including leisure centres and sports pavilions – secure external PSDS funding and extend the MEES project to include the full decarbonisation of tenanted buildings. | PSDS 3c Windrush Leisure Centre (on target) - In the construction phase with contractors on-site. Change in project management. Programme and cost on track. PSDS 4 Chipping Norton Leisure Centre (off target) - SLT and Members have decided to cancel the decarbonisation project and not to utilise the £2.2m grant funding that has been awarded to the Council. Significant impact on the Council's ability to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, as set out in the approved Carbon Action Plan 2024-2030. | | | Off Target | Andrew Prosser, Dan Levy, Alaric Smith | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | | PSDS 3b funded Carterton Leisure Centre decarbonisation - Carbon reduction through the replacement of the heating and hot water system of the building with a low-carbon alternative and increasing the amount of solar PV on site. | PSDS 3b Carterton Leisure Centre - lack of grant funding to decarbonise the leisure centre will significantly affect the council's ability to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The installation of solar provides clean and green energy to the centre, however does not help to remove the large amount of carbon emissions. | 31/10/22 | 31/03/25 | Off Target | Andrew Prosser, Tim Sumner | Hannah Kenyon |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4.1 | Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency | | 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 (WESP) business case being drafted with partners. It does not yet consider infrastructure, i.e. net zero depots and waste fleet, which is key to a sustainable waste service. Vehicle procurement underway to purchase 4 x electric food waste vehicles. Review of whole fleet undertaken to identify potential to electrify vehicles due for replacement. | | | On Target | Lidia Arciszewska | Si Pocock-Clulely / 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. | Completed. West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy 2025-2030 approved in July. | 01/07/23 | 30/6/2024 | Complete | Andrew Prosser | 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. | Completed. Sustainability impact assessments are now mandatory for all Council decisions. | 01/02/2023 | 01/04/2024 | Complete | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | | Solar PV project for tenanted buildings - A Publica-wide long-term project to install rooftop solar panels on council owned buildings, increasing the amount of renewable energy generated in the District. | Energy efficiency measures at 3 Welch Way being progressed. 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 |
| 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. (this should refer to the Nature Recovery Plan published by the council?) | 01/03/2023 | | In Progress | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| | The Council will be a community leader in | 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. Using Arup's preliminary retrofit report to identify actions to accelerate domestic retrofit. Promoting ESOX assessments and grant funding for commercial retrofit. | | | In Progress | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|---|---|------------|------------|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 4.3 | 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. | | Greenlight – nature and online hub to facilitate community action for a greener future. | Engaging with town and parish councils, catchment partnerships and other external stakeholders on climate mitigation and resilience. Identifying youth networks which can be used to improve climate awareness and support younger generations taking climate action. | | | In Progress | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | | Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) project for tenanted buildings - A Publica-wide review of tenanted buildings to determine what measures are needed to bring the EPC rating up to a B or above by 2030. | Reported breaches of MEES for privately rented homes will be investigated and enforced. | 01/07/2023 | | On Target | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| | | | 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 |
| 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 being finalised. Executive approval to progress to a district Local Area Energy Plan.(LAEP). Local Plan energy policies under review for the Reg 19 submission. | | | On Target | Andrew Prosser | Giles Hughes / Hannah Kenyon |
| 4.5 | | Work with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver on our joint commitment to active travel and public transport, including through improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure and better public transport services. | Install EV charging points across the District. | OxLEVI tender submissions have been awarded (preferred supplier). | 26/05/2023 | 01/01/2025 | Off Target but Mitigation in Place | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| 5.1 | Working Together for | 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. | Continued progress across our business support programmes for UKSPF and REPF. We were able to open the West Oxfordshire Business Boost grant fund in addition as budget available, extending support to more local businesses. Delivery partners remain on track, and six-month reporting will begin in October to monitor impact. We're also exploring plans for a celebratory event to recognise achievements and strengthen community connections. | | | On Target | Duncan Enright | Sam Stronach |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|---|------------|------------|-------------|--|-------------------|
| | West Oxfordshire | | Successful implementation of new Grant Scheme: a) Crowdfunding, b) Community and Voluntary Sector Service Level Agreements and c) Youth initiatives. | a) Crowdfunding (Westhive) platform is operational. By end of Round 4 (July 25) 28 projects supported with total value of £948,172.00. Detailed report due to go to Executive on 12th Nov 2025. b) 3 YR SLA programme implemented and being monitored. An update report went to Executive on 10th Sept 2025. c) Youth initiatives are being developed by the Youth Dev officer | 01/12/2022 | 31/05/2025 | On Target | Alaric Smith with Rachel Crouch, Andrew Prosser and Lidia Arciszewsk | Heather McCulloch |
| 5.3 | | Support Town and Parish Councils to represent their communities energetically and take action on issues important to their locality. | Towns and Parish Biodiversity project– UKSPF funded project to provide case studies for communities on how to enhance biodiversity in different habitats. | Completed | 01/12/2022 | 31/05/2025 | Complete | Andrew Prosser | Hannah Kenyon |
| 5.4 | | Support the Voluntary and Community Sector to continue to undertake activity which serves the needs of residents including established organisations and more informal groups working to address particular needs such as access to food, youth support and cultural provision. | Community Grants | Ongoing engagement with VCS services through forums in major settlements and twice yearly Health and Wellbeing Alliance meetings. Will be recruiting in this quarter a Food action plan officer to support taking actions of the Food Action Plan forward. Implemented the CAG grant scheme - decisions in Oct 2025 - to support small community action projects. Designed the Community Insight Profile grant scheme (OCC Public health funded) - to support VCS groups to work in Central Witney ward - decisions in Nov 2025. 12 out of the 28 successful Westhive projects will benefit children and young people. | 01/12/2022 | 31/05/2025 | On Target | Rachel Crouch | Heather McCulloch |
| 5.5 | | Make a dedicated effort to further understand and meet the needs of our young people and support their mental health, including children, teenagers and young adults leaving school, entering the world of work and/or seeking to set up home in the District. | 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. | A Youth Partnership has been established alongside Witney Town Council and TVP. Youth Dev officer continues to engage with communities to establish provision where this is lacking eg Stonesfield, Freeland and Eynsham You Move - programme to tackle financial barriers faced by families to being active - continues to grow with over 500 families taking up membership and benefitting from free and low cost access to opportunities. Participants experiencing from poor mental health are benefiting from the Leisure Cards scheme as part of the GLL contract which provides free access to the leisure centres. | | | In Progress | Rachel Crouch, Tim Sumner | Heather McCulloch |



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
July - September 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.

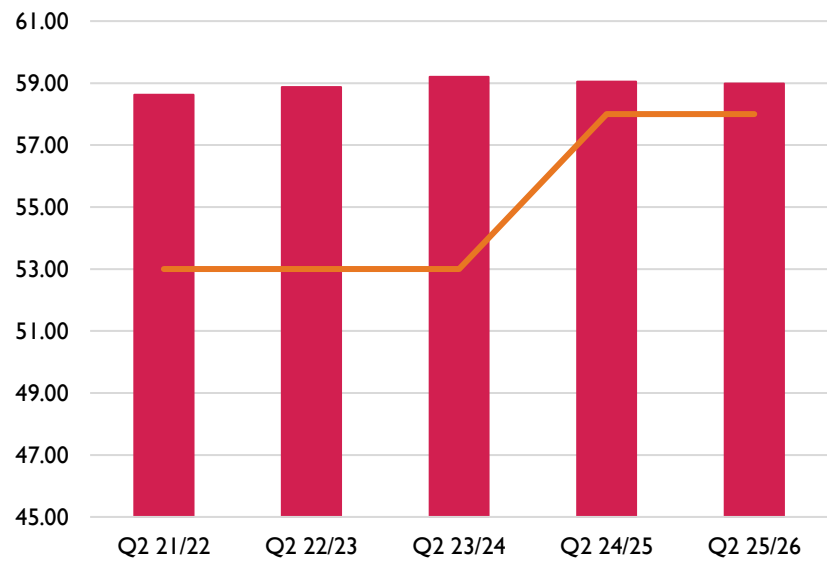
Overall Performance

The Council's overall performance remains positive, with continued progress in key areas. Revenue collection for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates is ahead of expectations, planning determination times remain well above target and customer satisfaction continues to be exceptionally high. Leisure services also performed strongly, with sustained engagement in gym memberships and leisure centre visits and the delivery of affordable homes significantly exceeded quarterly expectations.

However, some challenges persist. Processing times for Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit change events, while improving, remain above target due to the cumulative nature of the metric and operational complexities linked to Universal Credit migration. Freedom of Information response times dipped below the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) target and performance in Land Charges searches were affected by staffing pressures late in the quarter. Environmental performance also faces ongoing challenges, with household recycling rates impacted by seasonal factors and wider national trends.

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



— Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Year
↓
Slightly decreased since last year

Higher is Good

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Target | 58% |
| Actual | 58.99% |

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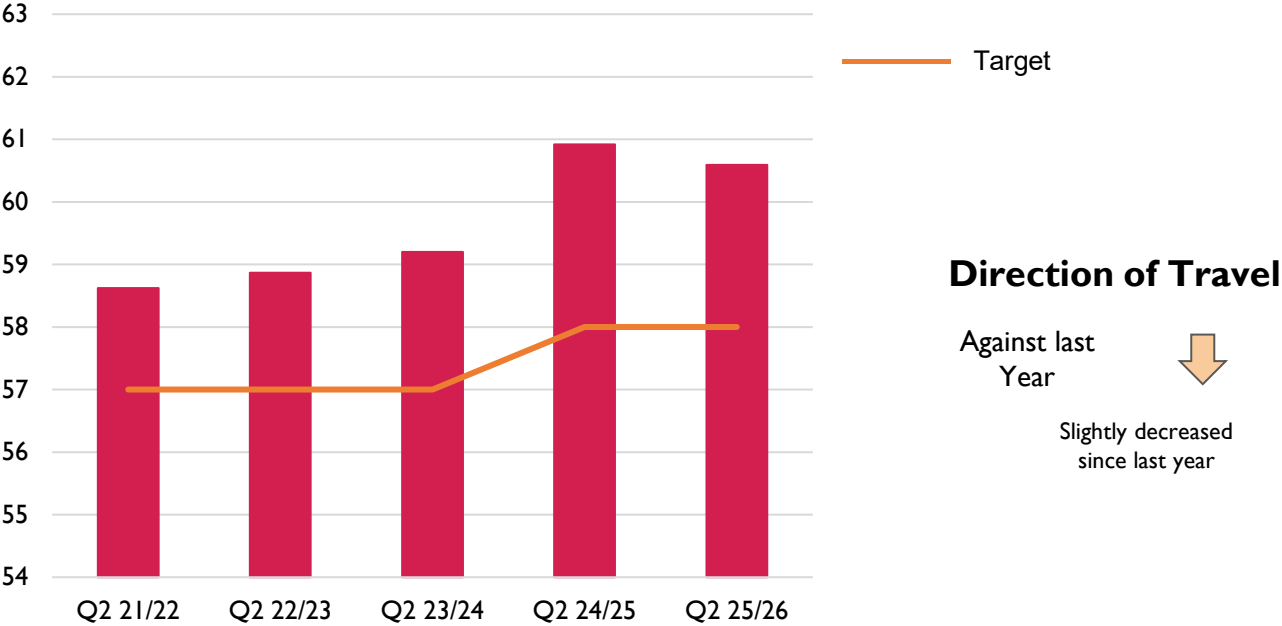
How do we compare?

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 | 98.06 | 1/5 | Top |
| West Oxfordshire | 98.02 | 2/5 | Top |
| 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 Q2, the Council met its collection target and surpassed pre-pandemic levels by 1.7%. While 12-month payment plans are slightly reducing early-year collection, the year-on-year drop is just 0.06%, suggesting the trend may be stabilising.

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



Direction of Travel

Against last Year

 Slightly decreased since last year

Higher is Good

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Target | 58% |
| Actual | 60.59% |

How do we compare?

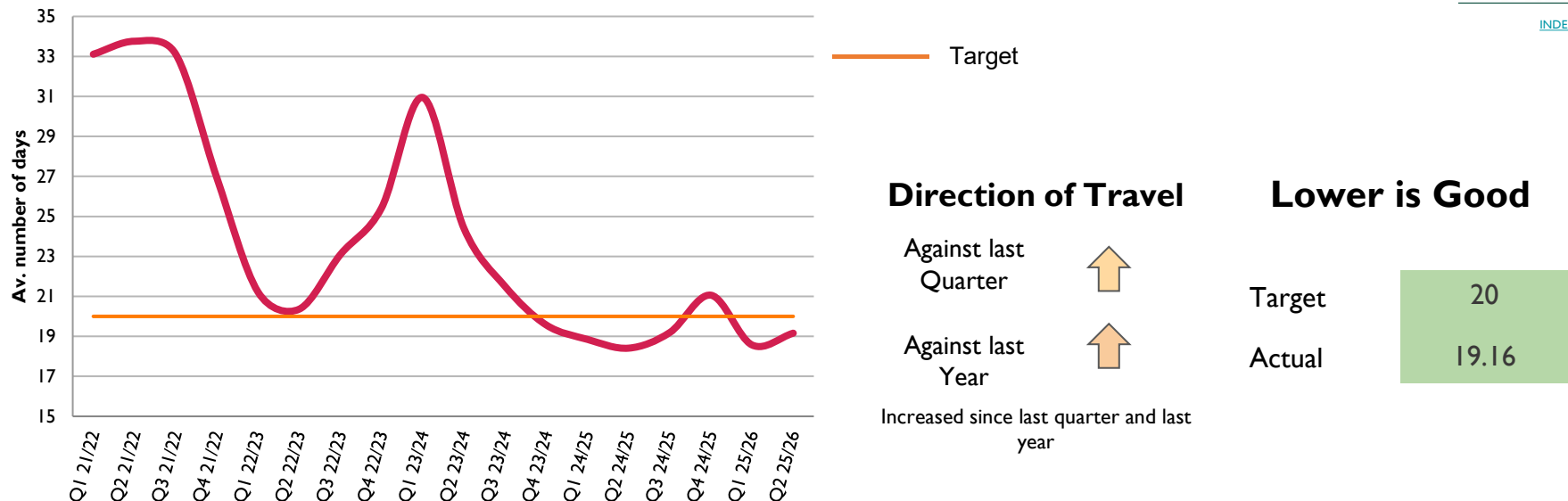
Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire - Current Dataset is up to March '25 (2024-2025)

| 2024-2025 Benchmark | % | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| Cherwell | 98.83 | 1/5 | Top |
| West Oxfordshire | 97.66 | 2/5 | Top |
| 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 Q2, the Council exceeded its collection target, with performance just 0.13% below last year. Recovery work is up to date, and earlier staff training has supported flexible working across Council Tax and NDR, helping reduce backlog and strengthen resilience.

Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims

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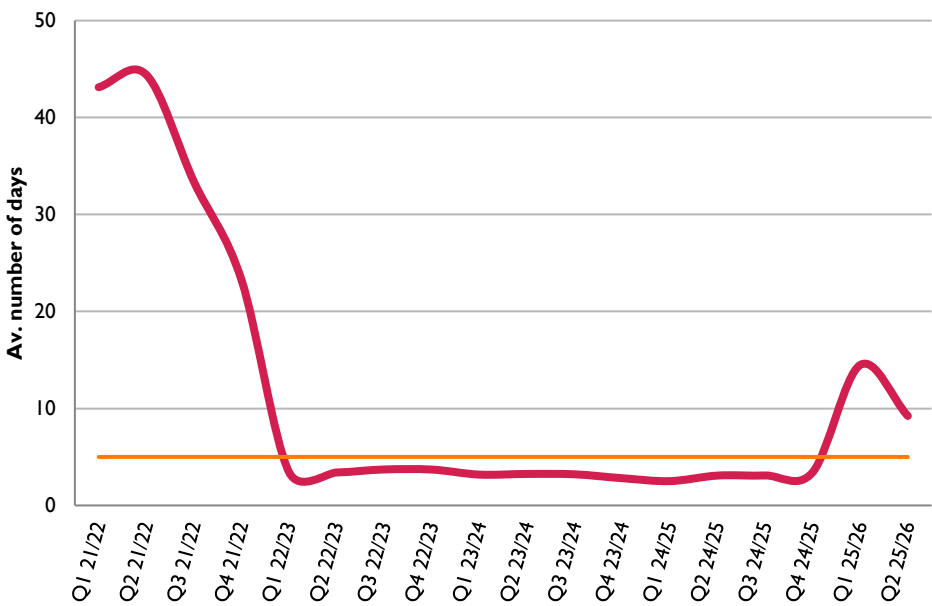
How do we compare?

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 June 2025 and the percentage change from June 2024 for each authority.

| | Number of Claimants at end of Sept 2024 | Percentage Change since Sept 2023 |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Oxford | 8,479 | -7.33% |
| Cherwell | 5,962 | -1.18% |
| West Oxfordshire | 4,374 | -0.32% |
| Vale of White Horse | 5,095 | 5.79% |
| South Oxfordshire | 5,312 | 6.58% |


Processing times rose slightly this quarter, likely due to a 20% increase in applications between Q1 and Q2, but the 20-day target was still met. Performance remains consistent, reflecting strong operational focus.


Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter but increased since last year

Lower is Good

Target

5

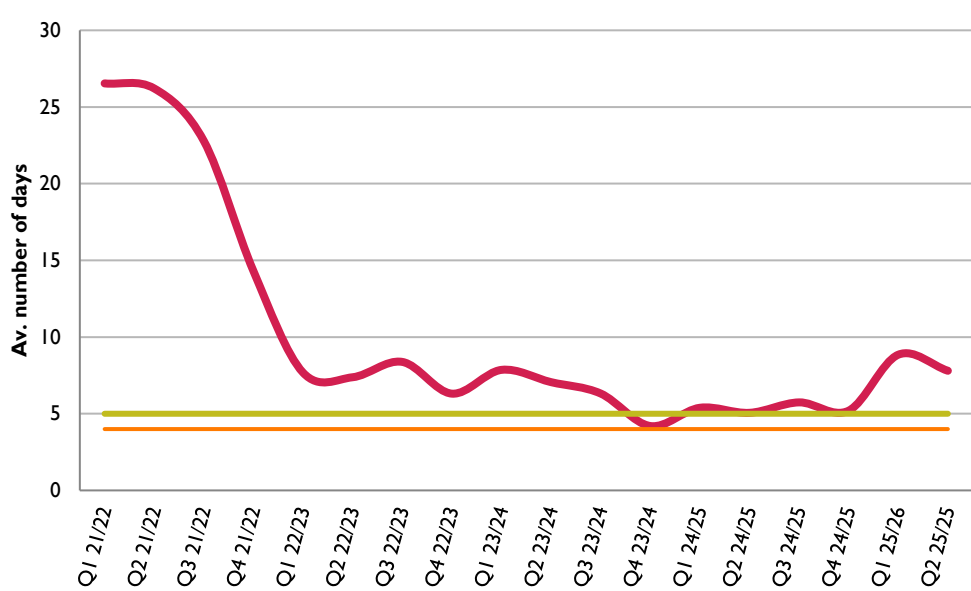
Actual

9.23


In Q2, the Councils processing times continued to improve, with a cumulative average of 9.23 days—down 5.26 days from Q1. Automation and backlog clearance contributed to this progress, with quarterly averages well within the 5-day target, reaching just 2.71 days for July-September.


Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances

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Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Decreased since last quarter but increased since last year

Lower is Good

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Target | 4 |
| Actual | 7.8 |

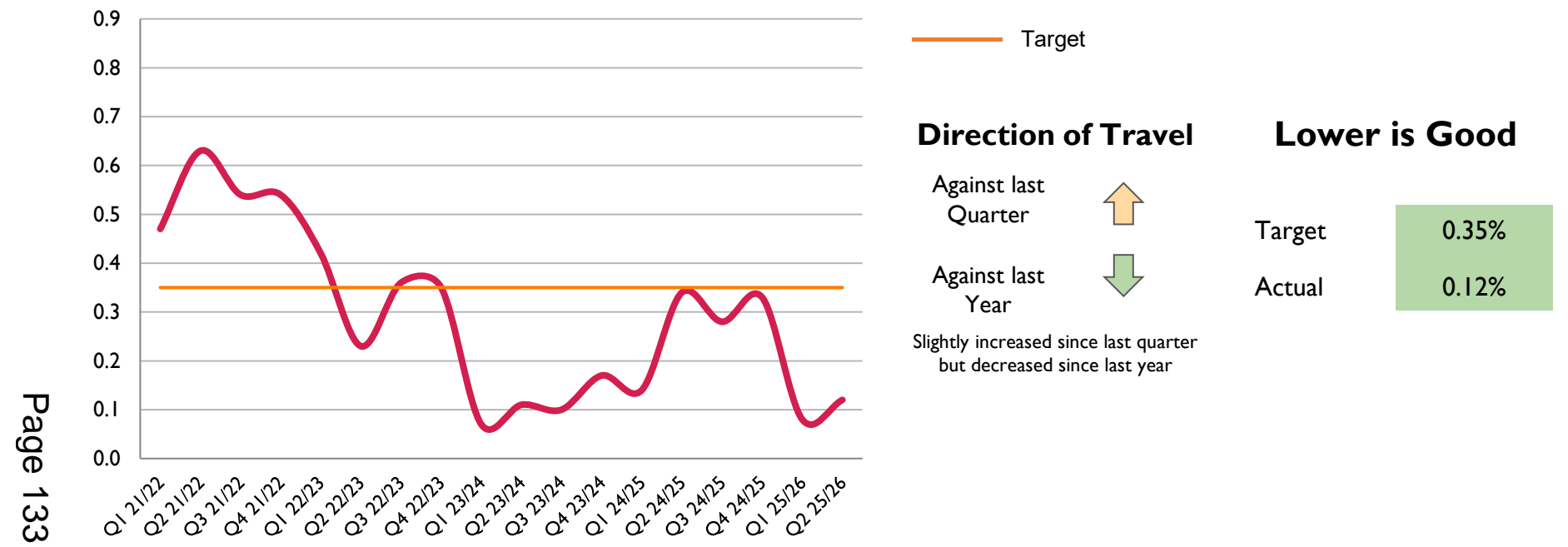
How do we compare?

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 – January – March 2025 (Q4 24-25)

| Q4 24-25 Benchmark | Days | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Cherwell | 1.79 | 1/5 | Top |
| Vale of White Horse | 2.37 | 2/5 | Top |
| South Oxfordshire | 2.46 | 3/5 | Second |
| West Oxfordshire | 4.30 | 4/5 | Third |
| Oxford | 12.92 | 5/5 | Bottom |

In Q2, processing times improved but remained above the 4-day target. Following the migration to Universal Credit, new applications have declined, but the remaining caseload, primarily pension-age and temporary accommodation claims, is sensitive to delays, meaning even minor hold-ups can disproportionately affect processing times.

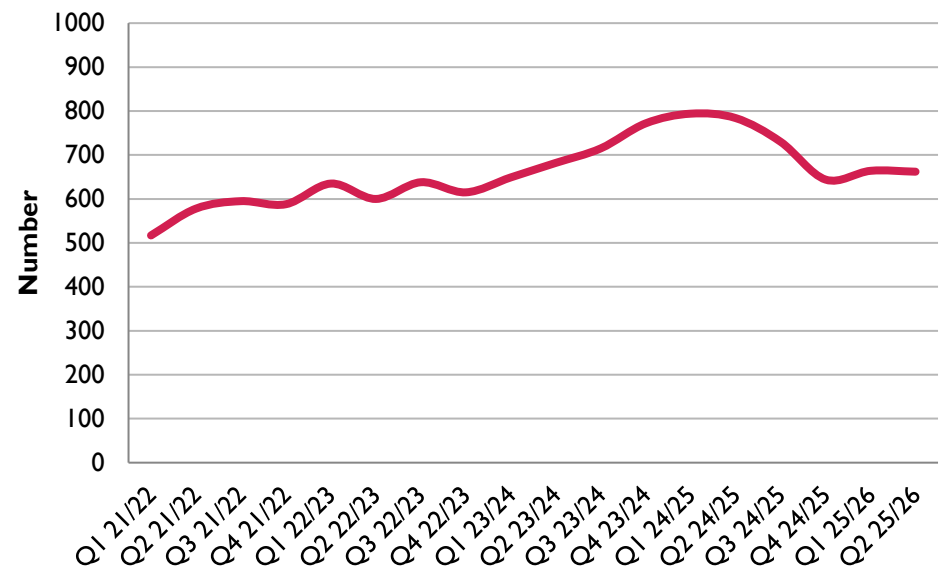
Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay



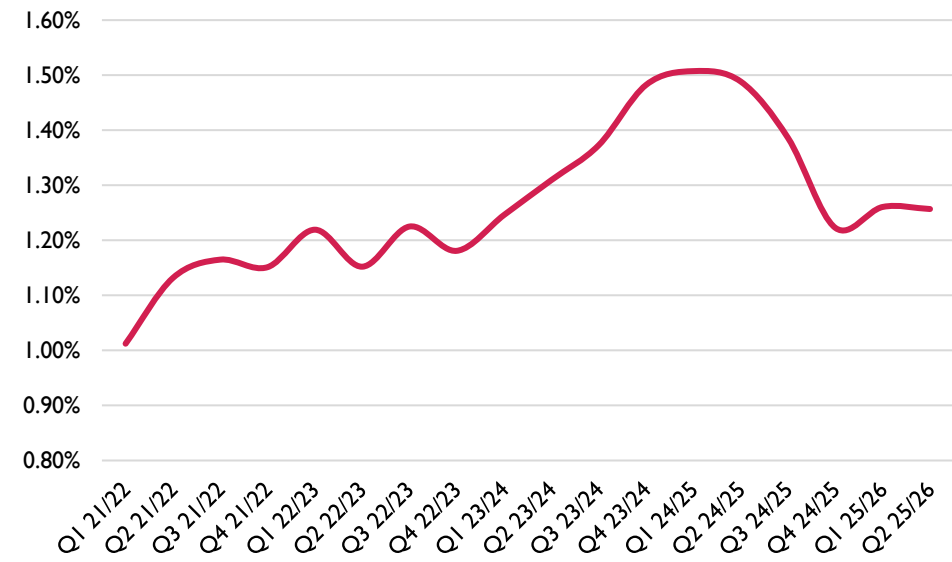
The Council remains below the national target of 0.48% and the stricter service target of 0.35%.

(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties

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% of LTEs of the Total Housing Stock



Direction of Travel

Lower is Good

Against last Quarter



Against last Year

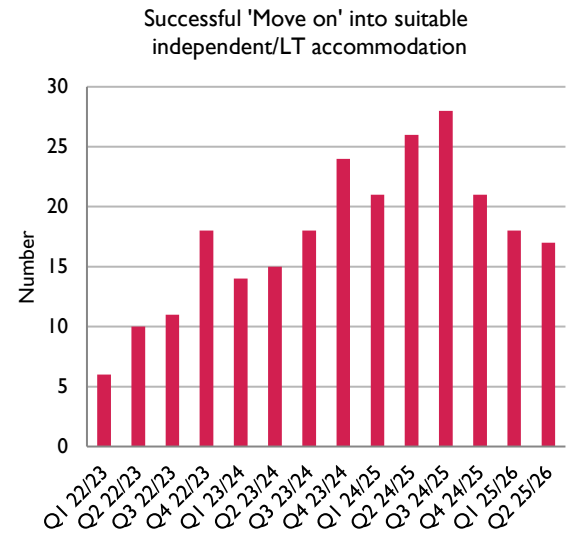
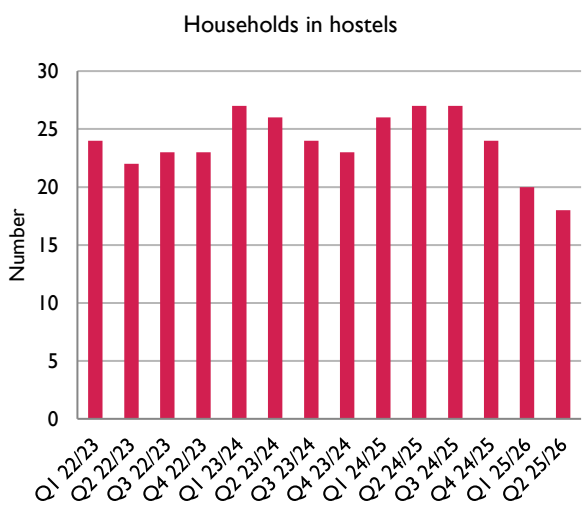
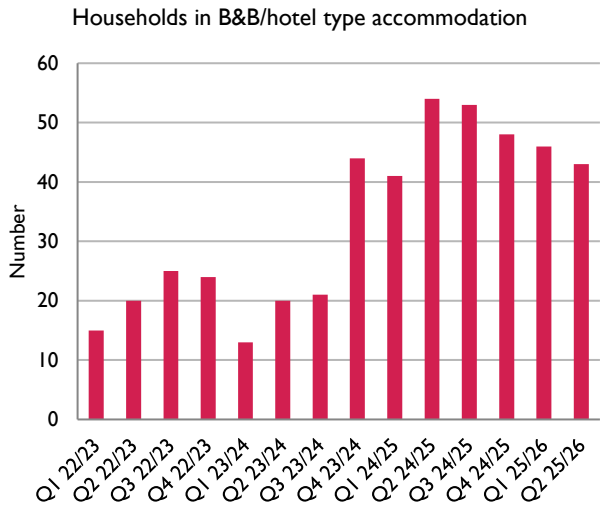


Slightly decreased since last quarter and decreased since last year

662

The Council saw a slight reduction in long-term empty properties, though 38 were newly registered between August and September, 25 of which are currently for sale. This may reflect a broader housing market slowdown, possibly linked to the quieter summer period.

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



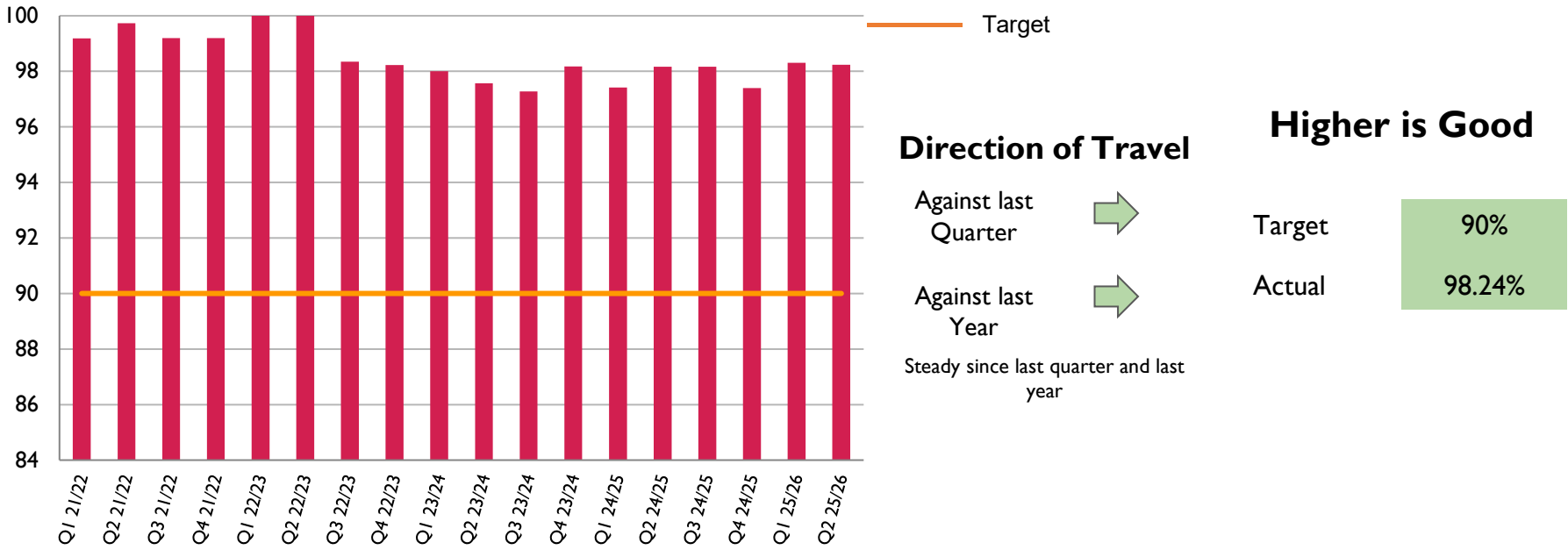
Direction of Travel

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|---|
| 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 | ↓ |

The number of people in temporary accommodation has steadied, following a reduction in those placed in insecure B&B-style housing during the first quarter. This improvement reflects both strong preventative work and effective collaboration with local housing providers. Programmes like the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) are helping to boost the supply of self-contained temporary units and efforts are underway to expand the council's own own hostel stock by 30 bedrooms by 31st March 2026.

Customer Satisfaction - Telephone

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How do we compare?

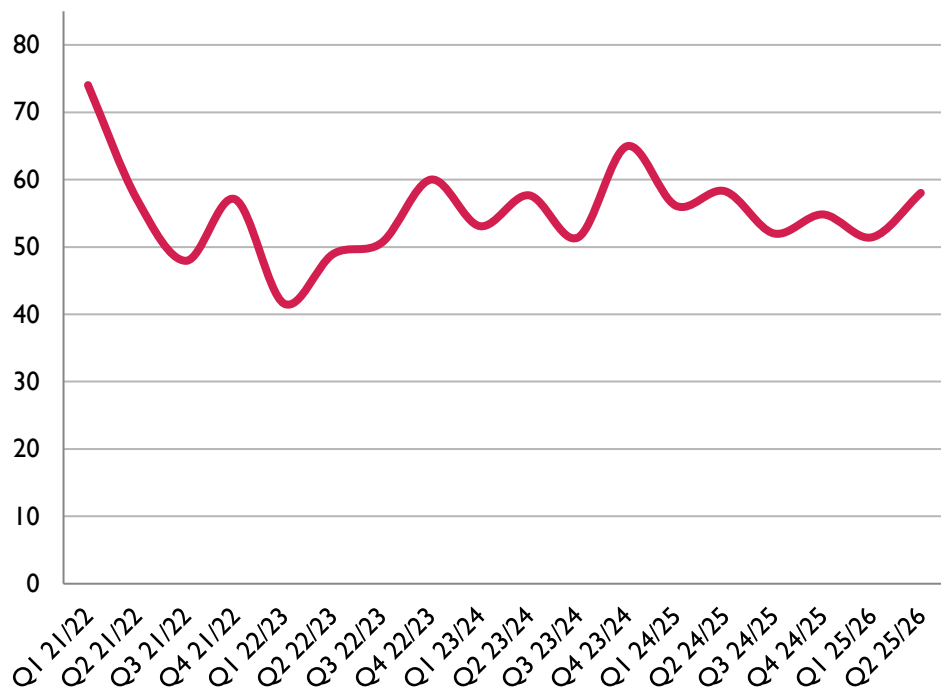
The Govmetric Channel Satisfaction Index is a monthly publication of the top performing councils across the core customer access channels. At least 100 customers need to be transferred to the survey to be included in the league table so even if satisfaction is high, it may not be included.

A total of 569 residents participated in the survey, of these, 559 customers reported being satisfied with the service, reflecting a high level of overall satisfaction.



| | July Rank | July Net Sat. | Aug Rank | Aug Net Sat. | Sept. Rank | Sept. Net Sat. |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| West Oxfordshire | 2 | 96% | 4 | 95% | 2 | 98% |

Customer Satisfaction - Email

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Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 
- Improved since last quarter and steady since last year

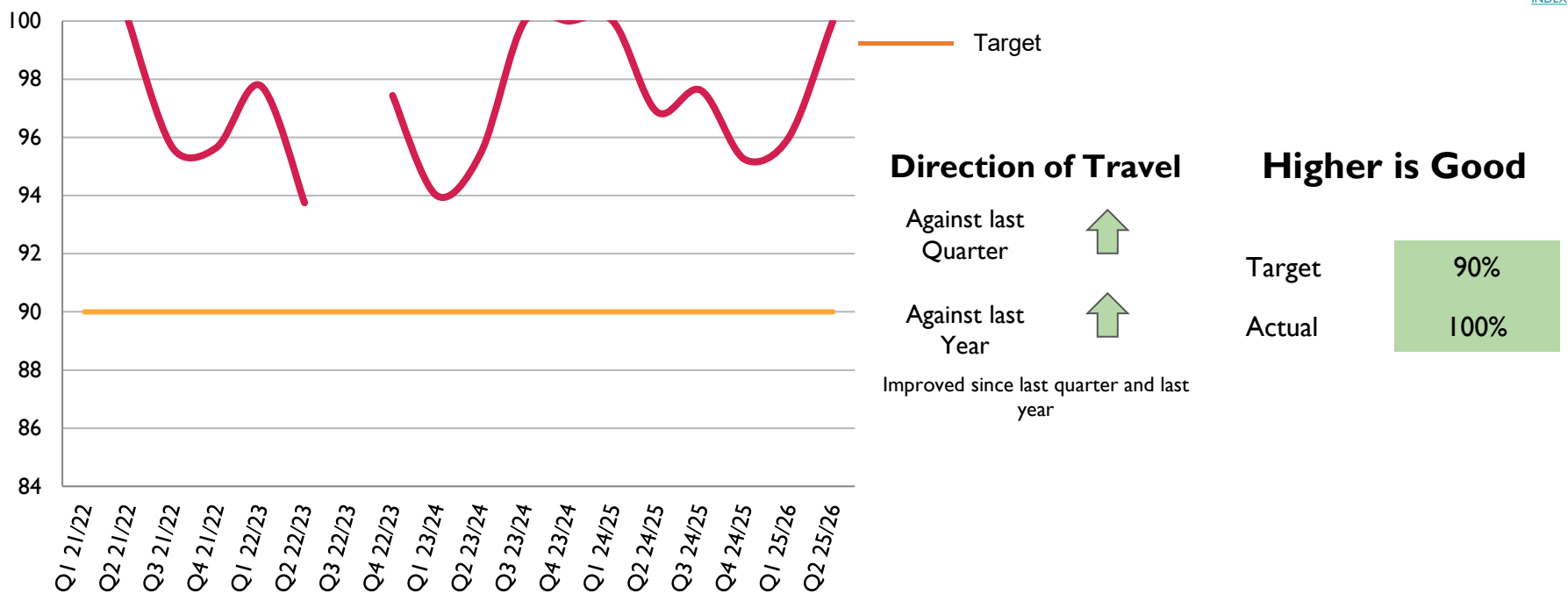
Higher is Good

58.03%

498 residents responded to the survey, with 289 expressing satisfaction (58.03%), up from 51.43% in Q1, 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.

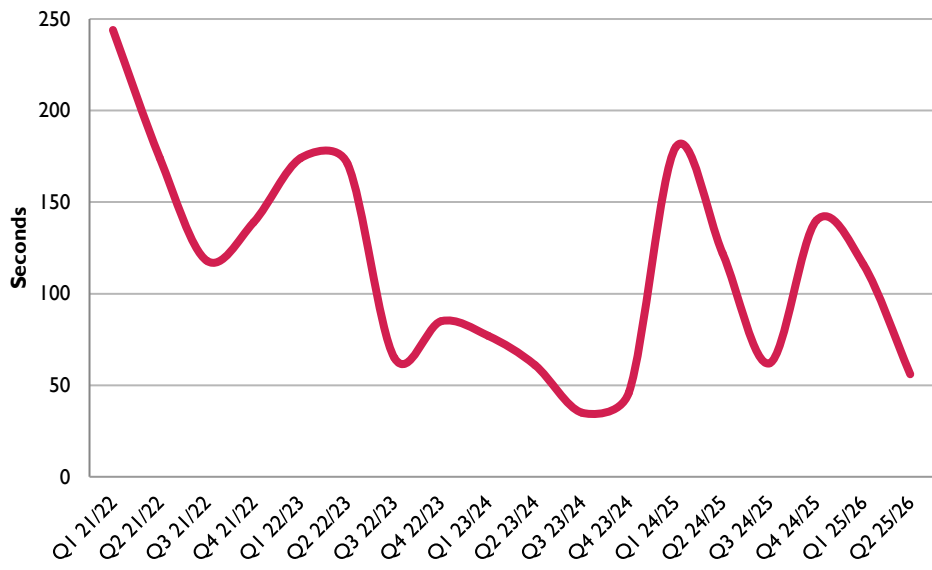
Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face

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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



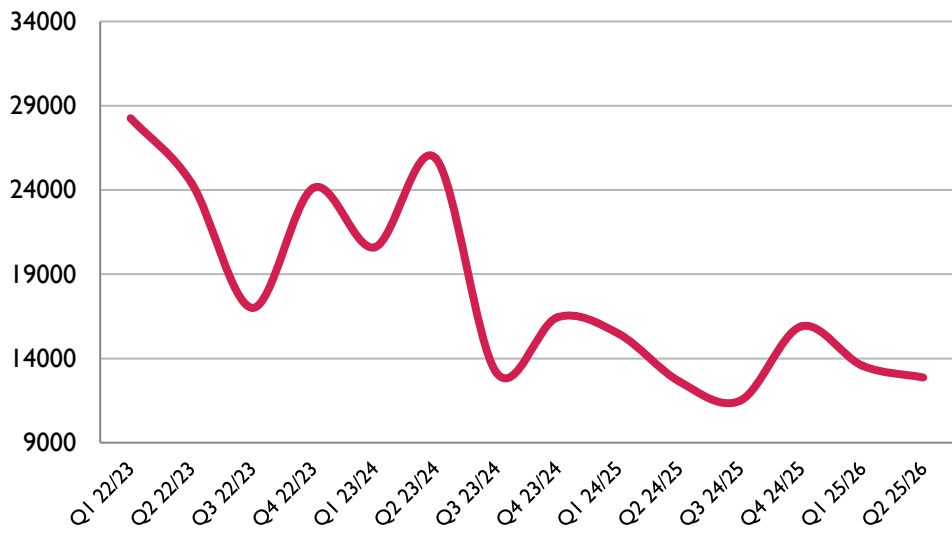
Against last
Year



56 Seconds

Decreased since last quarter and last
year

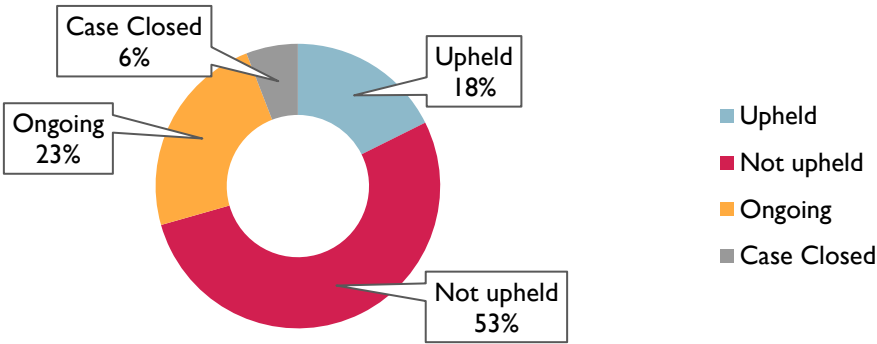
Call Volume over Time



Average call waiting time improved by around a minute compared to the same period last year, despite a slight rise in call volumes. The shift toward digital channels continues to support shorter phone hours and reflects changing customer behaviour, with strong operational oversight and regular staff training helping maintain stable performance.


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 and 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.

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.

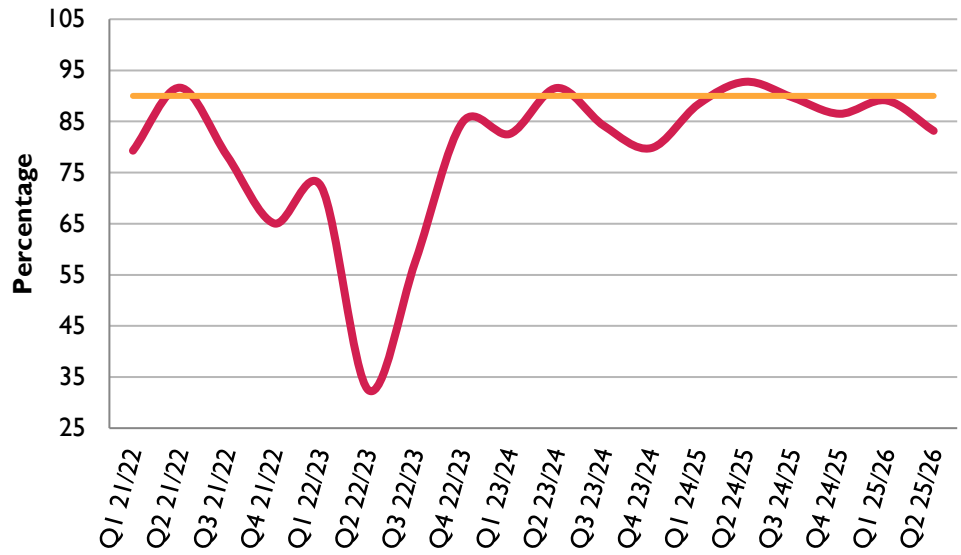
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| 2024-25 | Complaints Investigated | Percentage Upheld | Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents | Percentage Satisfactory Remedy | Percentage Compliance with Recommendations |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| 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 |

Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

| Service area | Description | Outcome/learning | Decision | Response time (days) |
|-------------------------|--|---|----------|----------------------|
| West Oxfordshire | | | | |
| Data Protection | Data breach by contractor for sending out mass mailouts. | Apology offered by service. | Upheld | 10 |
| Revenues & Benefits | Incorrectly billed for Council Tax. | Apology offered by service. | Upheld | 7 |
| Waste & Recycling | Waste not being picked up. | Recollection sent and an apology offered. | Upheld | 5 |
| Waste & Recycling | Garden waste bin not being picked up. | Refund offered for licence. | Upheld | 9 |

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



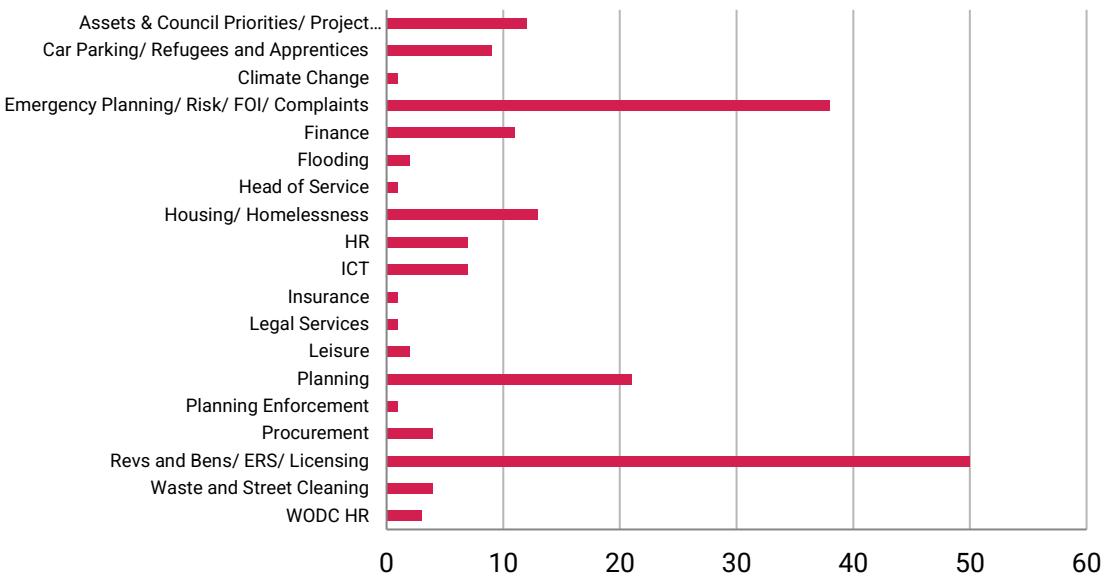
Declined since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good

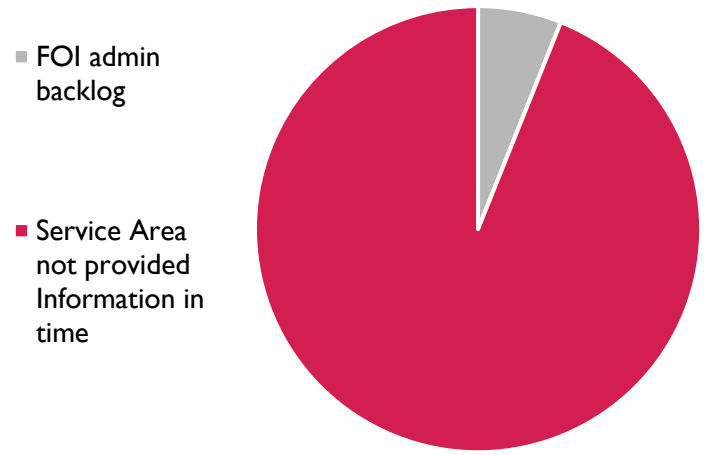
| | |
|--------|--------|
| Target | 90% |
| Actual | 83.16% |

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Requests by Service Area

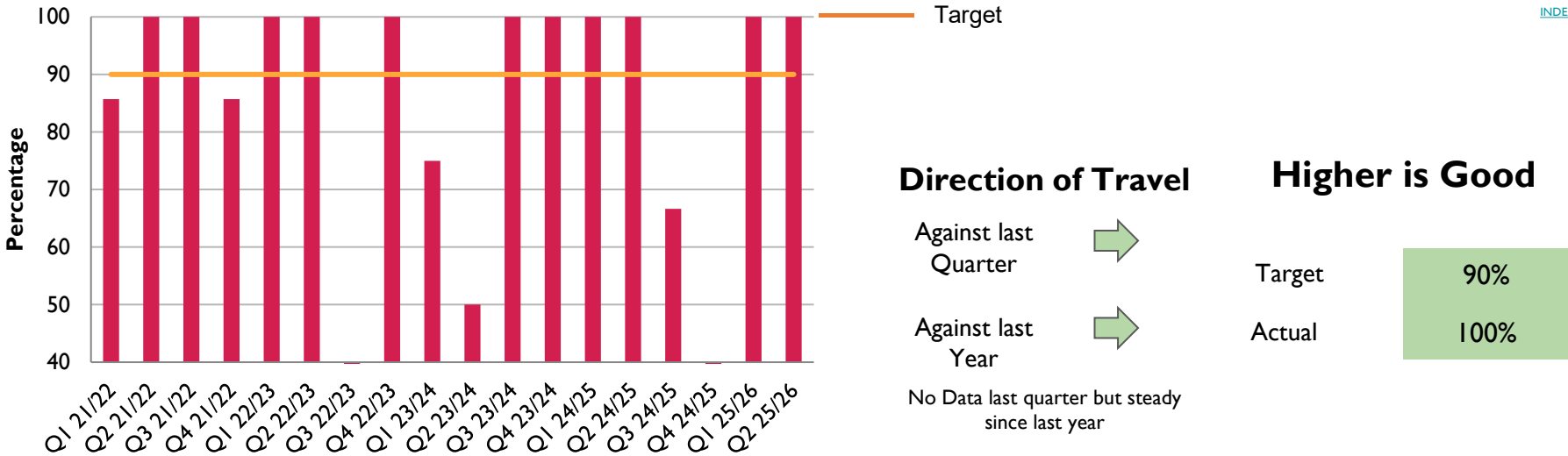


Reason FOI request was not Answered within 20 Days



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

Building Control Satisfaction



Satisfaction survey data continues to present challenges due to low response rates, with only one received this quarter. To improve this, a webform was developed and has been attached to completion certificates from October onwards.

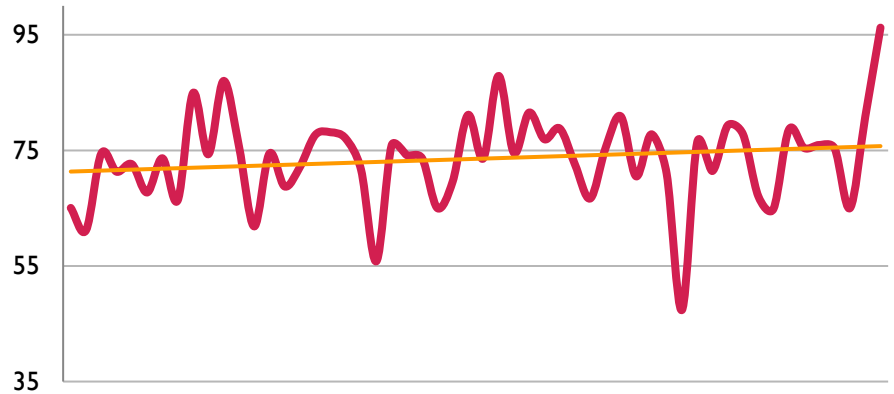
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How do we compare?

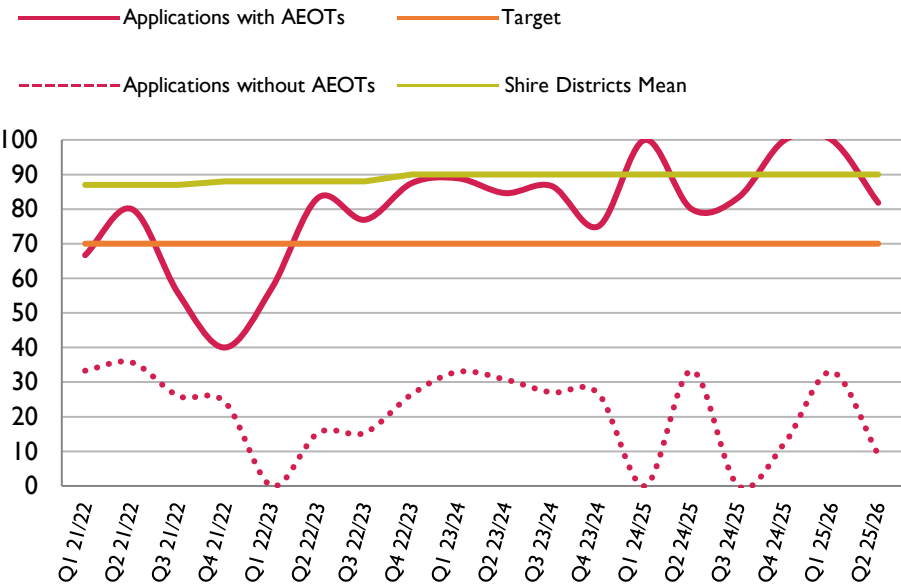
Percentage of share in the market

| | July | Aug. | Sept. | Number of Apps for Quarter |
|------|------|------|-------|----------------------------|
| West | 61% | 81% | 96% | 148 |

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

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Declined since last quarter but
steady since last year

Higher is Good

Target

70%

Actual

81.82%

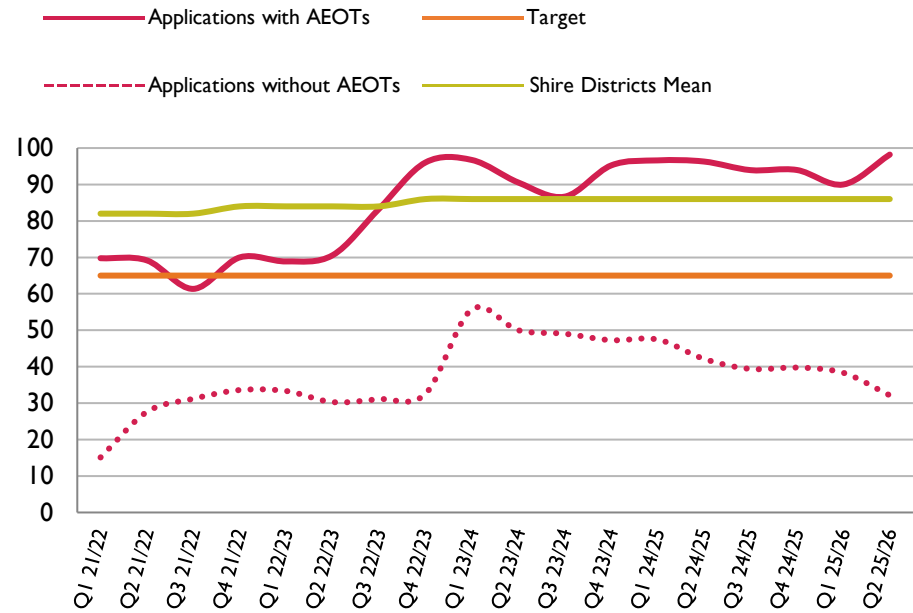
How do we compare?

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


| Q1 25-26 Benchmark | % | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Vale of White Horse | 100 | 1/5 | Top |
| West Oxfordshire | 100 | 1/5 | Top |
| Oxford | 89 | 3/5 | Second |
| South Oxfordshire | 83 | 4/5 | Third |
| Cherwell | 78 | 5/5 | Bottom |


The service demonstrated consistently strong performance in Q2, with nine out of eleven 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 

Increased since last quarter and steady since last year

Higher is Good

Target

65%

Actual

98.21%

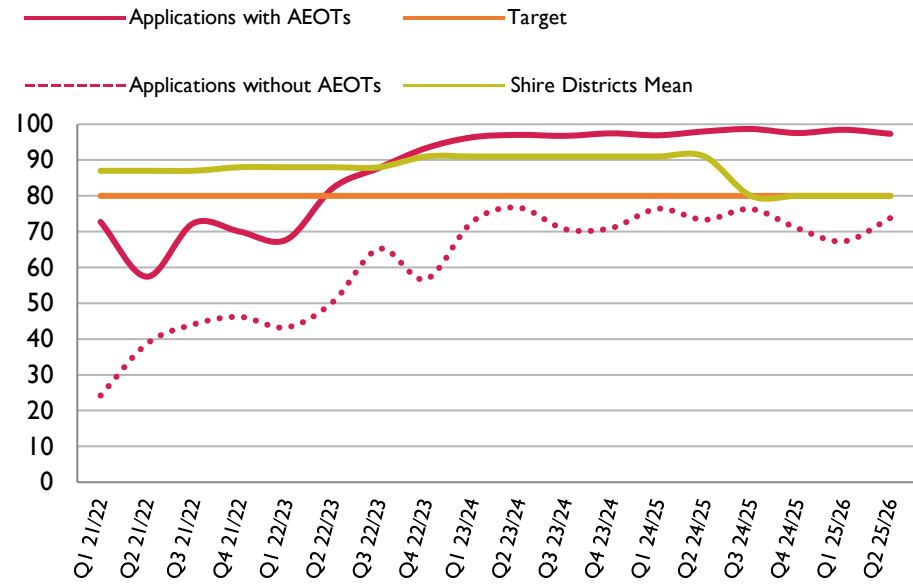
How do we compare?

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

| Q1 25-26 Benchmark | % | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| Vale of White Horse | 93 | 1/5 | Top |
| Oxford | 91 | 2/5 | Top |
| West Oxfordshire | 90 | 3/5 | Second |
| South Oxfordshire | 87 | 4/5 | Third |
| Cherwell | 79 | 5/5 | Bottom |

This quarter, delays persist due to the absence of a dedicated Landscape Officer, though recruitment is progressing with interviews held. The team is preparing for increased demand from upcoming legislative changes and remains committed to delivering sustainable, high-quality development despite national policy challenges.

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



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter →

Against last Year →

Steady since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good

Target

80%

Actual

97.33%

How do we compare?

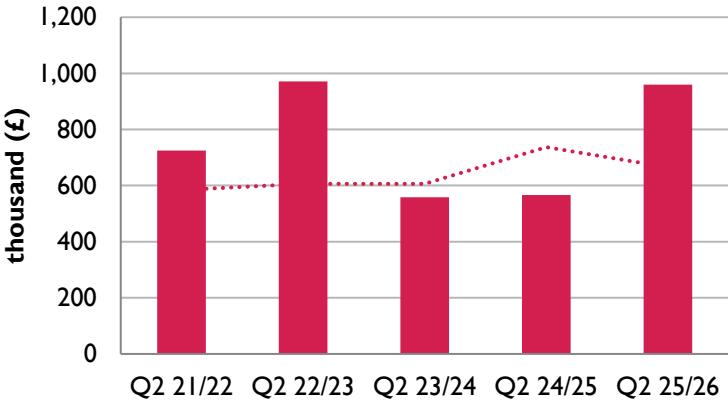
Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform

| Q1 25-26 Benchmark | % | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| West Oxfordshire | 98 | 1/5 | Top |
| Vale of White Horse | 96 | 2/5 | Second |
| South Oxfordshire | 96 | 3/5 | Second |
| Oxford | 88 | 4/5 | Third |
| Cherwell | 79 | 5/5 | Bottom |

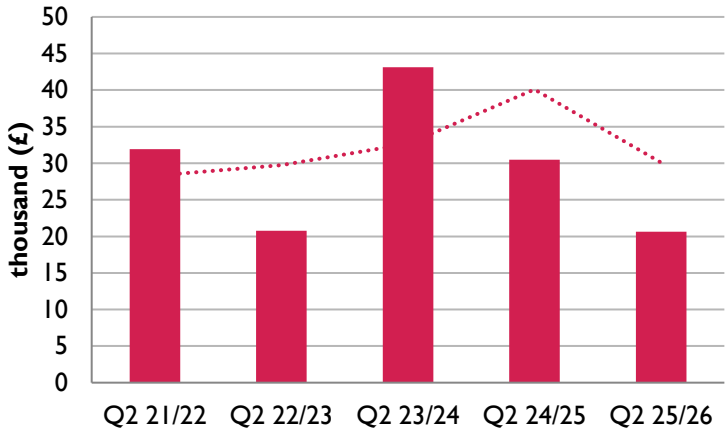
Determination times remain high, with 187 applications processed in Q2, including 182 within agreed timescales.

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

Total planning income



Pre-application income



Direction of Travel

| Total Planning Income | |
|------------------------|---|
| Against last Quarter | ↑ |
| Against last Year | ↑ |
| Pre-Application Income | |
| Against last Quarter | ↓ |
| Against last Year | ↓ |

Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)

Target 665,087

Actual 959,309

Pre-Application Income (£)

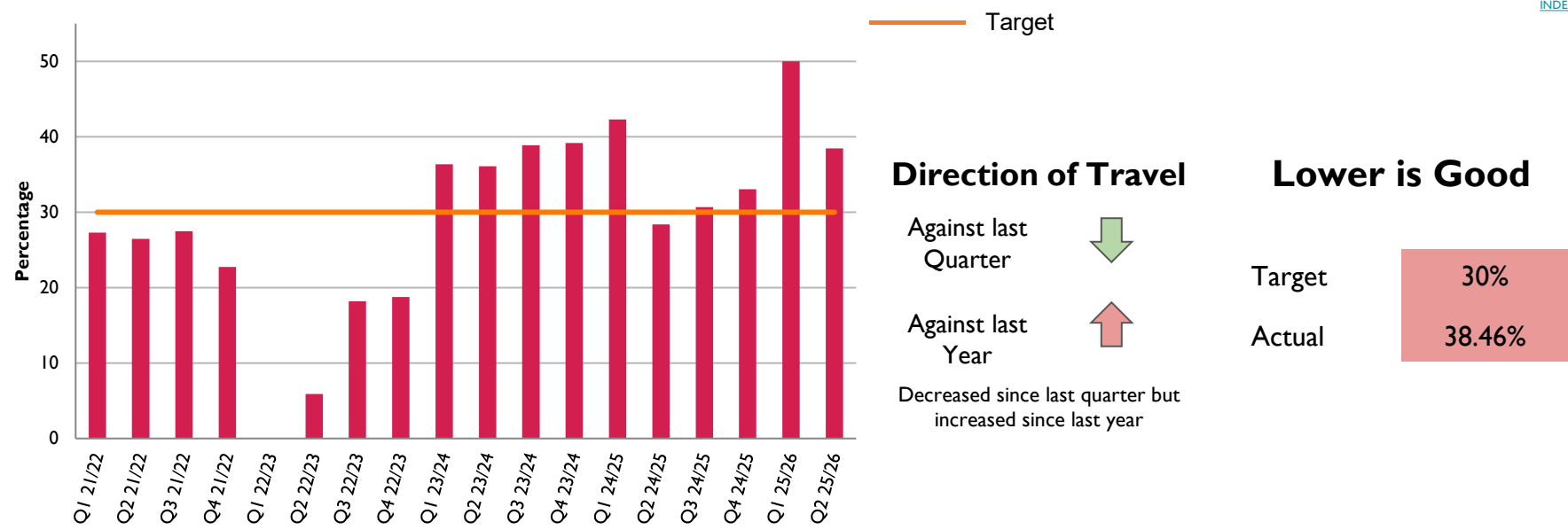
Target 30,087

Actual 20,617

Total Income increased since last quarter and last year
Pre-App Income decreased since last quarter and last year

In Q2, the Council recorded high financial performance, with strong income received during the summer months contributing positively towards the annual target. However, pre-application uptake in West remains low, and the team is currently exploring pricing adjustments alongside a renewed focus on Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs).

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



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How do we compare?

Percentage of planning appeals allowed – LG Inform

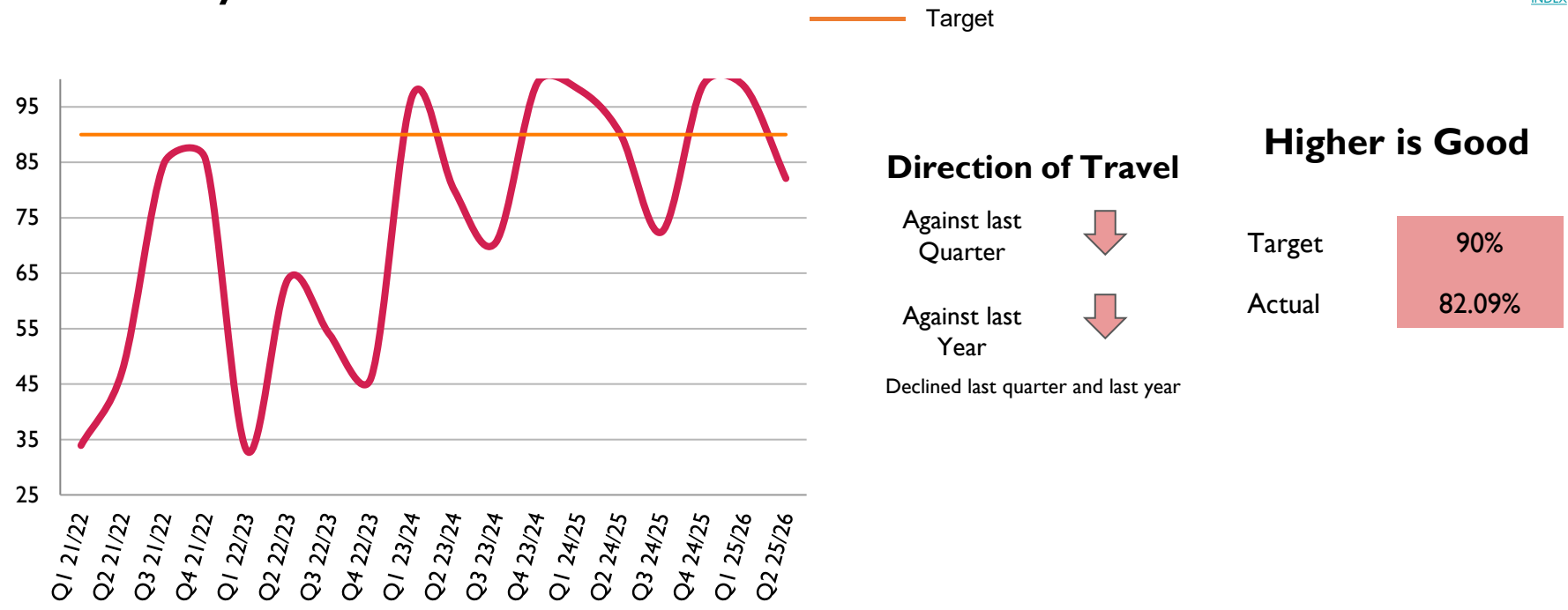
| Q1 25-26 Benchmark | % | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| Vale of White Horse | 17 | 1/5 | Top |
| South Oxfordshire | 27 | 2/5 | Top |
| Oxford | 29 | 3/5 | Second |
| Cherwell | 43 | 4/5 | Third |
| West Oxfordshire | 50 | 5/5 | Bottom |

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).

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

| | Decided | Allowed | % Allowed |
|----------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Uplands | 7 | 2 | 28.57% |
| Lowlands | 6 | 3 | 50.00% |

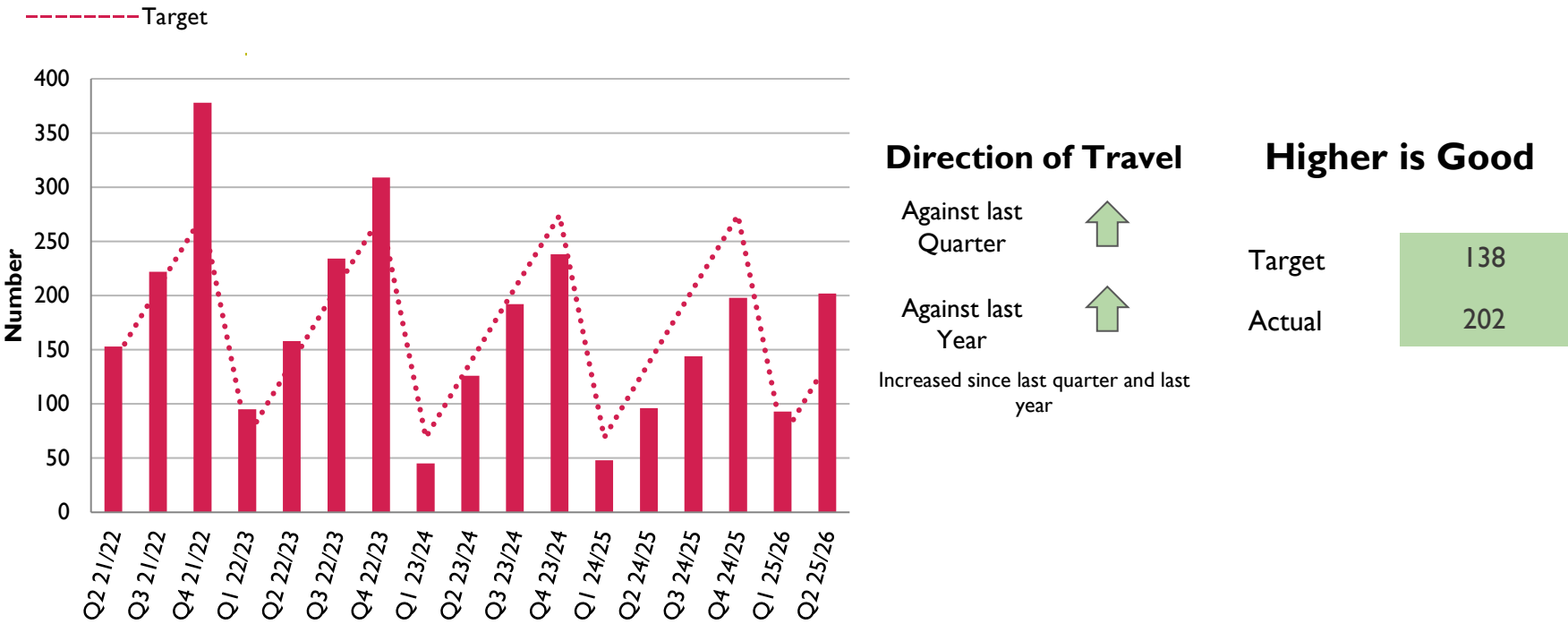
Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



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Performance fell from 98.67% in Q1 to 82.09% in Q2, mainly due to a long-term staff absence from late August. July and August exceeded the 90% target, and additional support has been deployed to improve resilience and restore performance.

Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)

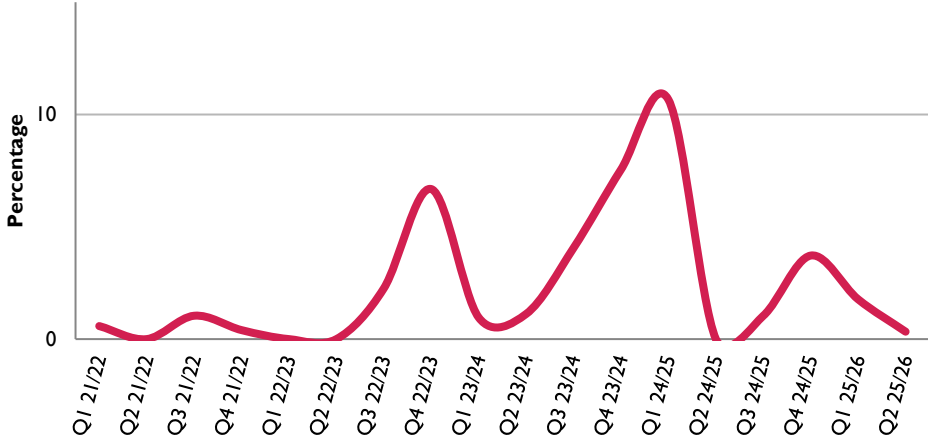


The Council delivered 109 affordable homes in Q2, bringing the year-to-date total to 202, with 43 homes for social rent, maintaining a strong focus on genuinely affordable tenures, which now make up 50% of all affordable homes delivered this year.

A key milestone this quarter was the completion of the affordable home development in Aston, delivering 40 new affordable homes through a partnership with Stonewater, supported by Homes England grant funding. The scheme is 100% affordable and includes sustainable features such as solar panels and air source heat pumps, supporting both housing need and environmental goals.

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

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



Direction of Travel

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Number of Fly Tips | | | Number of Fly Tips Collected | |
| Against last Quarter | ↓ | | 136 | |
| Against last Year | ↓ | | | |
| Percentage Enforcement Action | | | Percentage Enforcement Action | |
| Against last Quarter | ↓ | | 0.33% | |
| Against last Year | ↑ | | | |

Fly Tips – Declined since last quarter and last year
 Enforcement Action – Declined since last quarter but slightly increased since last year

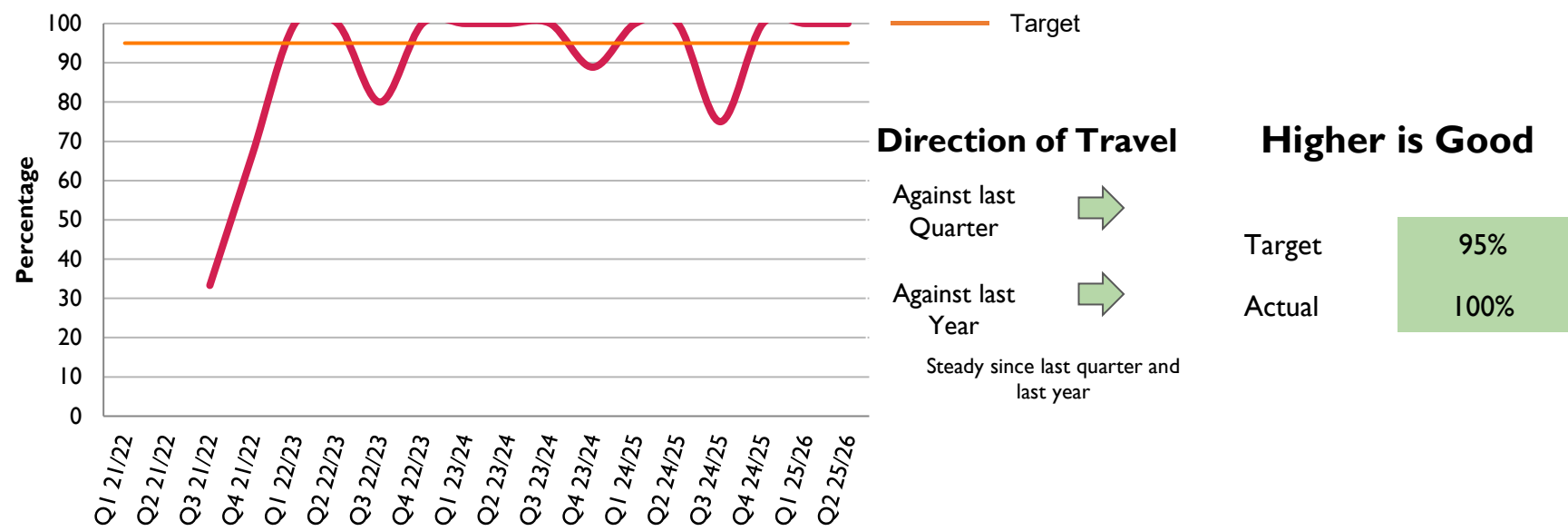
How do we compare?

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 |
| West Oxfordshire | 1135 | 76 | 13 | 1.15% | 4/5 | Third |
| Oxford | 4959 | 297 | 7 | 0.14% | 5/5 | Bottom |

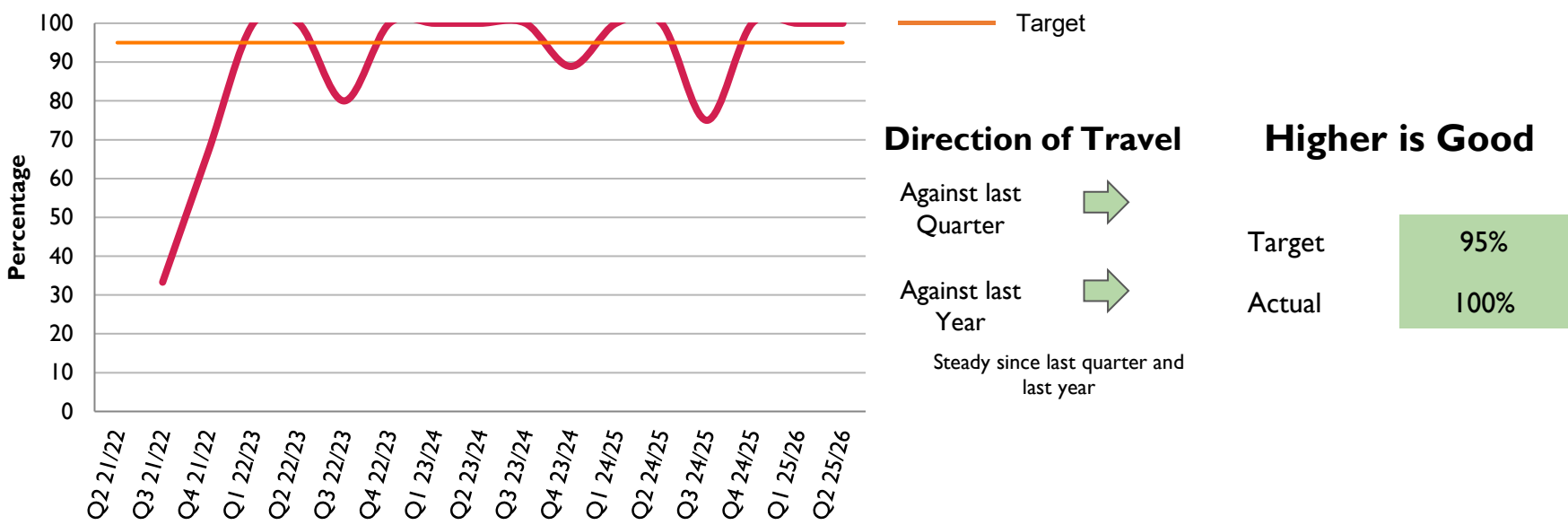
In Q2, the service continued preparations for stop-and-search operations, school engagement, and public awareness campaigns. Consultation began on a proposed district-wide PSPO to tackle dog fouling and require dogs to be under control, with penalties of £100 or up to £1,000 if prosecuted. Work also progressed on plans for PSPOs addressing anti-social behaviour, supported by Police enforcement.

Percentage of high-risk food premises inspected within target timescales



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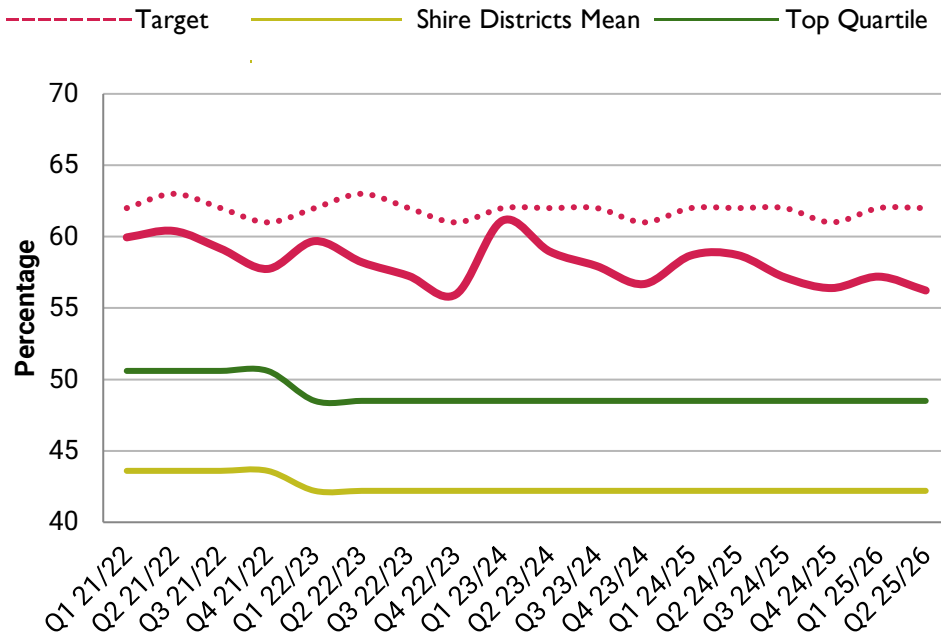
Five High-Risk food inspection was undertaken during Q2, which were completed within the target timeframes.



One notification was received during Q2 which was assessed within one working day.

Percentage of household waste recycled

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Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Declined since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Target | 62% |
| Actual | 56.23% |

How do we compare?

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

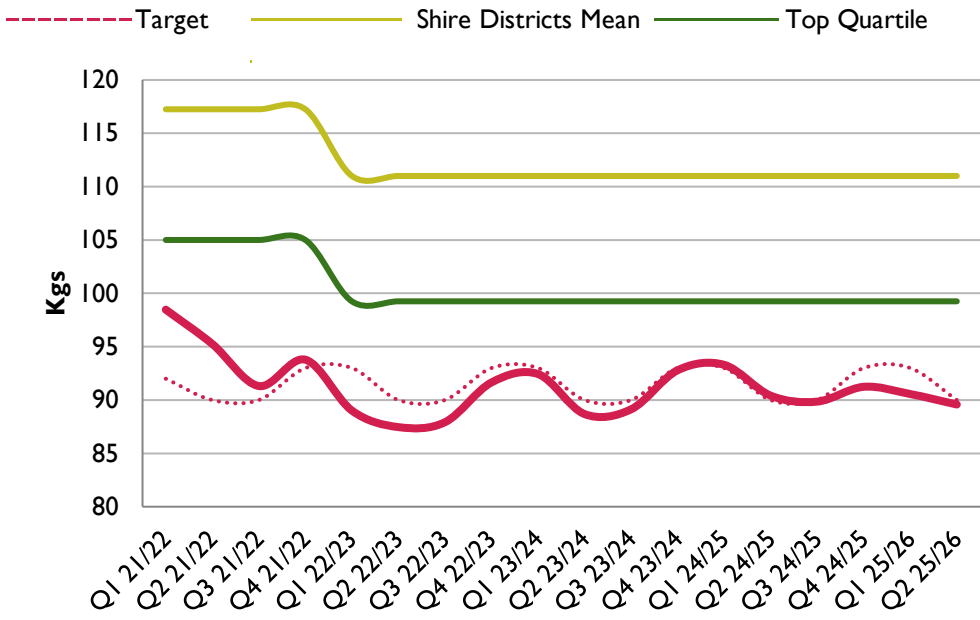
| 2023-24 Benchmark | % | County Rank | Quartile |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| South Oxfordshire | 62.9% | 1/5 | Top |
| Vale of White Horse | 60.7% | 2/5 | Top |
| West Oxfordshire | 57.2% | 3/5 | Second |
| Cherwell | 53.2% | 4/5 | Third |
| Oxford | 48.3%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

During Q2, there was a decline of around 2.5% 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 | 89.58 |

Page 155

How do we compare?

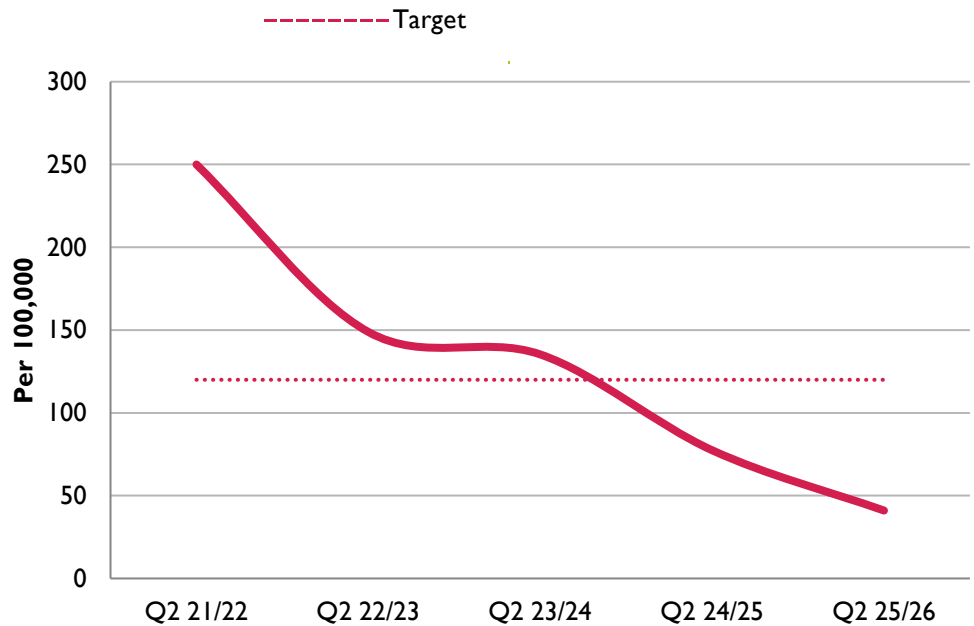
Residual household waste per household (kg/household) – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is from 2023-2024.

| 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 |
| West Oxfordshire | 344.7 | 4/5 | Third |
| Cherwell | 396.9 | 5/5 | Bottom |

During Q2, 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

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Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter
Against last Year
Decreased since last quarter and last year

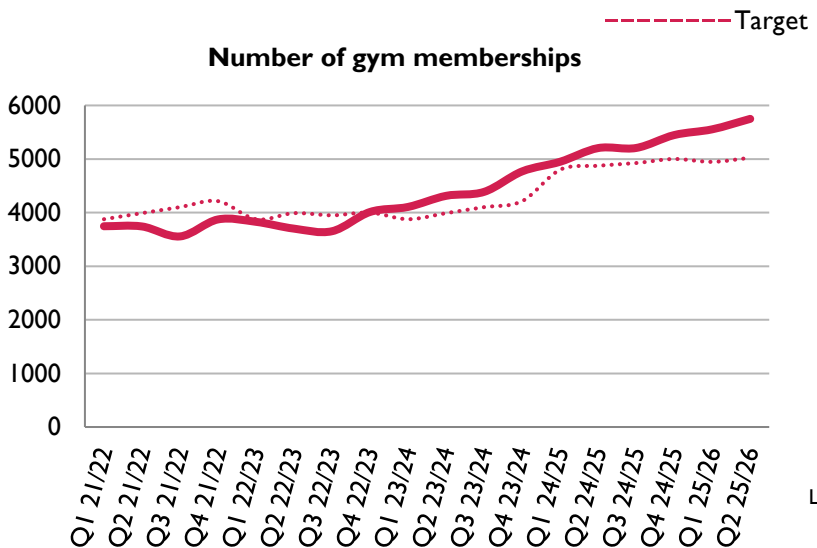
Lower is Good

| | |
|--------|-------|
| Target | 120 |
| Actual | 41.02 |

The Council recorded 41.02 missed bins per 100,000, well within target, and overall service performance has improved following recent measures. Whilst assisted collection issues persist, they have dropped by around 60% since last quarter. A vehicle breakdown in August temporarily disrupted services for residents in narrow access areas but strengthened team and contractor relationships continue to support progress.


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- Declined since last quarter but improved since last year

Higher is Good

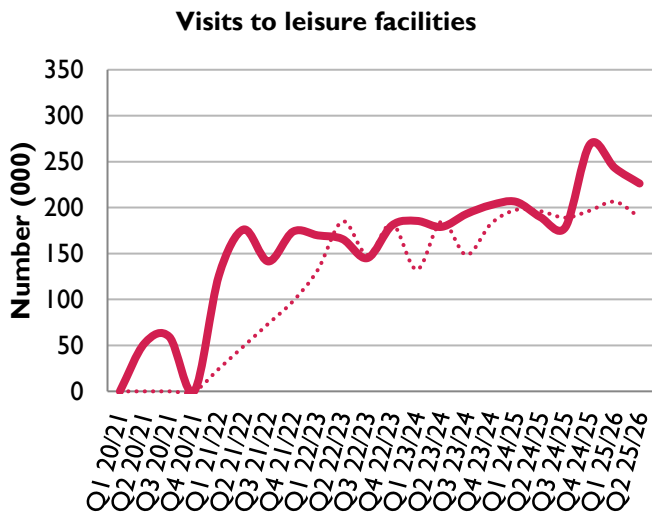
Gym Memberships

| | |
|--------|-------|
| Target | 5,023 |
| Actual | 5,749 |

Leisure Visits

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Target | 189,446 |
| Actual | 226,202 |

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The Council exceeded its leisure targets in Q2, achieving 14.4% above target for memberships and 19.4% above target for visits, reflecting strong public engagement with its facilities.

Breakdown of Leisure Visits per facility:

| Facility | Q1 24-25 | Q2 24-25 | Q3 24-25 | Q4 24-25 | Q1 25-26 | Q2 25-26 |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Bartholomew Sports Centre | 9,681 | 9,747 | 5,506 | 16,712 | 20,268 | 17,195 |
| Carterton Artificial Turf Pitch | 6,840 | 6,840 | 6,840 | 9,252 | 858 | 1810 |
| Carterton Leisure Centre | 70,220 | 62,866 | 57,100 | 64,139 | 57,346 | 63,254 |
| Carterton Pavilion | 600 | 600 | 600 | 600 | 600 | 320 |
| Chipping Norton Leisure Centre | 22,907 | 21,717 | 18,804 | 54,713 | 47,750 | 40,080 |
| Windrush Leisure Centre | 76,286 | 65,250 | 73,237 | 103,947 | 95,596 | 81,676 |
| Witney Artificial Turf Pitch | 19,320 | 19,320 | 16,487 | 19,640 | 19,557 | 15,724 |
| Woodstock Open Air Pool | 516 | 3,126 | 0 | 0 | 1,137 | 6,143 |

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|---|--|
|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and Date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE – 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>LOCAL PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (AMR)</p> |
| <p>Wards Affected</p> | <p>ALL</p> |
| <p>Accountable Member</p> | <p>Councillor Hugo Ashton – Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development. Email: hugo.ashton@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable Officer</p> | <p>Andrew Thomson – Planning Policy Manager Email: andrew.thomson@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report Author</p> | <p>Andrew Thomson – Planning Policy Manager Email: andrew.thomson@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p> | <p>To consider the Council's Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2024-2025</p> |
| <p>Recommendation</p> | <p>That the Executive Resolves to: I. Note the content of the report.</p> |
| <p>Corporate Priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| <p>Key Decision</p> | <p>NO</p> |
| <p>Exempt</p> | <p>NO</p> |
| <p>Consultees/ Consultation</p> | <p>There is no requirement to consult on the Annual Monitoring Report.</p> |

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Members will be aware that under current planning legislation, the Council is required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 1.2** The main purpose of the AMR is to monitor the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies but it must also include information on the following:
- Progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables;
 - Neighbourhood Planning;
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
 - How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.
- 1.3** The AMR must be made available on the Council's website, at its main offices and at any other appropriate locations.
- 1.4** The 2024 – 2025 AMR covers the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025 (referred to as 'the monitoring year').
- 1.5** The AMR is attached at Annex A and the key points of interest are summarised in Section 2 below.

2. AMR 2024/2025 – OVERVIEW

Local Plan Progress

- 2.1** The AMR reports on the Council's progress of preparing a new Local Plan covering the period to 2043, against the Local Development Scheme (October 2025). It sets out that three stages of Regulation 18 consultation were completed in 2022, 2023 and 2025 respectively. It notes that further Regulation 18 consultation on Preferred Spatial Options is in progress.
- The Council's most recent Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved in October 2025, setting out the expected timetable for Local Plan preparation up to submission for Examination by September 2026.

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 2.2** The AMR provides an update on the progress of the Salt Cross AAP. Consultation on the proposed Main Modifications to Policy 2 – Net Zero Carbon Development took place from 3 October to 14 November 2025 with the Inspector's final report anticipated potentially in December 2025 or January 2026. The District Council hopes to then be in a position to formally adopt the AAP shortly thereafter.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.3** The AMR provides an update on Neighbourhood Planning in West Oxfordshire, explaining that there are now 10 'made' (adopted) Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) in West Oxfordshire.
- 2.4** The AMR explains that a further 7 NDPs are currently in preparation.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.5 The AMR provides an update on the District Council's progress with introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) into West Oxfordshire setting out that, following receipt of the Inspector's report in July 2025, the CIL Charging Schedule was formally adopted on 1 October 2025, with an effective charging date of **31 January 2026**.

Duty to Co-Operate

- 2.6 The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement on local planning authorities to engage with other relevant authorities and certain prescribed bodies in relation to cross-boundary strategic planning matters. The AMR therefore provides an update on how the District Council has continued to fulfil its obligations under the duty throughout the monitoring period.
- 2.7 The AMR also outlines that ongoing Oxfordshire-wide discussions are currently taking place around plan-making and are expected to culminate in the publication of Statements of Common Ground which will form part of the District Council's evidence to demonstrate that it has complied with the duty to co-operate in preparing the new Local Plan 2043.

Implementation of Local Plan Policies

- 2.8 The AMR is structured around the five main sections of the current Local Plan 2031:
- Overall strategy
 - Providing new homes
 - Sustainable Economic Growth
 - Transport and Movement
 - Environmental and Heritage Assets
- 2.9 The key points to note under each heading are summarised below.

Overall Strategy

- 2.10 A total of 1,368 planning applications were determined during the monitoring period (1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025). The majority of these (1,186 applications) were approved or resolved to be approved subject to a legal agreement.
- 2.11 43% of the applications determined were for relatively minor 'householder' type proposals and 22% were for full or outline planning approval.
- 2.12 The majority of planning approvals were concentrated within the Main Service Centres, Rural Service Centres and larger villages of the District in accordance with Local Plan Policy OS2, which seeks to focus development primarily at larger settlements due to their relative sustainability in terms of available services and facilities.
- 2.13 59 appeals were determined during the monitoring period. The majority of these were dismissed with 19 being allowed or allowed in part.

- 2.14** £2,143,908 was collected towards new infrastructure from new development in West Oxfordshire between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. Over £1.1m was spent on new infrastructure during the same period.
- 2.15** A detailed breakdown of infrastructure funding (received and spent) is set out in the Council's separate Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which is published annually each December. The Council's most recent IFS covering the period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025 is available [online](#).

Providing New Homes

- 2.16** Planning permission was granted for 687 new dwellings during the monitoring period, a net gain of 667 dwellings. This included approval of an outline planning application for 450 dwellings on appeal in relation to the East Witney SDA adopted local plan allocation.
- 2.17** The largest concentrations of outstanding residential commitments are located within, or on the edge of Main Service Centres within neighbouring Parishes, e.g. Witney / Curbridge and Carterton /Brize Norton. There are also significant concentrations at Woodstock, Minster Lovell and Long Hanborough.
- 2.18** There were 300 net residential completions in the monitoring period. This is significantly lower than both the Local Plan housing requirement of 1,125 dwellings and also the previous standard method calculation of housing need (549 dwellings per annum), which the Council was utilising for housing land supply calculations during the monitoring period.
- 2.19** It is also important to note that since the start of the current Local Plan period between the 1st April 2011 and 31st March 2025, a total of 8,019 new homes have been completed which falls below the requirement of 9,200 set in the Local Plan for the period. This shortfall of 1,181 homes is largely a result of slower than anticipated delivery on a number of adopted local plan allocations.
- 2.20** Approximately 157 new affordable homes were completed during the monitoring period, comprising a mixture of affordable rented, social rented and shared ownership properties. These were located predominantly on larger sites in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy H3. The delivery of new social rented homes is particularly welcome given that these are not a formal policy requirement of the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.21** Of the total housing completions, over 50% were therefore classed as affordable, slightly above the requirements of Local Plan Policy H3 which adopts a tiered approach ranging from 35% - 50% depending on location.
- 2.22** In September 2023, the Council undertook a formal review of the Local Plan 2031 in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.23** Importantly, the review concluded that the Local Plan housing requirement set out in Policy H2 (which has previously been used to calculate the Council's 5-year housing land supply) needs updating because it is based on 2014 evidence which pre-dates the introduction of the standard method for assessing local housing need.

- 2.24** The significance of this is that because the current Local Plan is now more than 5-years old, the District Council is able to calculate its 5-year housing land supply position using the Government's standard method for assessing local housing need.
- 2.25** Using this alternative measure of housing need, the Council was however unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land at 31 March 2025.

Sustainable Economic Growth

- 2.26** A total of approximately 2,500m² of new business floorspace was approved during the monitoring period, the majority of which was for mixed business uses, including general industrial, offices and storage and distribution.
- 2.27** In addition to the above new floorspace there were changes of use between business uses, for example at Eagle Industrial Estate, where permission was granted from change of use of existing brewery to Class E use.
- 2.28** Any new business development approved in the rural parts of the District during the monitoring period was relatively minor in nature.
- 2.29** The majority of tourism-related development during the monitoring period was for new tourist accommodation.
- 2.30** Town centres continue to diversify with a number of approvals for residential development arising from the conversion of existing uses.

Transport and Movement

- 2.31** The majority of new development continues to be focussed within the Main Service Centres and Rural Service Centres, which are the most accessible locations to access services and facilities by a range of transport options, including public transport, walking and cycling.
- 2.32** The AMR recognises, however, that access to some key services remains poor in some areas of West Oxfordshire and car ownership remains higher than the rest of the county.
- 2.33** An update on Local Plan 2031 identified highway infrastructure schemes is provided. Notably, the access to Witney (Shores Green) junction improvement scheme started on-site in spring 2025 and is due to be completed by summer 2026.

Environmental and Heritage Assets

- 2.34** No major development was approved within the Cotswolds National Landscape – a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) during the monitoring period.
- 2.35** The majority of new development is steered away from environmentally sensitive locations in West Oxfordshire, particularly areas with ecological, landscape or heritage sensitivities or areas at risk of flooding.
- 2.36** There have been no significant changes to the area of protected habitats or number of protected species in West Oxfordshire during the monitoring period.

2.37 The number of heritage assets recorded as being 'at risk' on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register has fallen from 8 in 2023 to 5 in 2025.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

3.1 None.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The report raises no direct financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6. Preparation of the AMR is a legal requirement under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The AMR raises no significant risks.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 The report raises no specific equality implications for any specific group/protected characteristic. The adopted Local Plan was supported by a separate Equalities Impact Assessment.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The AMR reports on a number of climate and ecological related issues.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

(END)

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 Annual Monitoring Report (2024 – 2025)

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Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose of the Annual Monitoring report

- 1.1 The primary purpose of the AMR is to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policies set out in the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.
- 1.2 The AMR is also required to report on the following matters:
 - The progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables.
 - Neighbourhood Planning.
 - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
 - How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate
- 1.3 This AMR focuses primarily on the 1-year **period 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025** but includes some information from outside this period where appropriate.

Structure of the report

- 1.4 The following section of the report (Section 2) covers the four bullet points listed above whilst Section 3 summarises the implementation and effectiveness of adopted Local Plan policies against relevant indicators.

Section 2 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan and associated documents

Local Plan Progress

- 2.1 The existing West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was formally adopted in September 2018.
- 2.2 In September 2023, reflecting the fact that the Local Plan became 5-years old, the Council undertook a review in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.3 The review is available [online](#) and concludes that whilst many of the policies remain consistent with national policy, they would benefit from being reviewed and re-considered in light of updated evidence and to reflect any changing circumstances.
- 2.4 Recognising the importance of having robust and up-to-date policies in place to guide development, the Council has committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan covering the period to 2043.
- 2.5 The timetable for preparing a Local Plan must be set out in a Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 2.6 The current LDS for West Oxfordshire was published in October 2025 and progress against the key milestones is summarised in the table below.

Table 1 - West Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme Key Milestones (November 2024 - to date)

| Stage/Milestone | Progress |
|--|---|
| Regulation 18 initial scoping consultation August/October 2022 | COMPLETE |
| Regulation 18 focused consultation on draft plan objectives, spatial strategy options and call for sites. June/July 2023 | COMPLETE (although consultation took place slightly later than anticipated from August – October 2023) |
| Regulation 18 consultation on preferred policy options/approaches June – August 2025 | COMPLETE |
| Regulation 18 consultation on preferred spatial options – November - December 2025 | IN PROGRESS |
| Regulation 19 publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan May 2026 | Not yet undertaken |
| Regulation 22 submission of draft Local Plan September 2026 | Not yet undertaken. |
| Examination and adoption 2026/27 | Not yet undertaken. |

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 2.7 The Local Plan 2031 identifies land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham as a strategic location for growth (SLG) which is intended to accommodate a free-standing exemplar Garden Village of around 2,200 new homes plus 40 hectares of business land and various supporting services and facilities.
- 2.8 The Local Plan requires comprehensive development of the Garden Village (now referred to as Salt Cross) led by an Area Action Plan (AAP).
- 2.9 Following extensive stakeholder engagement, the final draft version of the AAP was submitted for independent examination in February 2021 with hearing sessions held in June/July 2021.

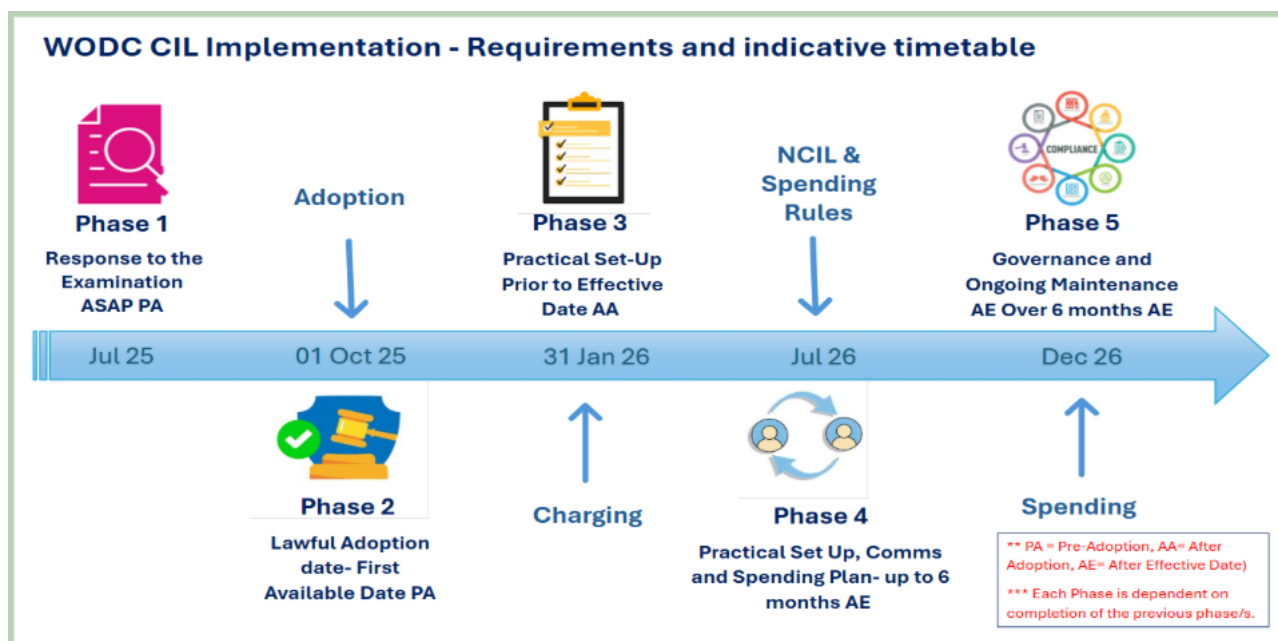
- 2.10 Following a pause in the examination to enable additional work on infrastructure phasing to be undertaken, the appointed Inspectors wrote to the District Council in May 2022 to confirm that the AAP is capable of being found ‘sound’ subject to a number of Main Modifications (MMs).
- 2.11 Consultation on those Main Modifications took place from September to October 2022 and on 1 March 2023, the Inspectors issued their final report which concluded that the AAP can be formally adopted subject to a number of modifications.
- 2.12 However, a legal challenge was subsequently lodged by Rights Community Action (RCA) focusing on the conclusions reached by the Inspectors in relation to the soundness of AAP Policy 2 – Net Zero Carbon Development.
- 2.13 The legal challenge was successful and in March 2024, it was confirmed that the Inspector’s report and proposed Main Modifications are quashed insofar as they relate to Policy 2.
- 2.14 As a result, the examination was re-opened in April 2024 with a new Inspector appointed to re-consider Policy 2.
- 2.15 The District Council submitted a revised version of Policy 2 and updated supporting evidence in April 2025 and a hearing session was held on 30 June. Following the hearing, the Inspector issued a post-hearing letter which concluded that Policy 2 as proposed to be modified is consistent with national policy and capable of being found ‘sound’ subject to a number of Main Modifications. Consultation on those Main Modifications took place from 3 October to 14 November 2025 with the Inspector’s final report anticipated in December 2025 or January 2026. The District Council hopes to then be in a position to formally adopt the AAP shortly thereafter. Further information is available on the Salt Cross Garden Village AAP web page^[1].

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 2.1 The Council submitted a new CIL Charging Schedule for examination on 4 March 2025, and a hearing session was held on 10 June 2025. The CIL Inspector issued his report on 18 July 2025 concluding that, subject to modifications, including 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 adopted Local Plan strategic development areas), the schedule provides an appropriate basis for the collection of the levy in West Oxfordshire.
- 2.2 The CIL Charging Schedule was formally adopted on 1 October 2025, with an effective charging date of **31 January 2026**. The diagram below gives an overview of the process for CIL becoming chargeable and ongoing governance for the monitoring and spending of CIL funds.

^[1] <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/salt-cross-garden-village/salt-cross-area-action-plan-examination/salt-cross-area-action-plan-re-opened-examination-2024/>

Figure 1 - CIL indicative timetable 25/26



Botley West

- 2.3 The Botley West Solar Farm is a proposal for an 840MW solar farm to the west of Oxford within the districts of West Oxfordshire, Cherwell and the Vale of White Horse. The proposal is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) due to its size and as such, the decision on whether to approve the scheme is made by the Government following examination.
- 2.4 The examination of the proposed solar farm opened on 13 May and closed on 13 November 2025. A recommendation on whether to grant development consent is due by February 2026

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 2.5 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are intended to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted Local Plan. The District Council now has a number of SPDs in place. Details are provided in the summary table below with copies of the SPDS available on the Council's website [here](#).

Table 2 - West Oxfordshire Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

| Title | Date of adoption | Purpose |
|---------------------------|------------------|--|
| Affordable Housing | 27 October 2021 | Supplements Local Plan Policy H3 – Affordable Housing and provides detailed guidance on the delivery of new affordable housing in West Oxfordshire. Link: Affordable Housing SPD Final (adoption version 27 October 2021) |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Developer Contributions | 31 July 2023 | Supplements Local Plan Policy OS5 – Supporting Infrastructure and provides detailed guidance to developers, infrastructure providers and local communities on likely infrastructure requirements for developments in West Oxfordshire. Link: Developer Contributions SPD Document |
| Combe Village Design Statement | 28 July 2023 | Supplements Local Plan Policy OS4 – High Quality Design and provides design guidelines that can help to shape any future development so that it blends in with Combe’s distinctive rural landscape and heritage. Link: Combe Village Design Statement |
| West Oxfordshire Design Guide | 2016 | Supplements Local Plan Policy OS4 – High Quality Design and contains a detailed analysis of both natural and man-made aspects of the district and detailed design advice. Available to download here: Supplementary planning documents - West Oxfordshire District Council |

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.6 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) provide an extra tier of planning, to address locally specific issues within localities, mainly parishes in the case of West Oxfordshire. NDPs form part of the statutory Development Plan and are therefore a key consideration in decision making in West Oxfordshire.
- 2.7 Ten NDPs have been formally adopted or ‘made’ in West Oxfordshire. Details of these plans are provided in sequential date order in the table below.

Table 3 - Made Neighbourhood Development Plans

| NDP | Date of adoption | Weblink |
|------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Brize Norton | September 2025 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/zsvj4xow/brize-norton-neighbourhood-plan-made_astrid-harvey.pdf |
| Cassington | 26 June 2023 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wkojqf3/made-cassington-neighbourhood-plan-for-web.pdf |
| Milton under Wychwood | 26 June 2023 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/g4okpjt/milton-under-wychwood-neighbourhood-plan-made-26062023.pdf |
| Woodstock | 23 January 2023 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/saynun5i/woodstock-neighbourhood-development-plan.pdf |
| Charlbury | 14 June 2021 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/wbenslr3/regulation-19-charlbury-decision-statement-14-june-2021-astrid-harvey-1.pdf |
| Eynsham | 6 February 2020 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/ngkckyhi/eynsham-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |

| NDP | Date of adoption | Weblink |
|------------------------|------------------|---|
| Hailey | 2 September 2019 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/flmhngyh/hailey-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |
| Shilton | 2 September 2019 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/5fvkylce/shilton-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |
| South Leigh | 8 January 2019 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/mp5klvz1/south-leigh-neighbourhood-plan-v2.pdf |
| Chipping Norton | 15 March 2016 | https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/tlchsxc5/chipping-norton-neighbourhood-plan.pdf |

2.8 In addition, there are a further seven NDPs currently being prepared as outlined below.

- Ascott-under-Wychwood
- Ducklington
- Hanborough
- Minster Lovell
- North Leigh
- Stonesfield
- Wootton by Woodstock

Duty to Cooperate

- 2.9 The Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement on local planning authorities to engage with other relevant authorities and certain prescribed bodies in relation to cross-boundary strategic planning matters. It applies during the period of plan-preparation i.e. up to the point at which the plan is submitted for examination.
- 2.10 West Oxfordshire District Council has a strong track record of working actively and continuously with other local authorities and statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.
- 2.11 The District Council will continue to work closely with other local authorities and statutory bodies in the preparation of the new Local Plan 2043. Early engagement has already been undertaken through three rounds of informal Regulation 18 consultation, and this will continue up until the point of submission and beyond as appropriate.
- 2.12 The Oxfordshire local planning authorities (LPAs) have collectively signed Statements of Common Ground to identify the relevant strategic, cross-boundary matters on which the Oxfordshire local planning authorities will be required to co-operate. A duty to co-operate forum has been established to ensure ongoing and meaningful engagement in relation to these strategic matters.
- 2.13 Relevant strategic, cross-boundary matters identified between the Oxfordshire authorities include: Housing need and supply; gypsy and traveller needs; employment and jobs needed; natural environment; and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 2.14 Statements of Common Ground will form part of the District Council's evidence to demonstrate that it has complied with the duty to co-operate in preparing the new Local Plan. Where

appropriate, the District Council may also seek to agree separate statements of common ground with individual authorities.

Section 3 - Monitoring Results

4.1 The primary purpose of the AMR is to monitor the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies and in this section, we consider the extent to which policies are being delivered under the five main sections of the Local Plan:

- Overall strategy
- Providing new homes
- Sustainable economic growth
- Transport and movement
- Environmental and heritage assets

4.2 For each section, we consider the effectiveness and implementation of the various Local Plan policies with reference to relevant indicators and contextual information.

OVERALL STRATEGY

SUMMARY

- The majority of planning applications submitted during the monitoring period were approved, in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan 2031.
- The majority of planning applications that were appealed during the monitoring period were dismissed.
- The Local Plan continues to facilitate the delivery of new development in line with the vision and overarching strategic objectives. This ensures beneficial outcomes against the objectives of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan which seeks to enable a good quality of life for all and create a better environment for people and wildlife.
- The majority of planning approvals granted were located within the main service centres, rural service centres and villages in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy OS2.
- The majority of developments are suitably located to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of towns and villages and contribute to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
- Ensuring that new development is located in the right places enables a good quality of life for all, by ensuring that housing, jobs and infrastructure can be delivered where it is needed, while protecting the characteristics of the district that make West Oxfordshire special.
- Maintaining an up-to-date Local Plan ensures a plan-led approach to managing development in West Oxfordshire can continue and that planning applications can be determined in accordance with the Plan and overarching vision and objectives.

- The majority of residential development has been delivered on undeveloped greenfield sites throughout the monitoring period, due to relatively limited available opportunities for brownfield redevelopment.
- The council has continued to secure funding through development for new infrastructure, but there remains a significant funding gap to deliver necessary infrastructure improvements in the district.
- The delivery of infrastructure is important if the Local Plan is to deliver against a range of Core Objectives and to meet the priorities of the West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2023 – 2027. Failure to deliver adequate supporting infrastructure is likely to have a detrimental impact on the quality of life for all.

4.3 The overall strategy for the Local Plan comprises five strands; a presumption in favour of sustainable development, ensuring development is located in the right places (i.e. focused primarily on larger, more sustainable settlements) prudent use of natural resources, high quality design and ensuring that new development is supported by appropriate investment in infrastructure.

4.4 Set out below is some commentary and statistical/monitoring information around these five main strands with links to each policy (and also the Council Plan) provided as appropriate.

Planning Applications Determined in Monitoring Period (links to Policy OSI)

4.5 A total of **1,368** planning applications were determined within the monitoring period (1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025).

4.6 This includes applications that were subsequently withdrawn, but the figures serve to illustrate the level of interest in developing in West Oxfordshire and the important role the planning department plays in determining applications and implementing the policies of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

4.7 A breakdown is provided below. As can be seen, the vast majority of applications were approved in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is embedded in Local Plan Policy OSI.

Table 4 - Types of planning application decision 2024-2025

| Type of decision | Number of applications 24/25 |
|--|------------------------------|
| Approved / Subject to S106 | 1,186 |
| Prior approval granted / not required | 47 |
| Split decision | 0 |
| Refused | 80 |
| Withdrawn | 45 |

| Type of decision | Number of applications 24/25 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Prior approval refused | 10 |
| TOTAL | 1,368 |

Figure 2 - Types of planning decision 2024 – 2025

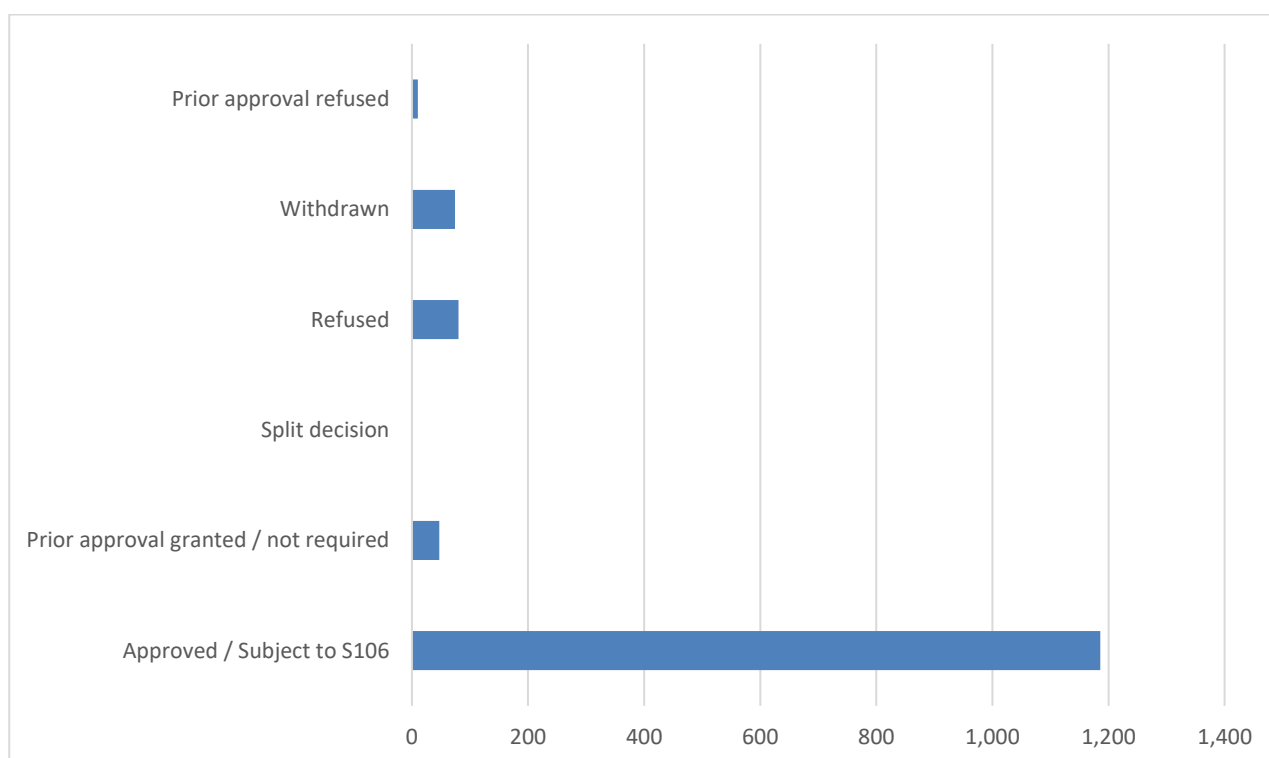


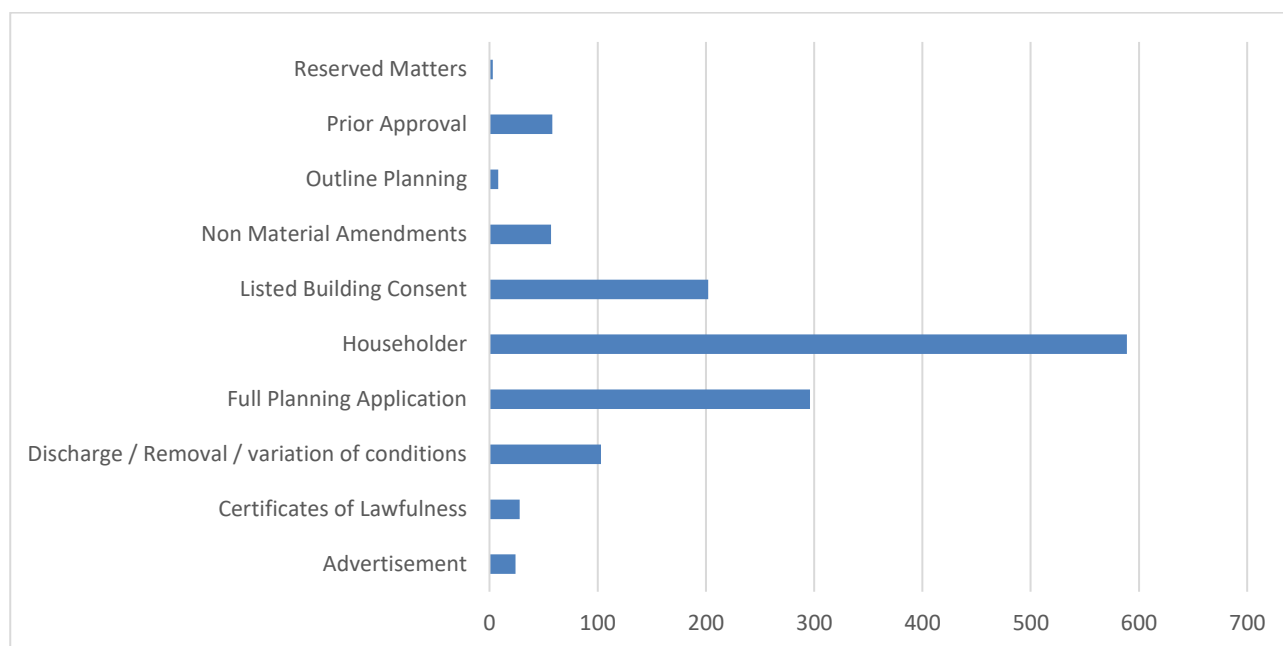
Table 5 - Types of planning application 2024 – 2025

| Type of application | Number of Applications 24/25 |
|--|------------------------------|
| Advertisement | 24 |
| Certificates of Lawfulness | 28 |
| Discharge / Removal / variation of conditions | 103 |
| Full Planning Application | 296 |
| Householder | 589 |
| Listed Building Consent | 202 |
| Non-Material Amendments | 57 |

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Outline Planning | 8 |
| Prior Approval | 58 |
| Reserved Matters | 3 |
| TOTAL | 1,368 |

4.8 Of the **1,368** applications that were determined, the largest proportion were householder applications.

Figure 3 - Types of planning application 2024 – 2025



Planning Appeals (links to Policy OSI)

- 4.9 A total of **59** planning appeals were determined within the monitoring period. The majority of these (**39**) were dismissed, with **19** allowed and **1** allowed in part.
- 4.10 The allowed appeals included a number of residential schemes as illustrated in table 6 below including major developments at North Leigh and Witney.

Table 6 - Appeals allowed for residential development 2024 – 2025

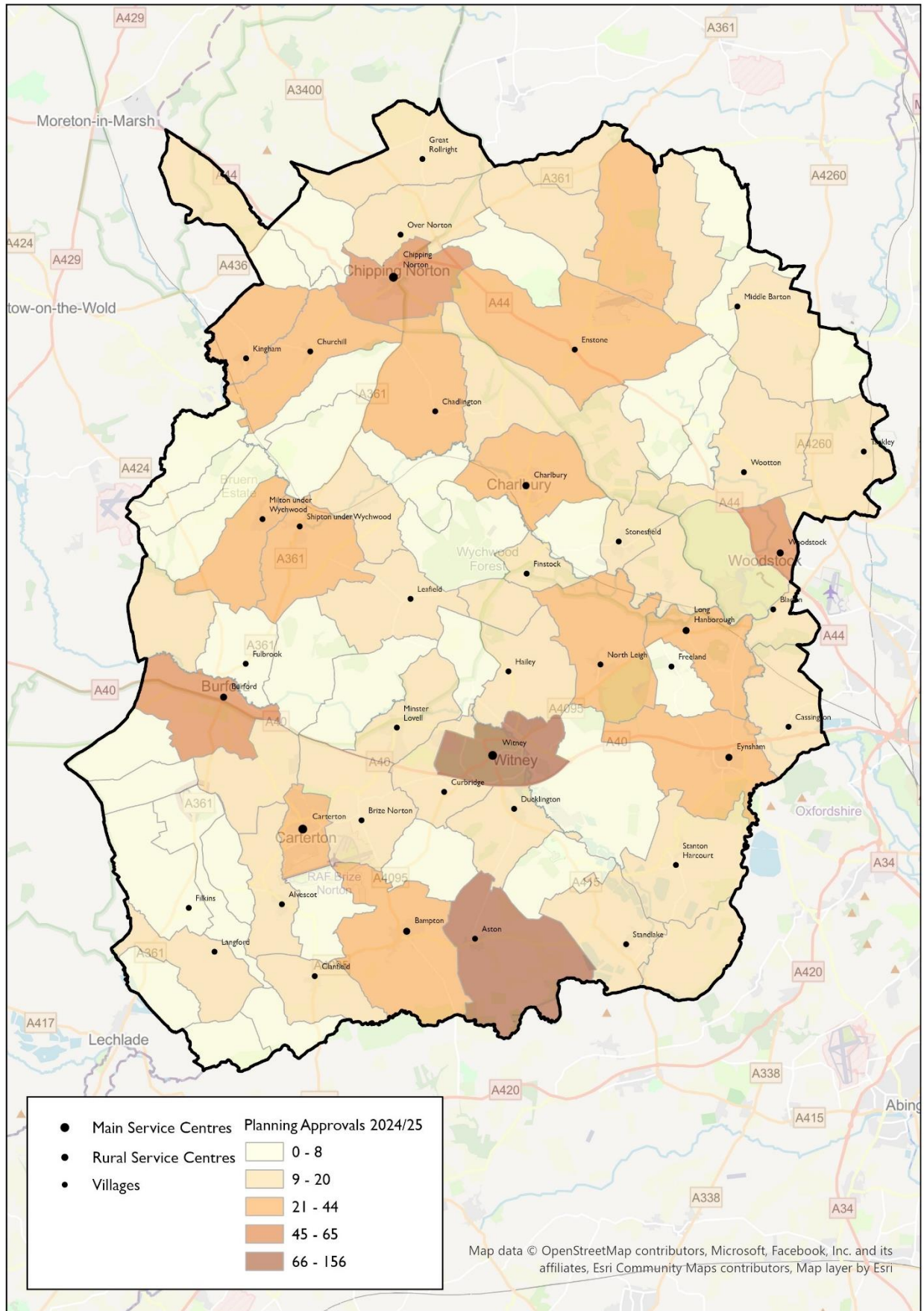
| Reference | Location | Description |
|---------------------|---|---|
| 22/00838/OUT | Land At Chapel Lane Enstone | Outline planning permission for residential development (up to 8 dwellings), access, parking, public open space, landscaping and associated development infrastructure. (some matters reserved) |
| 22/02740/FUL | Land North of A4095 North Leigh | Erection of a single storey dwelling with attached kennel, office and kitchen building along with construction of a kennel block all to be used in association with the existing dog training facility |
| 23/00794/OUT | Land South Of I New Yatt Road North Leigh | Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for means of access) for the erection of up to 43 residential dwellings, including affordable housing, public open space, landscape planting, sustainable drainage system and new access arrangements from New Yatt Road (amended plans) |
| 23/00860/FUL | Land Formerly Known As The Square Church Enstone | Erection of a single dwelling |
| 20/02654/OUT | Land South East Of Oxford Hill Witney | Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except access) for the erection of up to 450 dwellings together with associated open space and green infrastructure (Amended) |
| 23/02245/FUL | Wychwood Garage Fairspear Road Leafield Witney OX29 9NU | Demolition of the existing garage, bungalow, associated buildings and hardstanding. Construction of seven dwellings with associated works |
| 23/03070/FUL | Land West Of Colt House Aston Road Bampton | Erection of five single storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure |
| 23/01182/FUL | Churchfields Care Home Pound Lane Cassington | Erection of a two-storey detached key worker nurses accommodation block and associated works |

| Reference | Location | Description |
|---------------------|---|--|
| | Witney OX29 4BN | |
| 23/02971/FUL | 48 Black Bourton Road Carterton OX18 3HE | Erection of 9 dwellings and associated external works |
| 23/02197/FUL | Mutchmeats Ltd Abattoir New Close Lane Ducklington Witney OX29 7GX | Erection of two semi-permanent single storey self-contained sleeper cabins (Retrospective) |
| 24/01368/S73 | Vicarage Field Church Road Milton Under Wychwood Chipping Norton OX7 6LQ | Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 21/00776/FUL to allow design and layout changes to both dwellings including the addition of two dormers and two rooflights (plot 1) and provision of office with dormer window above garaging (plot 2) (amended) |
| 24/01030/FUL | South Lawn Farm South Lawn Swinbrook Burford OX18 4EN | Conversion of stables/tack room into two bedroom living accommodation (Part Retrospective) |

Location of Development (links to Policy OS2)

- 4.11 Local Plan Policy OS2 seeks to steer development to larger, more sustainable settlements where there are good opportunities for active travel and public transport and a good range of services and facilities available.
- 4.12 In this context, figure 4 below shows the concentrations of planning approvals in each town and parish between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.
- 4.13 As can be seen, the majority of planning approvals were concentrated within the main service centres and rural service centres in line with the general approach of Policy OS2.

Figure 4 - All planning applications approved 2024 – 2025



Car use and accessibility (links to Policies OSI, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.14 11.5% of households in West Oxfordshire have no access to a car compared to 16% across Oxfordshire as a whole. Higher levels of car ownership may be a reflection of the rural nature of the district and relatively poor access to public transport in some rural areas, which may increase car dependency for many communities.

Figure 5 - West Oxfordshire car ownership statistics, Census 2021

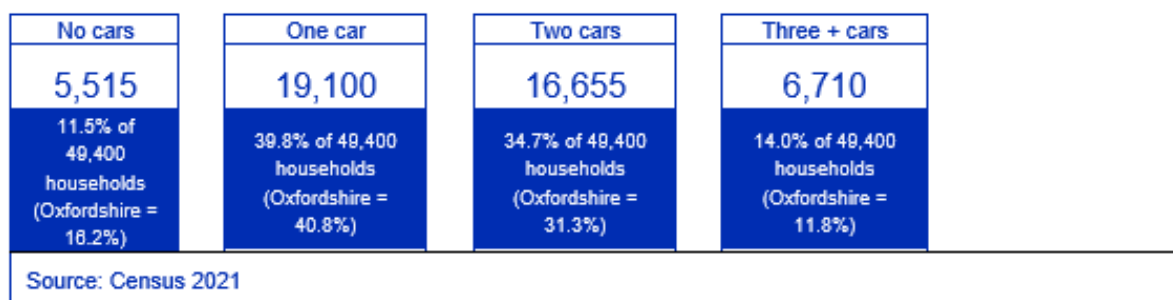
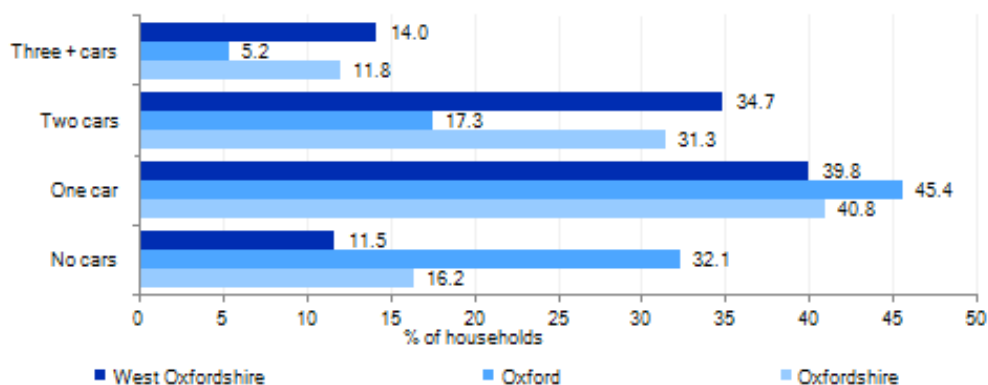


Figure: Car ownership
Source: Census 2021



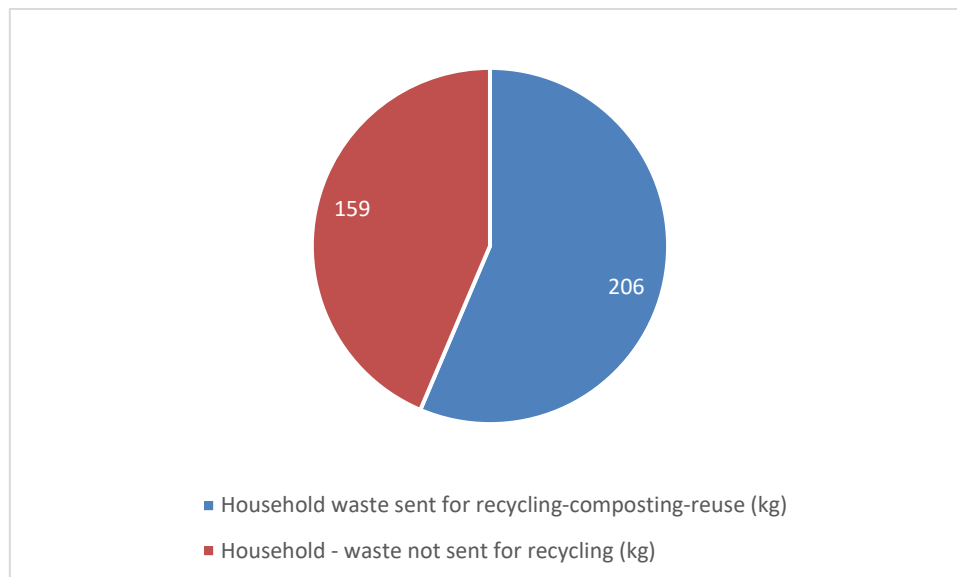
Proximity of development to public transport (links to Policies OSI, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.15 The majority of development is focused within the main and rural service centres which are the most accessible locations for public transport services linking to other centres, particularly bus services.
- 4.16 Financial contributions towards improved bus services have been secured through new development that has been delivered in the district during the monitoring period.
- 4.17 There were 9 new residential development schemes approved during the monitoring period, located within 1.6km of a railway station. The total number of dwellings approved was 12, although one of these was for a replacement dwelling, so a net gain of 11. One approval was for an ancillary dwelling.
- 4.18 A total of 6 approvals were granted for residential development that were relatively isolated in terms of access to good transport links, totalling a net gain of 2 dwellings. These included two replacement dwellings and a couple of agricultural to residential conversions.

Waste and recycling (links to Policy OS3)

- 4.19 A total of 364.8 kg of residual waste per household was collected by the local authority between 2024 and 2025. The Local Plan includes a target to recycle or compost 70% of household waste by 2025. The figures for the monitoring period indicate a shortfall against this target with 56% of waste recycled, composted or re-used within the period.

Figure 6 -Proportion of residual waste per household sent for recycling, composting or reuse in West Oxfordshire 2024 - 2025



Previously Developed (Brownfield) Land Redevelopment (links to Policies OS1, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.20 The Local Plan seeks ensure that development makes the most efficient use of land. There is relatively limited previously developed (brownfield) land available in the district since the majority of former industrial sites have already been developed, yet a large amount of residential development has been delivered on previously developed land, though conversion or redevelopment.
- 4.21 Approximately 69 dwellings out of 687 (10%) were approved on previously developed land during the monitoring period.

Development at risk of flooding (links to Policies OS1, OS2 and OS3)

- 4.22 There were 7 approvals for residential development within Flood Zones 2 or 3 including at East Witney where part of the allocation on the land to the west of the Stanton Harcourt Road is in the flood zone, however, residential development would be located in areas of low flood risk. In addition to the East Witney approval, permission on sites FZ2 or FZ3 areas, totalled 5 further dwellings during the monitoring period¹. The majority of these approvals were for conversion or redevelopment of existing buildings.

¹ Calculated using GIS analysis – Any planning application boundary that intersects flood zones 2 or 3.

- 4.23 There were few reported incidents of property flooding recorded during the monitoring period, despite periods of heavy rainfall and named storms during the monitoring period.
- 4.24 There were incidents of highway flooding recorded during the monitoring period, however.
- 4.25 Incidents of highway and property flooding in West Oxfordshire are often a result of sewer inundation and overfilling their capacity. This is an issue that will need to be addressed to ensure that there is capacity for future development in the district.

Water Quality (links to Policies OS1, OS2, OS3 and OS4)

- 4.26 Water quality is measured on a river catchment scale and West Oxfordshire falls within two catchment areas: the Evenlode and the Windrush which are both major tributaries of the River Thames.
- 4.27 The annual water quality report for the Evenlode (2024)², recorded high nitrate concentrations, primarily from agriculture, are compounded by high phosphate concentrations downstream of sewage treatment works.
- 4.28 Sewage treatment works are a major contributor to phosphate pollution, accounting for 65% to 83% of the average phosphate contribution across the catchment. Water quality significantly decreases below STWs, and the flow in receiving water bodies is often insufficient to mitigate daily STW discharges.
- 4.29 No waterbodies in the Evenlode catchment achieved good ecological status in 2024, with water quality generally decreasing from headwaters to the confluence.

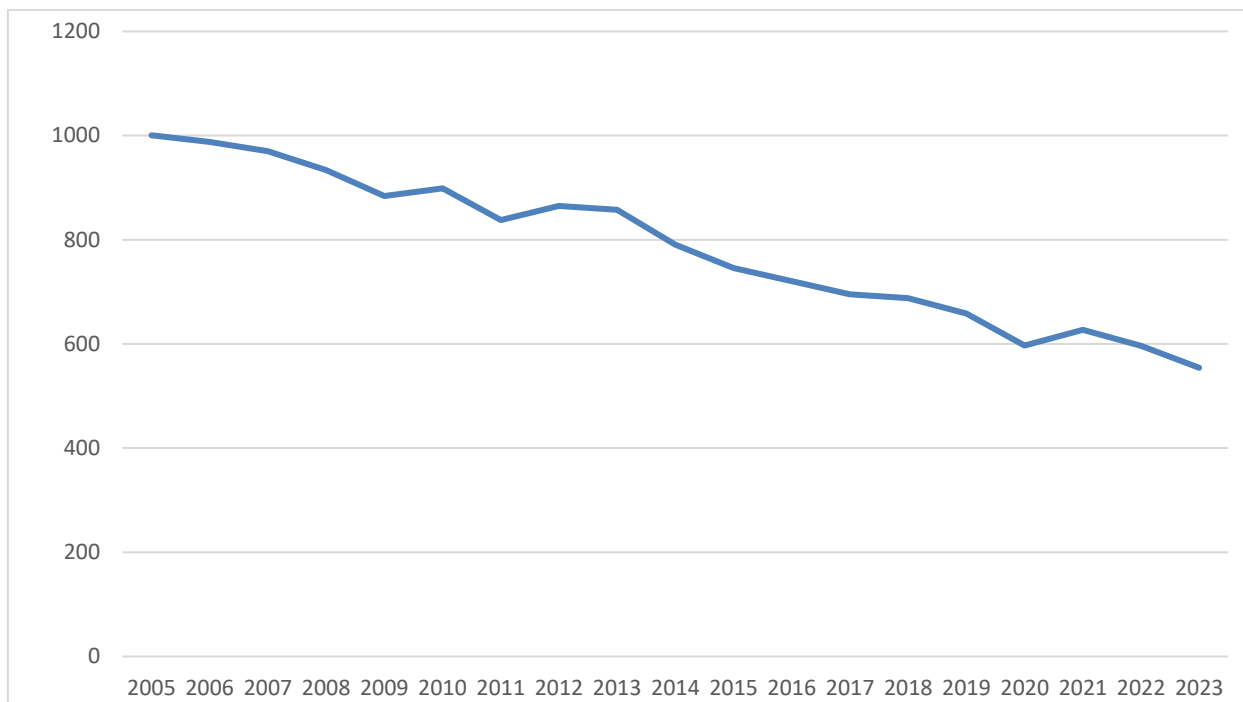
Climate and Carbon (links to Policies OS1, OS2, OS3 and OS4)

- 4.30 The government publish statistics³, to produce a nationally consistent set of greenhouse gas emission estimates for local authority areas in England. The latest statistics published in June 2024 show the change in greenhouse gas emissions for different sectors over the lifetime of the Local Plan.
- 4.31 Figure 7 below, shows the trend in greenhouse gas emissions in West Oxfordshire since 2005. Notably, there has been a steady decrease since 2011 with a slight uptick in 2021.

²² [Evenlode Catchment Partnership – 2024 Water Quality Report - Earthwatch Europe](#)

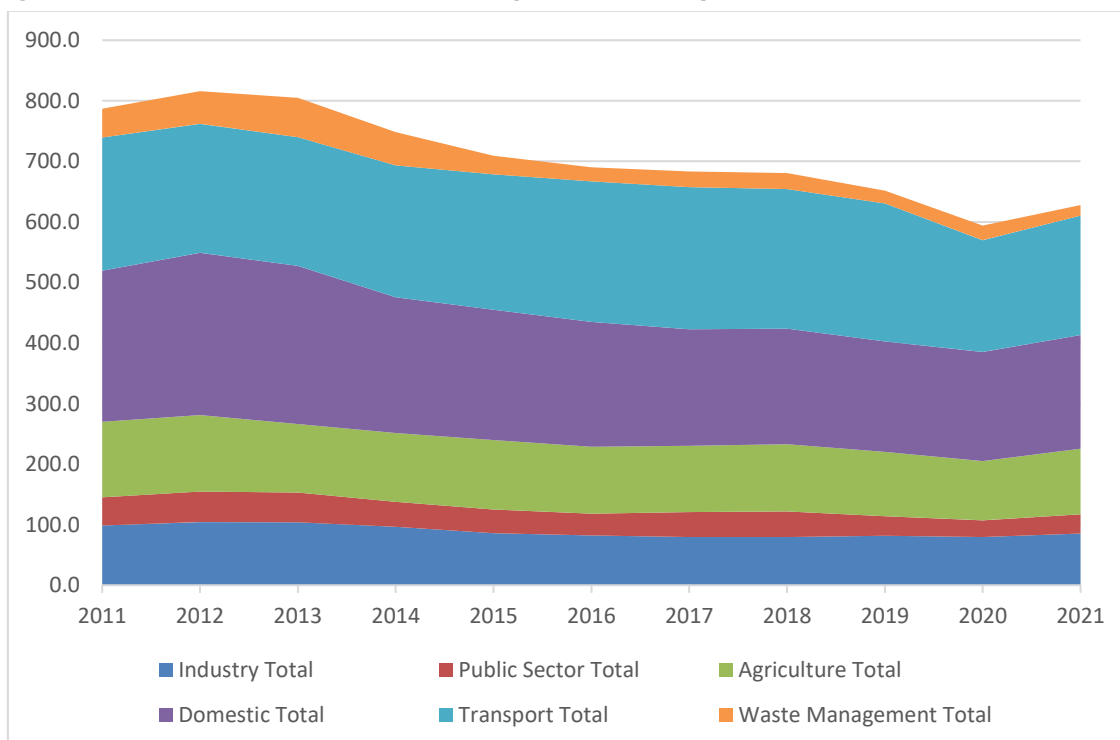
³ UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, 2005 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[West Oxfordshire Climate Change Strategy 2025 v3.pdf](#)

Figure 7 – West Oxfordshire greenhouse gas emissions since 2005



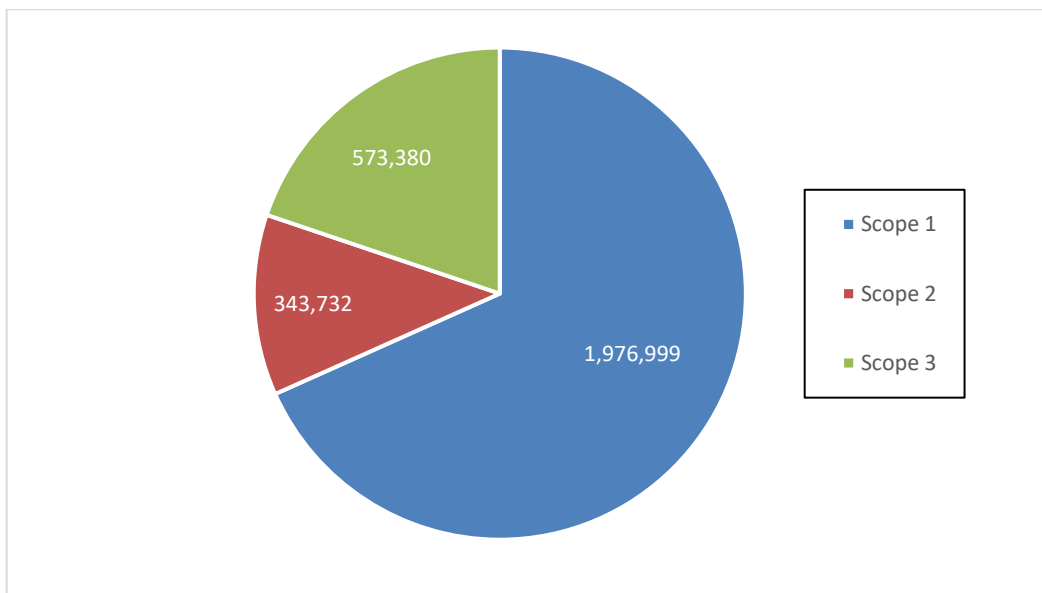
- 4.32 The majority of greenhouse gas emissions in West Oxfordshire arise from domestic and transport emissions, which account for over 58% of the total.
- 4.33 Further action to reduce emissions from residential development and transport will be necessary to meet targets for net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier.

Figure 8 - West Oxfordshire Greenhouse gas emissions by sector 2011 - 2021



- 4.34 WODC has undertaken analysis to assess carbon emissions from the Council's own operations during the monitoring period. These emissions are categorised as Scope 1 and Scope 2, which are directly from WODC own operations and buildings and Scope 3, which is related to emissions where the council does not have direct control e.g. staff business mileage.
- 4.35 Total carbon emissions from the council's own operations for 2023/24 are illustrated on the chart below. The majority of the Council's own emissions are categorised as Scope 1 and relate to the operation of the council's own buildings, such as office space and the council's vehicle fleet.
- 4.36 The Council published a Carbon Action Plan in 2020. Since then, it has become good practice to consider additional sources of emissions beyond those previously accounted for, including emissions where the lack of data means that these cannot be reported formally through the Council's carbon reporting process. The Carbon Action Plan 2024⁴ provides an updated version of the Climate Action Plan, covering actions to be undertaken between 2024 and 2030 to reach the carbon neutral target. Additional actions for procurement and waste have been included in line with best practice, while actions from the previous plan which are complete have been removed.

Figure 9 - West Oxfordshire District Council Carbon Emissions (kgCO₂e)



Provision of Supporting Infrastructure (links to Policy OS5)

- 4.37 New development is required to deliver or contribute towards the timely provision of essential supporting infrastructure either directly as part of the development or through an appropriate financial contribution.

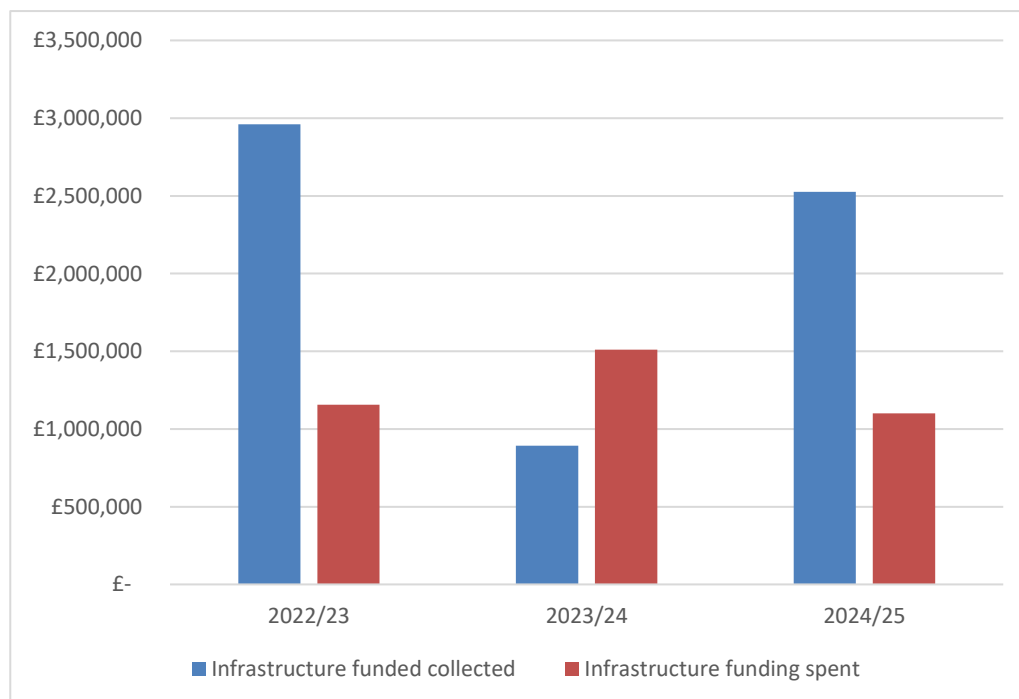
⁴ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/tslaufqh/wodc-carbon-action-plan-20242030-oct-24.pdf>

- 4.38 The Local Plan 2031 is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which sets out a range of highways, utilities, community and green infrastructure that is necessary to support the delivery of the Local Plan.
- 4.39 Evidence⁵ suggests that there is a significant funding gap relating to the cost of infrastructure in the district and this will have to be made up through a range of mechanisms including Section 106 agreements, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and central Government funding.
- 4.40 West Oxfordshire District Council adopted CIL on 1st October 2025, however it will not become chargeable until **31 January 2026**, so within the monitoring period, all monies received were via S106 legal agreements.
- 4.41 The Council collected a total of **£2,143,908.13** of infrastructure funding allocated but not spent through the monitoring period. A summary of financial contributions is shown in the table below. Further, detailed information is set out in the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) published [online](#) annually.

Table 7 - Section 106 infrastructure funding agreed, collected and spent 2024 – 2025

| Year | Infrastructure Funding Agreed | Infrastructure funding collected | Infrastructure funding spent |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2024 - 2025 | £3,440,837.95 | £2,525,351.53 | £1,101,130.81 |
| Total | £3,440,837.95 | £2,525,351.53 | £1,101,130.81 |

Figure 10 - Section 106 infrastructure funding collected and spent 2022 – 2025



⁵ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/nzwnkumu/funding-gap-analysis-note-march-2025.pdf>

PROVIDING NEW HOMES

SUMMARY

- The highest concentrations of new residential development have taken place within Main Service Centres, Rural Service Centres and larger villages in line with the locational policies of the Local Plan.
- In 2024/25, a total of 300 new homes were completed, below the housing need for the district (549 dwellings per annum⁶) and below the Local Plan requirement (1,125 dwellings).
- Overall, there has been an upward trend in housing delivery since the start of the Local Plan period (1st April 2011) although completions rates have decreased since 2021. Up until 31st March 2025, a total of 8,019 new homes have been completed, set against a requirement for 9,200 over the same period (i.e. a shortfall of 1,181 dwellings over a 14 year period).
- The District Council was unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land when calculated using the Government's standard method for assessing local housing need at 31 March 2025.
- Affordable housing continues to come forward as a significant proportion of total housing permitted and completed in the District.
- Approximately 157 new affordable homes were completed during the monitoring period, over half of the total housing completions.
- Notwithstanding increased delivery of new affordable homes, the affordability ratio in West Oxfordshire has generally worsened over the lifetime of the plan, increasing from 8.03 in 2011 to 12.2 in 2021, but has fallen substantially since then to 9.5 in 2024.
- The mix of dwelling types approved is broadly consistent with the indicative guidelines set out in the Local Plan. There have been some additional dwellings to meet the needs older people both permitted and completed during the monitoring period.
- A small number of self-build plots were secured during the monitoring period. The provision of self-build plots will continue to increase as larger housing allocations are built out over the lifetime of the Plan.

⁶ Based on the previous standard method figure for West Oxfordshire in place during the monitoring period

4.42 The housing policies of the Local Plan deal with a range of issues including the overall number of homes to be provided, the distribution and location of those homes, affordable housing, housing mix, changes to existing dwellings and provision for specialist housing needs.

4.43 Housing related core objectives are as follows:

- CO4 - Locate new residential development where it will best help to meet housing needs and reduce the need to travel.
- CO5 - Plan for the timely delivery of new housing to meet forecast needs and support sustainable economic growth.
- CO6 - Plan for an appropriate mix of new residential accommodation which provides a variety of sizes, types and affordability with special emphasis on the provision of homes for local people in housing need who cannot afford to buy or rent at market prices including those wishing to self-build, as well as homes to meet the needs of older people, younger people, black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, families and travelling communities.

New residential permissions (links to Policies H1 and H2)

4.44 Planning permission was granted for **687** new dwellings during the monitoring period, representing a net gain of **667**.

Table 8 - New permissions for residential development 2024 - 2025 (net residential dwellings)

| Year | New permissions for residential development (net dwellings) |
|------------------------------|--|
| I April 2024 – 31 March 2025 | 667 |

4.45 The majority of permissions across the monitoring period were ‘major’ i.e. developments of greater than 10 units.

4.46 A number of developments approved during the monitoring period were allowed at appeal and include further significant development to the west of Minster Lovell, to the West of Witney and to the north of Woodstock (the Woodstock site being allocated in the adopted Local Plan).

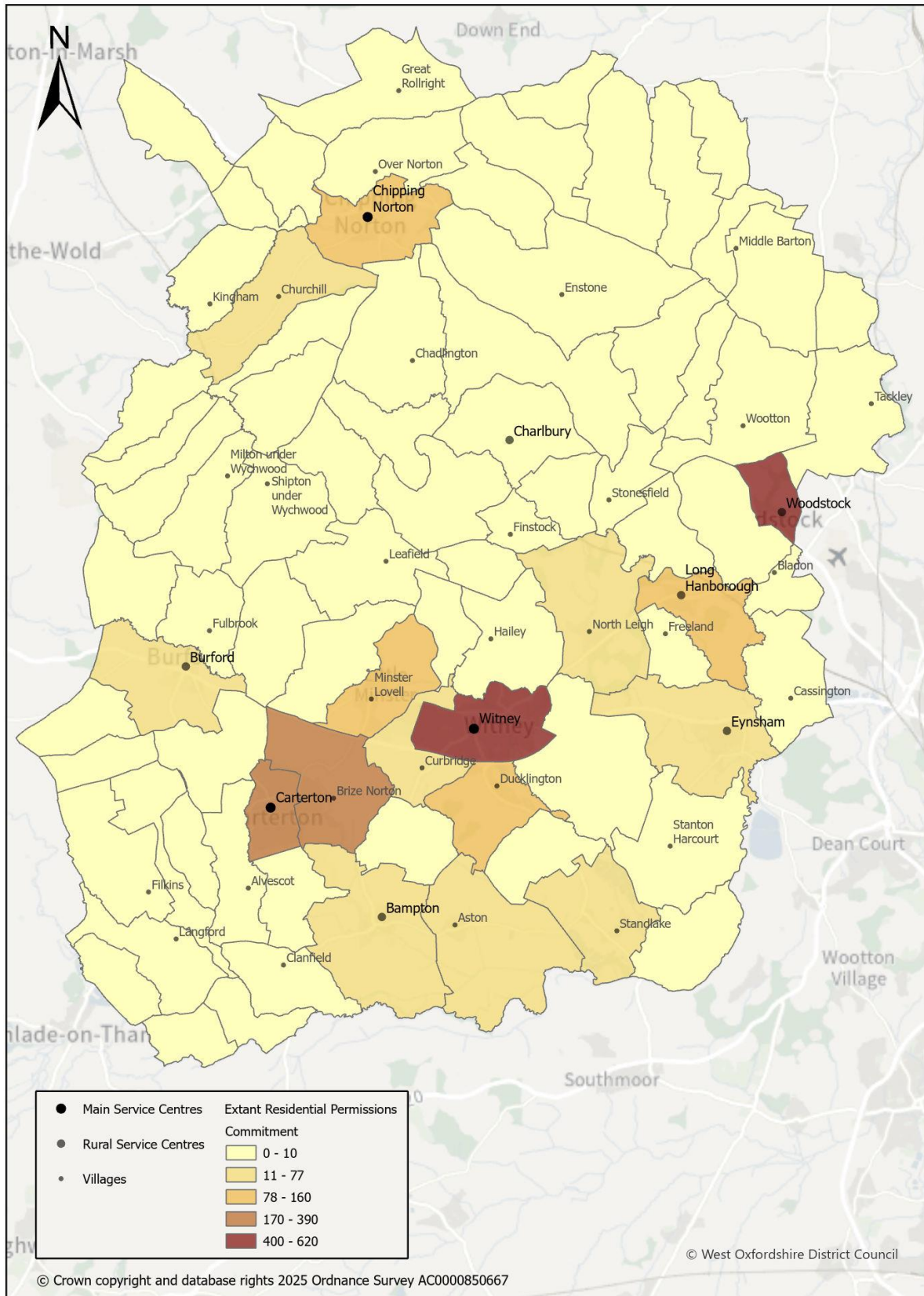
4.47 Total commitments for new residential development are illustrated in Table 9 below. It shows that the largest numbers of outstanding commitments (dwellings with planning permission that are yet to be built) are within and on the edge of Carterton, North Leigh and Witney.

4.48 This pattern of development is consistent with Policy H1, but as the main service centres expand, neighbouring parishes accommodate a growing share of new housing development. This is the case at Witney where housing growth has extended into the parish of Curbridge and at Carterton where housing development has expanded into Brize Norton.

Table 9 - Residential Commitments on major development sites April 2025

| Site Name | Number of units yet to be built as of 1st April 2025 | Parish |
|--|--|-----------------|
| North Curbridge, Local Centre (West Witney) | 39 | Witney |
| North Curbridge (West Witney) | 74 | Witney |
| Land west of Downs Road, Curbridge | 75 | Curbridge |
| Land east of Carterton (Brize Meadow) | 156 | Brize Norton |
| Land east of Carterton | 99 | Brize Norton |
| Land west of Shilton Road, Burford | 22 | Burford |
| Land North of Witney Road, Long Hanborough | 150 | Hanborough |
| Land West of Minster Lovell | 134 | Minster Lovell |
| Land East of Witney Road, Ducklington | 120 | Ducklington |
| Campbells Close, Woodstock | 18 | Woodstock |
| Land south of Hit or Miss Farm, Banbury Road, Chipping Norton | 82 | Chipping Norton |
| Land north of Witney Road, North Leigh | 55 | North Leigh |
| Land south of I New Yatt Road, North Leigh | 43 | North Leigh |
| Land north of Foxwood Close, Aston | 39 | Aston |
| Chipping Norton War Memorial Hospital, Horsefair, Chipping Norton | 14 | Chipping Norton |
| Station Garage, Station Road, Kingham, | 10 | Churchill |
| Land to the rear of 65 High Street, Standlake | 7 | Standlake |
| Site Of Former 19, Burford Road, Carterton | 10 | Carterton |
| Car Park Rear Of 58 West End, Witney | 10 | Witney |
| TOTAL | 1,157 | |

Figure 11 - Residential Commitments by Parish 2025



Total Net Housing Completions (links to Policies H1 and H2)

4.49 The adopted Local Plan is based on an overall housing requirement of 15,950 homes (798 per year from 2011 – 2031). This includes 13,200 homes for West Oxfordshire’s own housing needs (660 per year) plus a further 2,750 (136 per year rounded) for Oxford City’s unmet housing need.

4.50 Policy H2 of the Local is based on a ‘stepped’ housing requirement which increases from 2021 onwards to take account of Oxford’s unmet housing need as follows:

- 550 dwellings per year (2011 – 2021)
- 800 dwellings per year (2021 – 2023)
- 975 dwellings per year (2023 – 2024)
- 1,125 dwellings per year (2024 – 2025)

4.51 Notably, in the period 1st April 2011 – 31st March 2025, a total of 8,019 new homes were completed in West Oxfordshire, set against a requirement of 9,200 new homes over the same period. Delivery was effectively on track until 2023, but has dropped off during the monitoring period, with a shortfall now of approximately 1,181 over the whole Plan period to date.

4.52 This shortfall can largely be attributed to slower than anticipated delivery of new housing on some larger local plan allocated sites, compared to the anticipated housing trajectory set out in the Local Plan.

4.53 From 2023/24, the Council reverted to the Standard Methodology for housing need for the purpose of calculating housing land supply. At that time this equated to a housing need of 549 dwellings per annum.

Figure 12 - Net residential completions in West Oxfordshire 2011 – 2025



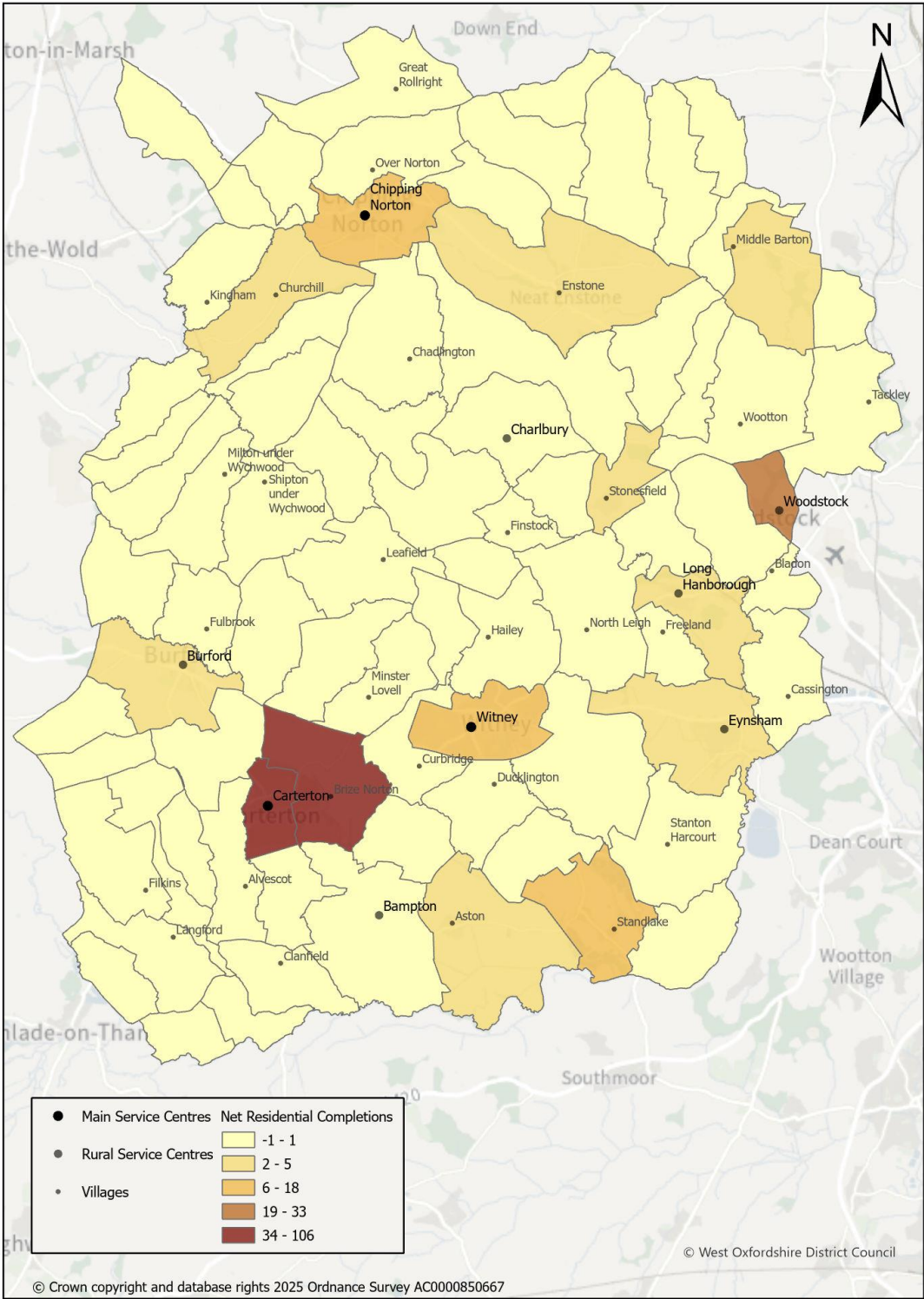
4.54 In December 2024, the basis of the standard method calculation of housing need was updated through the NPPF and for West Oxfordshire, this led to an increased level of need of 905 dwellings

per annum. The Council was unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply based on this measure at 31 March 2025.

Net Housing Completions 2024 – 2025 (links to Policies H1 and H2)

4.55 A total of **300** new homes were completed in 2024/25, falling short of the Local Plan requirement of 1,125 for the year. Figure 13 below shows the location of these completions on a spatial basis.

Figure 13 - Net residential completions 2024 – 2025



Housing allocations (links to Policies H1, H2 and various site allocations)

4.56 The adopted Local Plan allocates a number of strategic and non-strategic housing sites, a large number of which (primarily the smaller, non-strategic sites) have now been completed or are under construction and some of which are yet to come forward to construction, particularly the larger strategic sites. The location of these allocated sites is shown on figure 14 below.

Figure 14 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 housing allocations



4.57 Table 10 below lists the various local plan housing allocations and the total number of completions recorded up to 1st April 2025.

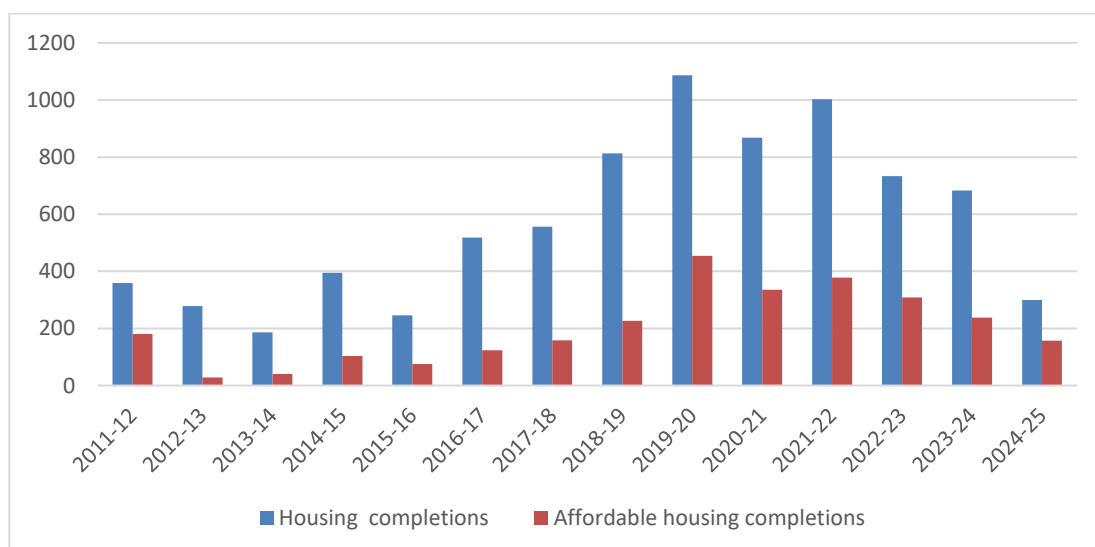
Table 10 - Expected and actual completions on allocated sites

| Site Name | Allocated total dwellings | Expected completions 2018-2025 (Local Plan Housing trajectory) | Total Completions to 31 March 2025 |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| East Witney SDA | 450 | 175 | 0 |
| North Witney SDA | 1,400 | 325 | 0 |
| Woodford Way Car Park | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| Land west of Minster Lovell | 125 | 125 | 126 |
| REEMA North and Central | 300 | 121 | 81 |
| Land at Milestone Road, Carterton | 200 | 200 | 76 |
| Land at Swinbrook Road, Carterton | 70 | 70 | 71 |
| East Chipping Norton SDA | 1,200 | 427 | 173 |
| Salt Cross Garden Village | 2,200 | 880 | 0 |
| West Eynsham SDA | 1,000 | 312 | 237 |
| Land east of Woodstock | 300 | 275 | 217 |
| Land north of Hill Rise, Woodstock | 120 | 120 | 0 |
| Land north of Banbury Road, Woodstock | 180 | 30 | 0 |
| Myrtle Farm, Long Hanborough | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| Oliver's Garage, Long Hanborough | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield | 50 | 50 | 66 |

Affordable Housing Completions (links to Policy H3)

- 4.58 The Office for National Statistics September 2025 data reveals that the average house price is £423,000 up 4.2% from July 2024 and the average monthly rent is £1,281 up 2.4% in the same period.
- 4.59 Notwithstanding increased delivery of new affordable homes, the affordability ratio in West Oxfordshire has generally worsened over the lifetime of the plan, increasing from 8.03 in 2011 to 12.2 in 2021, but has fallen substantially since then to 9.5 in 2024. The affordability ratio is the ratio of median house price to median gross annual-based earnings of local residents.
- 4.60 The Local Plan sets out the different forms of housing that come under the definition of 'Affordable housing'. These include social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing.
- 4.61 Over 50% of the homes completed in in the district were classed as 'Affordable housing'. This was slightly above the requirements of Local Plan Policy H3 which adopts a tiered approach ranging from 35% - 50% depending on location. Future developments in High and Medium Value zones, as indicated in the Local Plan are expected to increase the overall proportion of affordable housing delivered on-site.
- 4.62 All affordable housing completions during the monitoring period were focused on larger development sites, reflecting Local Plan Policy H3 which only requires on-site delivery of affordable housing for developments of 11 units or more.
- 4.63 In some instances, a financial contribution (commuted sum) may be sought in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision. Such contributions are then used to fund the delivery of affordable housing within the District.
- 4.64 A total of **£2,755,134.67** was collected towards the provision of affordable housing during the monitoring period.
- 4.65 Much of this is awaiting allocation, but the Council remains in discussion with affordable housing providers about allocating this funding effectively.

Figure 15 - Proportion of affordable housing completions 2011 – 2025



Affordable Housing Permissions (links to Policy H3)

- 4.66 A total of **263** on-site affordable housing units were secured through legal agreement in 2024/25 and will be delivered through future monitoring periods.
- 4.67 These affordable units will be focused within the main service centres of Witney and Carterton and the larger village of North Leigh.

Table 11 - Affordable Housing required from S106 planning obligations signed 2024-2025

| 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------|
| 20/02654/OUT | Land Southeast Of Oxford Hill, Witney | 180 |
| 22/03539/FUL | Land (E) 429494 (N) 207689, Monahan Way, Carterton | 35 |
| 23/00794/OUT | Land South Of I New Yatt Road, North Leigh | 18 |
| 23/01206/FUL | Land West of Witney North of A40 And East of, Downs Road, Curbridge, Witney | 30 |
| Total | | 263 |

Type and mix of new homes provided (links to Policy H4)

- 4.68 The population of West Oxfordshire has continued to grow over the lifetime of the Local Plan from around 104,800 in 2011 to 114,200 in 2021 and 120,941 in 2024. This 9% increase is higher than the overall increase for England of 6.6% over the same period. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over remains higher in West Oxfordshire than the Oxfordshire average.
- 4.69 West Oxfordshire has a higher dependency ratio than the Oxfordshire average. This is the ratio of non-working age people (those aged 0-15 and over 65) to working age population. It is therefore essential that an appropriate mix of housing types is delivered in district to meet the varied needs of the population.
- 4.70 The Local Plan provides a general guide to the size of open market properties required to meet the mixed needs of the population as follows;
- 4.8% 1 bed properties
 - 27.9% 2 bed properties
 - 43.4% 3 bed properties
 - 23.9% 4+ bed properties
- 4.71 Details of the new permissions granted over the monitoring period for different types and sizes of residential property are set out in table 12. A number of approvals during the monitoring period were for outline planning permission and as such, details of dwelling size, type and tenure are unknown.

Table 12 - Proportion of residential types and sizes granted permission between 2024 and 2025

| Size | Percentage |
|--------|------------|
| 1 bed | 16 |
| 2 bed | 31 |
| 3 bed | 21 |
| 4+ bed | 32 |

4.72 It can be seen that during the monitoring period, there was a very even balance of different sized units permitted with a slight skew towards 3 and 4+bed units.

Meeting the needs of elderly (links to Policy H4)

4.73 The Local Plan indicates that particular support will be given to the provision of specialist housing for the elderly. There have been limited new permissions and completions for such accommodation during the monitoring period, but there has been some new provision of age restricted accommodation as indicated in table 13 below.

Table 13 - Specialist elderly accommodation permissions and completions 2024 - 2025

| Reference | Description | Location | Status |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| 18/03035/RES | Residential development comprising 91 dwellings (50% affordable), 59 assisted living units (C2 use class) and a 64-bed care home (C2 use class) | Shilton Road, Burford | 38 assisted living units completed during monitoring period with 21 still to be completed Care home has been completed during 2024/25 period |
| 23/03070/FUL | Erection of five single storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure | Land West of Colt House, Aston Road, Bampton | Permission granted |
| 22/01768/FUL | Demolition of existing retirement dwellings. Construction of 37 no. replacement age restricted apartment units | Campbells Close, Woodstock | Permission granted – construction commenced in autumn 2024 and completion expected in 2025 |
| 25/00496/FUL | Conversion of existing single dwelling (class use C3) to Ofsted registered children's home (class use C2). | Malt Barn Burford Road Brize Norton Carterton Oxfordshire OX | Permission granted |

Provision for custom and self-build housing (links to Policy H5)

- 4.74 In order to address the need for custom and self-build housing, the Council requires that all housing developments of 100 or more dwellings should include 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for self-build purposes.
- 4.75 One site exceeded the threshold for the delivery of on-site self-build residential plots during the monitoring period at East Witney.
- 4.76 Providing access to self-build housing opportunities can provide a more affordable path to home ownership to some people. Although the provision of such plots has been relatively low during the monitoring period, more opportunities will rise as the larger housing allocations of the Local Plan start to come forward.

Provision for travelling communities (links to Policy H7)

- 4.77 There were no new planning applications for new gypsy and traveller accommodation during the monitoring period.
- 4.78 As at September 2024, there were a total 13 Gypsy and Traveller sites in West Oxfordshire with a total of 110 pitches accommodating 74 households. In addition, there were 4 Travelling Show person yards, with 24 plots accommodating 26 households.
- 4.79 WODC jointly commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) with the other Oxfordshire local planning authorities. The findings of the study, published in December 2024, will be considered in the determination of any future planning applications and in developing the new Local Plan 2043.

Land at Cuckoowood Farm, Freeland (links to Policy H8)

- 4.80 There were no planning applications granted permission at Cuckoowood Farm during the monitoring period.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

SUMMARY

- The new permission rates for employment development have remained relatively stable over the past 3 years. The uptake of land for business uses, particularly in locations identified in the Local Plan serves to support economic growth and help to provide a balance between homes and jobs.
- The Local Plan identifies a need for at least 27 hectares of additional employment land to be delivered in the District by 2031. Much of the land required was identified within existing employment sites and urban extensions, which have been a focus for employment land provision during the monitoring period.
- The Local Plan continues to direct the majority of business development, particularly larger scale development to the main and rural service centres.
- There has been a range of new business development permitted in rural parts of the district during the monitoring period, although this has been relatively minor in nature or changes of use between business uses. The West Oxfordshire local economy remains diverse, with professional, scientific and technical services the largest business sector in the district.
- Tourism development in West Oxfordshire has been primarily focused on the provision of visitor accommodation during the monitoring period.
- There have been a number of proposals during the monitoring period to increase the provision of community services and facilities in West Oxfordshire, although some existing community facilities have been lost to other uses. The availability of services and facilities in West Oxfordshire's settlements has remained fairly stable since the adoption of the Local Plan.
- There have been no changes to the extent of town centres during the monitoring period and only minor changes in terms of land use within town centres over the same period. Although there are some vacancies in town centre premises, the vacancy rates do not present too much cause for concern.
- The overall health of town centres is considered to be good as they continue to meet a range of Local Plan and council Plan objectives.

4.81 The economic growth-related policies of the Local Plan cover a number of issues including the provision and protection of employment land, the rural economy, tourism, town centres and the provision and protection of community facilities.

4.82 Core objectives are as follows:

Core Objectives

CO3 - Promote safe, vibrant and prosperous town and village centres and resist proposals that would damage their vitality and viability or adversely affect measures to improve those centres.

CO7 - To support sustainable economic growth which adds value to the local economy, improves the balance between housing and local jobs, provides a diversity of local employment opportunities, capitalises on economic growth in adjoining areas, improves local skills and work readiness, removes potential barriers to investment and provides flexibility to adapt to changing economic needs.

CO8 - To enable a prosperous and sustainable tourism economy.

CO12 - Look to maintain or improve where possible the health and wellbeing of the district's residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities.

CO13 - Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

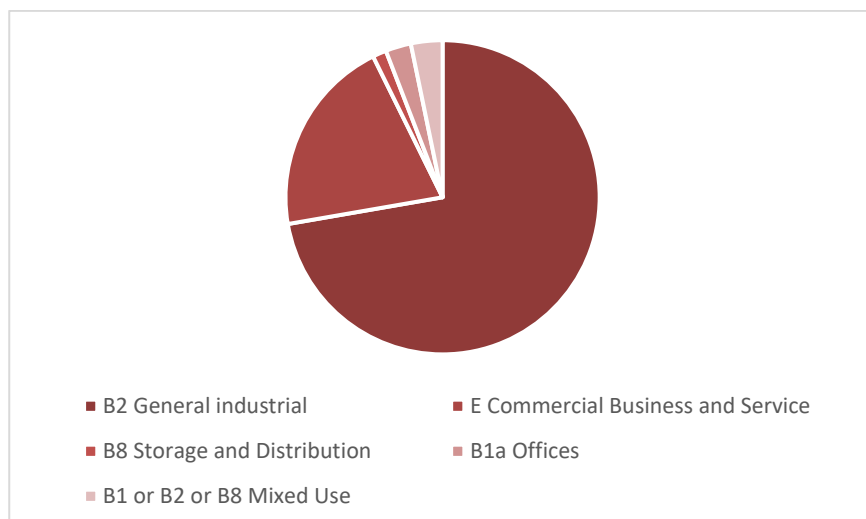
New Employment Permissions (links to Policy EI)

4.83 A total of approximately 2,500² of new business floorspace (net) was granted permission between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

4.84 The largest proportion of new employment floorspace permitted was for General Industrial development. In addition to new floorspace there were changes of use between business uses, for example at Eagle Industrial Estate, Witney, where permission was granted from change of use of existing brewery to Class E use.

4.85 The largest individual proposal was for the change of use of land from mixed use to B2 (General Industrial) for car servicing and repairs (retrospective), at Ramsden.

Figure 16 - proportions of new employment floorspace permitted 2024 – 2025

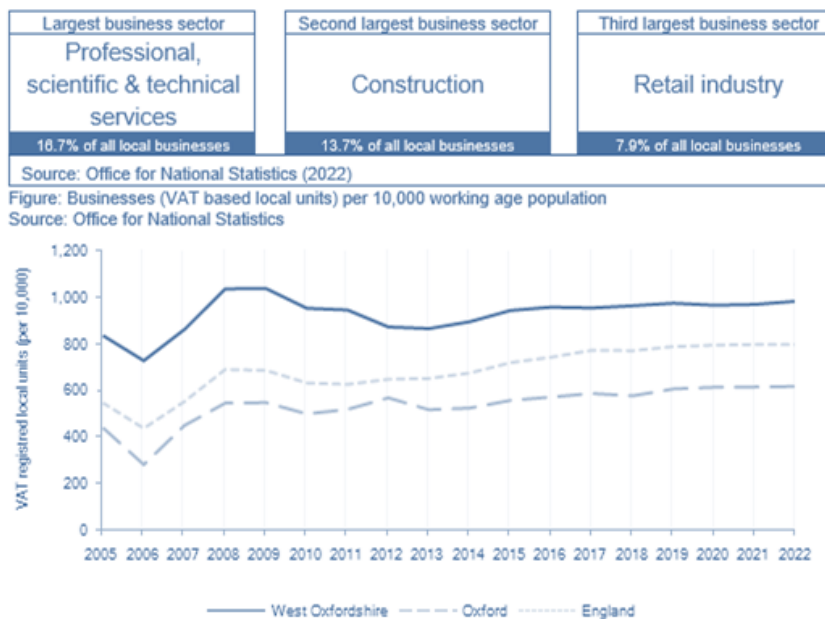


- 4.86 There were no new approvals for employment and commercial development during 2024-25 on land identified to meet the employment needs of the Local Plan.
- 4.87 As part of the supporting evidence for the new Local Plan, the Council has commissioned an economic needs assessment which will provide up to date evidence on the amount and type of new employment floorspace needed in the period up to 2041.

Rural economy (links to Policies E2, E3 and E4)

- 4.88 Figure 17 below shows that the largest industry groups for businesses based in West Oxfordshire are professional, scientific and technical services followed by the construction sector and the retail industry.

Figure 17 - West Oxfordshire largest business sectors, ONS 2022



- 4.89 The majority of businesses employ less than five people. Businesses employing less than 10 people represent approximately 86% of all local businesses.
- 4.90 Local Plan policy directs larger businesses and employers to the main service centres but seeks to support the rural economy by taking a positive approach to small rural business premises and diversifying the land-based sector.
- 4.91 The development of new small employment sites within and adjacent to rural service centres and villages are supported where commensurate with the scale and character of the area.
- 4.92 Outside of the main towns there were limited new permissions granted for new commercial floor space at service centres and villages. New permissions were relatively minor in nature and consistent with the requirements of Policy E2.

Table 14 - New permissions for commercial and business development in service centres and larger villages

| Parish Name | Permission Reference | Description |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
|-------------|----------------------|-------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|
| Minster Lovell | 24/01986/FUL | Erection of an industrial unit with 4 bays (amended description). |
| Ramsden | 24/02605/FUL | Change of use of land from mixed use to B2 (General Industrial) for car servicing and repairs (Retrospective) |
| Enstone | 24/02206/FUL | Erection of test building together with associated development. |
| Leafield | 24/02667/FUL | Change of use and conversion of a traditional agricultural building to office and associated warehouse use (class E) and associated works. |
| Chilson | 24/01893/FUL | Change of use and conversion of agricultural building to office use (class E) |
| Ascott-under-Wychwood | 24/02209/FUL | Change of use and extension of two traditional agricultural buildings to an office and associated studio (class E) |

4.93 As a rural district, much of the economic activity in West Oxfordshire relates to agriculture.

4.94 A total of approximately 6,700m² of new agricultural floorspace was permitted during the monitoring period, primarily relating to the formation of new storage for equipment and farm produce.

4.95 Policy E3 supports the re-use of traditional and non-traditional buildings for employment, tourism and community uses to support the rural economy, but there have been few applications for such development during the monitoring period.

Table 15 - New permissions for change of use and re-use of non-residential buildings in West Oxfordshire 2024 – 2025

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 24/02209/FUL | Change of use and extension of two traditional agricultural buildings to an office and associated studio (class E) | Ascott-under-Wychwood |
| 24/02667/FUL | Change of use and conversion of a traditional agricultural building to office and associated warehouse use (class E) and associated works. | Leafield |
| 24/01893/FUL | Change of use and conversion of agricultural building to office use (class E) | Chilson |
| 24/02605/FUL | Change of use of land from mixed use to B2 (General Industrial) for car servicing and repairs (Retrospective) | Ramsden |

- 4.96 There have been several holiday lets and other tourism related developments permitted during the monitoring period, supporting an increase in tourism accommodation and activity in the district.
- 4.97 The most significant tourism related development approved during the monitoring period was for the redevelopment of Mill House Hotel in Kingham to provide x 38 bedrooms.
- 4.98 As the provision of short-term holiday accommodation increases, particularly through changes to existing dwellings, regard should be had to the impact on existing communities, the increase in temporary residence within settlements and the impact this can have on house prices and service provision.

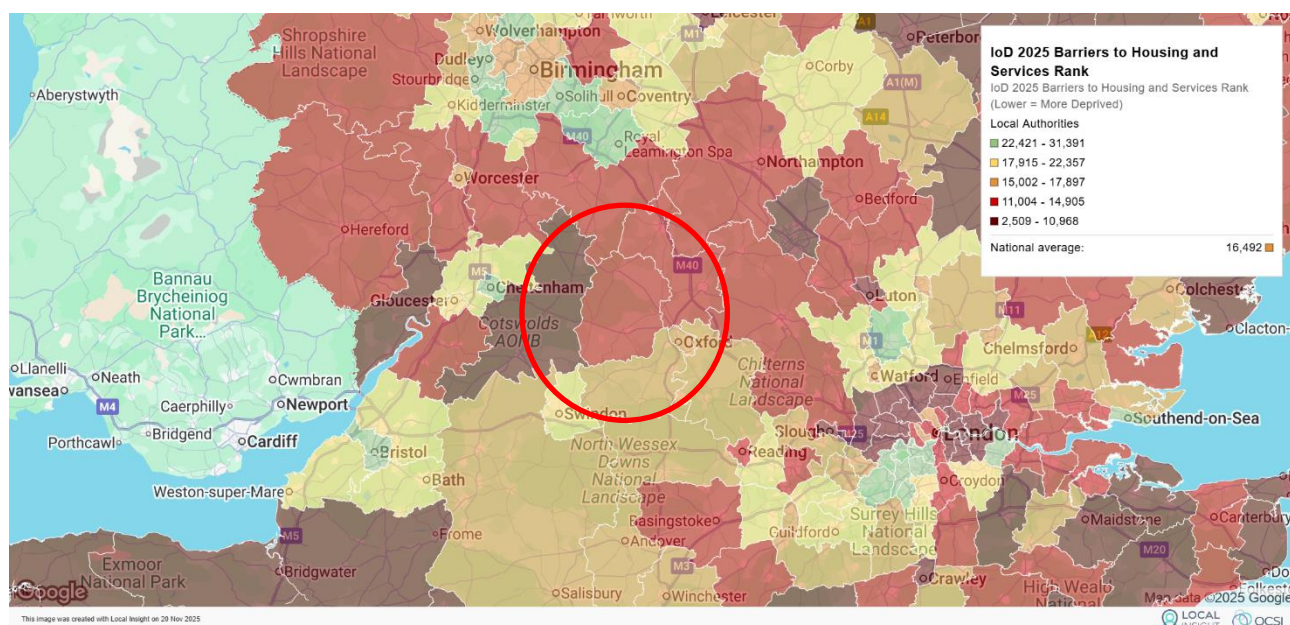
Table 16 - New permissions for tourism development in West Oxfordshire 2024 – 2025

| Permission Reference | Description | Parish Name |
|----------------------|---|-------------|
| 24/02866/FUL | Erection of two Airbnb cabins with associated change of use, access, and ancillary equipment. (Retrospective). | Alvescot |
| 24/00126/FUL | Change of use from dwelling to letting rooms, proposed rear extension, enlargement of the rear car park and alterations to the access and associated internal works (amended plans) | Clanfield |
| 22/03311/FUL | Redevelopment of the Mill House Hotel site to provide a 38 bedrooms hotel and ancillary facilities including restaurant, alehouse, reception/bakehouse, and demonstration barn. Associated provision of parking, landscaping and reinstatement of the former mill leat (Amended plans and information received) | Kingham |
| 23/02297/FUL | Proposed new dwelling to replace redundant stables and store, to create holiday let (amended plans) | Bampton |
| 24/01056/FUL | Change of use of self-contained staff living accommodation ancillary to the public house to an Airbnb (C3 dwellinghouse) | Cassington |

Local services and community facilities (links to Policy E5)

- 4.99 The 'Barriers to Housing and Services' deprivation domain measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: geographical barriers, which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and wider barriers which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability.
- 4.100 Figure 18 below shows that West Oxfordshire district is relatively in line with the average of deprived areas nationally for this measure of deprivation.

Figure 18 - Barriers to housing and services deprivation – West Oxfordshire compared with surrounding areas



4.101 The District Council supports the development and retention of local services and community facilities to meet local needs and to promote social wellbeing, interests, interaction and healthy inclusive communities. This is reflected in Local Plan Policy E5.

4.102 Records indicate that there have been proposals relating to the expansion and improvement of community services and facilities during the monitoring period.

4.103 These will help to ensure the continued integrity of community uses and support activity of communities in West Oxfordshire.

Table 17 - Planning permission for new community services and facilities 2024 – 2025

| Permission | Description | Parish |
|---------------------|--|------------------------|
| 23/03239/FUL | Change of use from planning class light industrial use to community centre (F2(b)) (amended) | Witney |
| 23/01361/FUL | Construction of new two storey teaching building, extension of existing sports changing room facilities, and modifications and improvements to external areas to provide additional car parking and to improve vehicle access. | Woodstock |
| 24/01476/FUL | Erection of a detached garden building for use as an additional classroom. | Burford |
| 24/01384/FUL | Erection of a clubhouse, storage and scorer's hut (revised plans and additional information submitted). | Shipton-under-Wychwood |

4.104 There have been a few losses of community uses to other forms of development during the monitoring period suggesting that Policy E5 is acting effectively.

4.105 Permission was granted for conversion of the methodist church in North Leigh to a dwelling and the former surgery at Long Hanborough was also approved for residential development.

Table 18 - Loss of community services and facilities 2024 – 2025

| Parish Name | Reference | Address | Description |
|-----------------|---------------------|--|---|
| Standlake | 23/02464/FUL | 61 High Street Standlake Oxfordshire OX29 7RH | Demolition of existing engineering workshop. Erection of 2 dwellings with associated parking, turning, landscaping, private amenity space and access to include the installation of solar panels on south-western elevations (retrospective). |
| Long Hanborough | 24/01834/FUL | Long Hanborough Surgery 56 Churchill Way Long Hanborough Witney Oxfordshire OX29 8JL | Change of Use from Class E (doctors surgery) to Class C3 to create 5 dwellings including external alterations to include 2 x dormers to match existing dormer, alterations to the fenestration, new render to all elevations and new bike stores. |
| Finstock | 24/02294/FUL | Crown Barn Shop and Post Office School Road Finstock | Change of use of former community shop (previously an outbuilding to existing dwelling) to create granny annexe together with reinstatement of domestic curtilage all to pertain to existing main dwelling, Crown House. |
| Woodstock | 24/02238/FUL | Store 16 Oxford Street Woodstock Oxfordshire OX20 1TS | Change of use and conversion of retail building to 2 flats with residential use (class C3) with associated works including erection of external staircase, insertion of rooflights and two dormer windows. |
| Woodstock | 24/00651/FUL | Land North of Lince Lodge Blenheim Park Woodstock Oxfordshire | Conversion of existing kennels to form a single residential dwelling with roof mounted PV and associated parking and works |
| Burford | 24/02152/FUL | Burford Methodist Church 75 High Street Burford Oxfordshire | Conversion of Methodist church back to a residential dwelling (self-build) |
| Witney | 24/02573/FUL | 21 - 23 Market Square Witney Oxfordshire OX28 6AD | Conversion of retail storage/ancillary space to two flats (Amended Plans) |

Town Centre Vitality and Viability (links to Policy E6)

4.106 There are currently 5 designated town centres in West Oxfordshire in the main and rural service centres as follows:

- Witney
- Carterton
- Chipping Norton
- Burford
- Woodstock

4.107 There were 41 new permissions granted within or on the edge of these town centres within the monitoring period (excluding Listed Building Consents).

Table 19 - Planning approvals within town centres 2024 – 2025

| Town Centre | Number of new approvals | Proposals of note |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Witney | 10 | The most significant approvals in the town centre include the demolition of the existing hall and erection of a 2-bed home. Also, in Market Square the conversion of retail storage to 2 flats. |
| Carterton | 1 | The only town centre approval in Carteron was a variation of condition to allow design changes for a previously approved new commercial and residential scheme. |
| Chipping Norton | 8 | The most significant approvals in the town centre included the change of use from Class E to part Class E and Part Class C3 and conversion to form 4 flats (at Barclays Bank). Other approvals were mainly minor alteration works and advertisement consents. |
| Burford | 13 | The majority of new permissions granted within Burford town centre were for conversions such as Burford Methodist Church being converted back to a residential dwelling as a self-build. Other approvals were mainly minor alteration works and advertisement consents. |
| Woodstock | 9 | The most significant approval in Woodstock town centre included the Change of use of E(c)(ii) professional services basement store to C3 (residential) use. |

4.108 There has been no change to the total area designated as town centre space during the monitoring period and only limited changes to land use and premises within these town centres.

4.109 Town centre surveys were undertaken in November 2023 (this information is looking to be updated in 2026 by Economic Development) to quantify the number of vacant units. Chipping Norton had a

total of 14 empty units. Carterton had a total of 1 empty unit and Witney a total of 34 across a number of locations including Corn Street, Market Square, High Street and Marriot's Walk (no change for Witney from the previous monitoring period).

- 4.110 The health of the District's Town Centres is key to meeting a number of Local Plan and Council Plan objectives as these are often to focal point of communities and the most accessible locations for residents to access services and facilities. Although there are some vacancies within town centres, they remain healthy, vibrant and active. As part of the supporting evidence for the new Local Plan, a retail and other commercial leisure needs assessment has been commissioned to provide evidence of the type and amount of floorspace needed.
- 4.111 There have been some changes to accessibility in Town Centres, including restricted access to motor vehicles in Witney and the introduction of parking permits in Woodstock. Such changes have been introduced to improve the town centre environment while keeping them accessible for residents, vulnerable road users and people with disabilities.

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

SUMMARY

- The majority of new residential and commercial development is located in the most accessible locations at town centres and rural service centres.
- Limited public transport improvements and enhanced opportunities for walking and cycling have been delivered in rural areas during the monitoring period.
- Car ownership and distances travelled to access key services and facilities remain higher than the Oxfordshire average.
- Funding has been secured towards highways improvements and monitoring of travel plans during the monitoring period.
- There has been good progress on a number of strategic highway schemes including the Access to Witney project (Shores Green Slip Roads) and the de-scoped A40 bus priority project.

4.112 The transport and movement policies of the Local Plan cover a number of issues including the location of development, improvements to the highway network, public transport, walking and cycling and parking provision.

4.113 Core objectives are as follows:

Core Objectives

CO1 - Enable new development, services and facilities of an appropriate scale and type in locations which will help improve the quality of life of local communities and where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be minimised.

CO10 - Ensure that land is not released for new development until the supporting infrastructure and facilities are secured.

CO11 - Maximise the opportunity for walking, cycling and use of public transport.

CO13 - Plan for enhanced access to services and facilities without unacceptably impacting upon the character and resources of West Oxfordshire.

CO15 - Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

CO16 - Enable improvements in water and air quality.

CO17 - Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

Location of Development (links to Policies T1 and T3)

4.114 The Local Plan gives priority to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities and where the need to travel by private car can be minimised.

4.115 The Local Plan identifies 3 Main Service Centres and 7 Rural Service Centres which offer the widest range of services and facilities, are accessible by a choice of transport modes and offer a range of job opportunities.

Main Service Centres

- Witney
- Carterton
- Chipping Norton

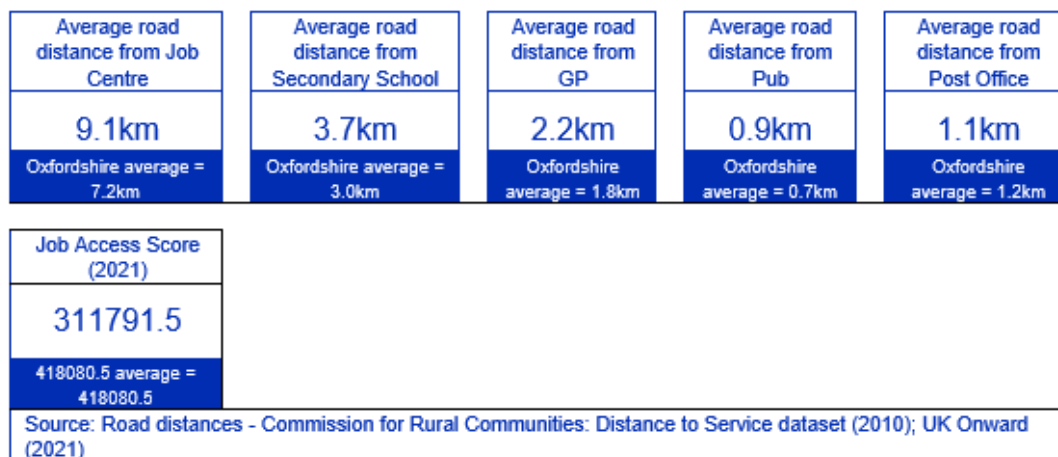
Rural Service Centres

- Bampton
- Burford
- Charlbury
- Eynsham
- Long Hanborough
- Woodstock
- Salt Cross Garden Village (proposed)

4.116 Planning permission was granted for 20 residential schemes at the service centres during the monitoring period totalling 571 dwellings, so although a large proportion of residential development is being directed to the most sustainable locations in accessibility terms⁷, a proportion of development is being directed towards larger villages, some of which are less accessible.

4.117 Notwithstanding the fact that most development is directed towards service centres, the rural nature of the district and fact that many settlements in the district have limited or no services at all, accessibility to key services and facilities in West Oxfordshire is relatively poor, resulting in relatively high car dependency.

Figure 19 - West Oxfordshire accessibility to key services and facilities 2021⁸



⁷ See Policies OS2 and H2 for further information

⁸ Oxfordshire Insight – Local Insight profile for West Oxfordshire. OCSI 2022

Highway Improvements (links to Policy T2)

4.118 All development in West Oxfordshire is required to demonstrate safe access and an acceptable degree of impact on the local highway network.

4.119 Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic should be supported by a transport assessment and travel plan.

4.120 The tables below indicate the level of financial contributions towards highway improvements and monitoring fees secured during the monitoring period.

Table 20 - Travel Plans submitted and monitored during monitoring period

| Year | Proposal | Contribution / Spend |
|---------|---|-----------------------------|
| 2024/25 | Erection of food store and 10 flats with associated parking landscaping and access. | £900 Travel Plan monitoring |

4.121 The District Council has secured funding towards public transport improvements from developments commercial developments and developments that have been approved outside of the service centres. The Council currently holds £12,147.00 that is yet to be allocated towards highways and sustainable transport projects. It is important to note that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is the main collector of contributions for highway works. OCC is required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement annually⁹.

4.122 The Local Plan also identifies a number of strategic highway infrastructure schemes. The latest position in relation to each of these schemes is summarised below.

Table 21 - Local Plan 2031 identified highway infrastructure schemes

| Scheme Name | Status |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Shores Green Slip Roads | <p>Started - Oxfordshire County Council are delivering new west-facing slip roads at the A40/ B4022 Shores Green junction at Witney. This scheme is funded by Housing Infrastructure Growth Deal funding and Section 106 developer contributions.</p> <p>The project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve access to Witney• Enable access to the A40 for local and through traffic without the need to travel through Witney town centre or use the A40/ Ducklington Lane junction• Alleviate congestion and air quality issues in Witney town centre• Deliver improved walking and cycling paths and crossings on the B4022 and alongside the A40, ultimately improving safety of connections between South Leigh, High Cogges and Witney• Support the delivery of more homes at Witney |

⁹ Oxfordshire County Council Infrastructure Funding Statements can be downloaded on the OCC website here: [Infrastructure funding statement | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

| Scheme Name | Status |
|----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Construction commenced on the scheme in spring 2025 and is due to be completed by summer 2026.</p> <p>(Source - Witney TAC Report by Oxfordshire County Council September 2024 Place Planning Team Update)</p> |
| West End Link Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at North Witney which is yet to come forward. |
| Northern Distributor Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at North Witney which is yet to come forward. |
| Eastern Link Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at East Chipping Norton which is yet to come forward. |
| Western Spine Road | Not Started – This scheme is associated with the allocated strategic development area at West Eynsham which is yet to come forward. |
| Access to Carterton | <p>Not Started - The Access to Carterton project looks to improve the connection between Carterton and the A40 via the B4477. This project has been split into two phases. To deliver phase I Oxfordshire County Council have received over £3million in Section 106 contributions to improve the safety of the B4477 between Carterton at Monahan Way and the A40. This funding has been received from developments in the local area, in particular the Brize Meadow development of 700 homes. This will support safe and sustainable travel between Carterton and the surrounding area for all users.</p> <p>The aim is to deliver phase I by 2029.</p> <p>The second phase of Access to Carterton (currently unfunded) will be progressed as part of the Local Plan 2043 and will explore access to the A40 to support any strategic sites that may be allocated to Carterton in this Local Plan.</p> |
| A40 improvements | <p>Started - Oxfordshire County Council successfully negotiated with funding partners Homes England and the Department for Transport (DFT) to confirm £126m in funding to deliver the A40 Eynsham Park and Ride to Wolvercote scheme. A park and ride has been built north of Eynsham village on the A40 eastbound. This is an 850-space park and ride with electric vehicle charging, cycle storage and public toilets. The park and ride will be accessible 24-hours a day.</p> <p>The aim of the park and ride is to provide regular and reliable public transport services and improve congestion on the A40. This will support Eynsham village and surrounding communities, communities north of Eynsham on the A40 and proposed developments including Salt Cross and West Eynsham Strategic Development Area and developments at Witney and Carterton.</p> <p>Construction of the park and ride was completed in Autumn 2024. The planning application for the A40 Eynsham park and ride to Wolvercote project was submitted on 27 June 2025 and is awaiting determination. Once approved, the scheme will be delivered in phases pending funding availability, beginning with connection to the Eynsham Park and Ride which is scheduled to open in 2027.</p> |

| Scheme Name | Status |
|---|--|
| Witney High Street and Market Square enhancements | <p>Not Started - In 2022 Oxfordshire County Council was awarded £1.98m from the UK Government's Active Travel England Tranche 3 fund to take forward Witney High Street and Market Square enhancements. The scheme seeks to deliver active travel improvements that support and maintain the traffic arrangement on Witney High Street and Market Square. The improvements aim to complement the town's history and character but would also help to improve the look and feel of Witney for visitors and for those arriving by walking, cycling or public transport.</p> <p>The project objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance public spaces while protecting the town's history and character • Support local businesses and the markets • Make it easier and more enjoyable to walk, wheel and cycle • Upgrade access to public transport • Improve safety for all users <p>The scheme is due to be completed 2025/26.</p> |
| West Witney walking and cycling path and crossings | <p>Not Started - As part of development in West Witney, Oxfordshire County Council have received Section 106 funding to progress active travel improvements in West Witney. The aim of these improvements is to facilitate safer, more convenient and more direct walking and cycling connections between West Witney and the rest of Witney. This will support local and national carbon emission reduction targets and support community health. These improvements are identified as important connections in Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan also.</p> <p>The project involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurfacing, widening and lighting (where appropriate) of the bridleway between Centenary Way and Deer Park Road • Delivery of a signalised crossing on Deer Park Road adjacent to the bridleway entrance/ exit • Delivery of a signalised crossing on Deer Park Road north of the junction of Deer Park Road/ Curbridge Road and Thorney Leys <p>The scheme is due to be completed 2025/26.</p> |

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS

| |
|--|
| <p>SUMMARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major residential development was approved in the Cotswolds National Landscape during the monitoring period. Larger residential schemes were approved in a limited number of service centres and villages. • A number of single dwellings and minor schemes were approved elsewhere in the protected landscape including small villages and open countryside. • There are 102 Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire, totalling 1761.83 hectares. The area of Local Wildlife Sites has increased by 24.72 hectares since last year (2024). There are 16 Local |
|--|

Geological sites in West Oxfordshire. The area of Local Geological sites has not changed since last year.

- There are 6,803 hectares of NERC S41 habitats in West Oxfordshire. This has increased by 1,680ha since 2024.
- There have been records of 145 priority species in West Oxfordshire within the last 10 years. We have not received records from two priority species in the last 10 years.
- The farmland bird index for West Oxfordshire is 1.18, which shows the index fell 0.2 from 2023.
- The number of heritage assets on the Historic England assets at risk register decreased from 8 to 5 to the end of the monitoring period.
- There were approximately 24 applications for new residential development approved within or on the edge of conservation areas in West Oxfordshire, totalling approximately 39 dwellings during the monitoring period.
- There were 197 applications for Listed Building consent during the monitoring period. Of these, 192 were approved.

4.123 The environmental and heritage section of the Local Plan covers a broad range of issues relating to the natural and built environment including the Cotswolds National Landscape – a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) landscape character, biodiversity, green infrastructure, sport and recreation, renewable energy, flood risk, pollution and heritage.

4.124 Core objectives are as follows:

Core Objectives

CO9 - Promote inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free communities.

CO14 - Conserve and enhance the character and significance of West Oxfordshire's high quality natural, historic and cultural environment – including its geodiversity, landscape, biodiversity, heritage and arts – recognising and promoting their wider contribution to people's quality of life and social and economic well-being both within the District and beyond.

CO15 - Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

CO16 - Enable improvements in water and air quality.

CO17 - Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

Development within the Cotswolds National Landscape (links to Policy EH1)

4.125 In line with national policy, the Local Plan has a generally restrictive policy against major development within the Cotswolds National Landscape – a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(AONB), with great weight applied to conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, landscape and countryside including wildlife and heritage.

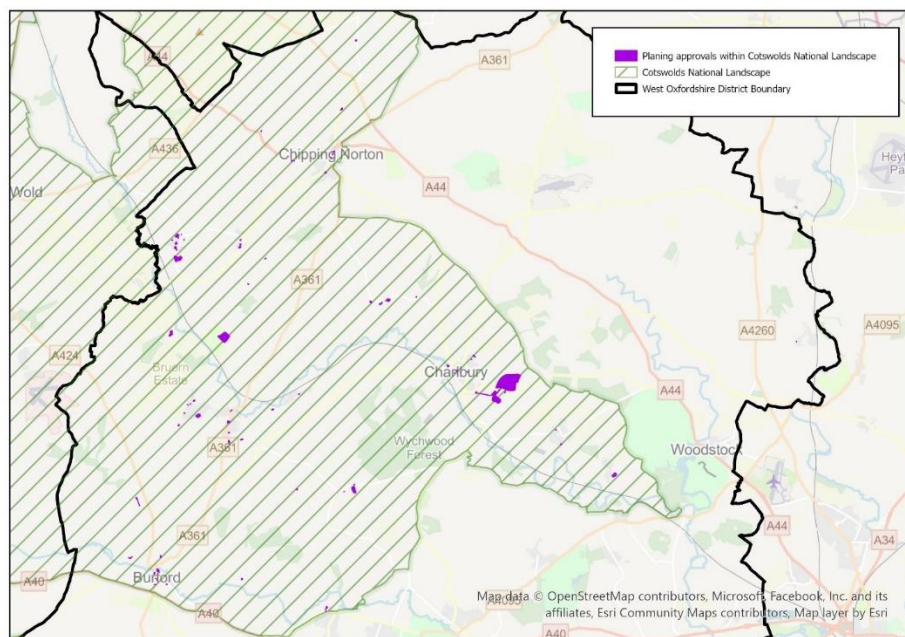
4.126 The Local Plan allocates no land for residential development within the Cotswolds National Landscape, but planning permission was granted for approximately 10 new dwellings during the monitoring period.

4.127 None of these proposals are major in nature and relate predominantly to the development of replacement dwellings or subdivisions.

4.128 There were 111 new permissions granted for a mix of development types and land uses within the Cotswolds National Landscape during the monitoring period, including:

- 34 householder applications approved
- 17 Full Planning approvals granted
- 26 applications for listed building consent granted

Figure 20 - Location of planning applications approved within Cotswolds National Landscape 2024 – 2025

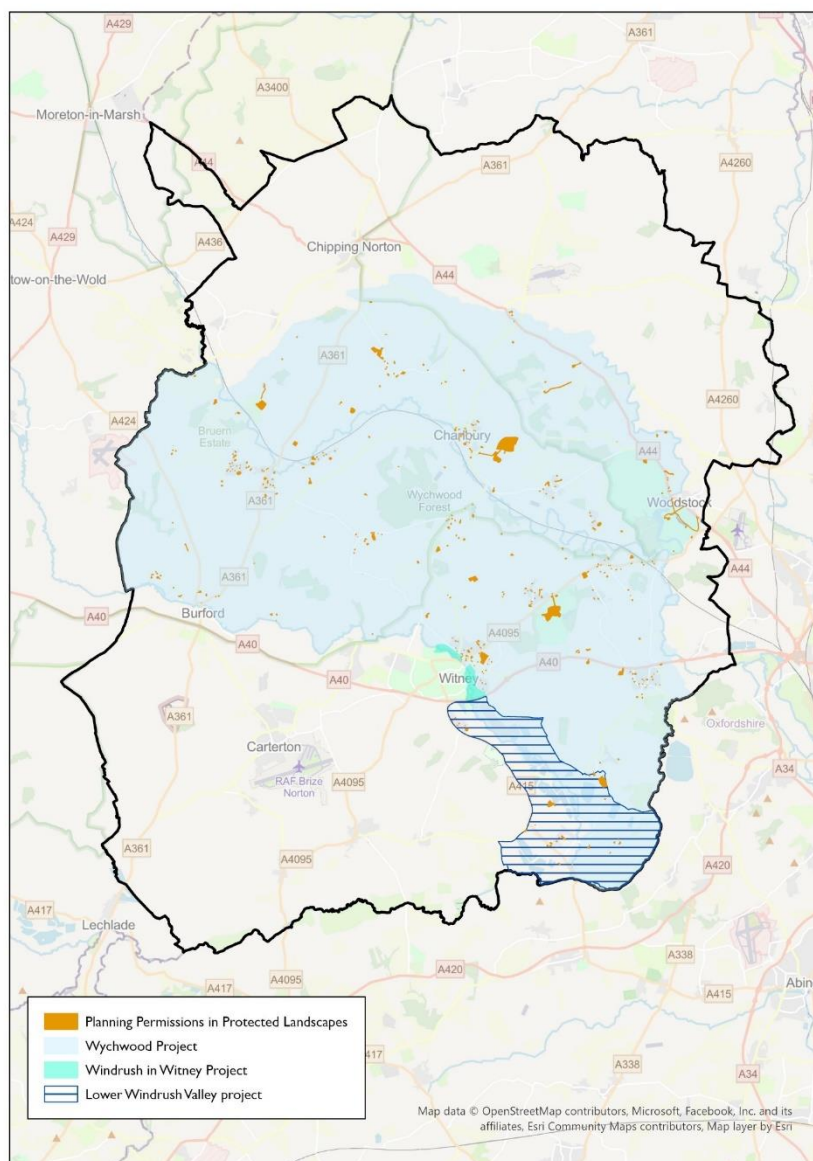


4.129 In addition to the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Local Plan identifies a further three special policy areas, that have been identified for special landscape protection, conservation and enhancement:

- Lower Windrush Valley Project Area – An area of major landscape change associated with mineral extraction and after uses, especially for recreation, tourism and nature conservation.
- Windrush in Witney Project Area – A fundamental component of the town's attractive character.
- Wychwood Project Area – A project that aims to restore the landscape character and mix of habitats associated with the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood.

4.130 A total of 506 planning approvals were granted within these various landscape project areas during the monitoring period.

Figure 21 - Location of planning approvals in landscape project areas 2045 - 2025



Biodiversity (links to Policy EH3)

4.131 Local Plan Policy EH3 aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in West Oxfordshire, with a focus on protected sites and species and ensuring that development contributes towards the aims and objectives of Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) within the District.

4.132 Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) produce a Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) which provides useful information on areas of biodiversity importance, priority habitats, priority species and the distribution and status of farmland birds.

4.133 The information from the TVERC AMR is reproduced below for information.

Table 22 - Areas of sites designated for Intrinsic Environmental Value in West Oxfordshire

| Designation | 2024 | 2025 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|
| Local Geological Site | 333.33 | 333.33 |
| Local Wildlife Site | 1737.11 | 1761.82 |

4.134 Records indicate that there has been a slight increase in the area of land designated as a Local Wildlife site in West Oxfordshire between this and the last monitoring periods.

4.135 There are **102** Local Wildlife Sites in West Oxfordshire. The area of Local Wildlife Sites has increased by **24.72 hectares** since last year. The area of Local Geological sites has not changed since last year.

4.136 Figures for changes in area are derived from an analysis of site boundary data following a site selection panel meeting during the analysis year. Counts in this report are based on the number of sites, rather than polygons, thus counts may differ from previous reports aside from any changes arising from panel decisions.

Changes in area of UK priority habitat

4.137 This indicator identifies the UK NERC Act section **41 habitats** of principal importance (priority habitats) within West Oxfordshire.

4.138 Table 25 below provides details of the UK priority habitats which have been identified within West Oxfordshire. The changes in the UK priority habitats are mostly attributable to new information such as confirmation of boundaries of habitat types.

4.139 The changes largely represent an improved understanding of the habitat resource in West Oxfordshire, rather than the creation or loss of habitat.

Table 23 - Changes in area of UK priority habitat

| S4I Habitat | 2024 (area in ha) | 2025 (area in ha) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Coastal And Floodplain Grazing Marsh | 1517.67 | 1540.71 |
| Eutrophic Standing Waters | 339.45 | 362.4 |
| Hedgerow (Priority Habitat) | 7.85 | 0 |
| Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland | 17.15 | 17.15 |
| Lowland Calcareous Grassland | 189.34 | 444.96 |
| Lowland Dry Acid Grassland | 12.55 | 12.55 |
| Lowland Fens | 53.73 | 50.17 |
| Lowland Meadows | 237.28 | 253.58 |
| Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland | 1578.25 | 2916.11 |
| Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland | 783.31 | 803.27 |
| Mesotrophic Lakes | 221.11 | 141.64 |
| Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land | 33.09 | 41.65 |
| Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture | 1.24 | 1.24 |
| Reedbeds | 2.13 | 2.96 |
| Rivers | 29.24 | 29.18 |
| Traditional Orchards | 57.85 | 63.62 |
| Wet Woodland | 31.21 | 40.11 |
| TOTAL | 5122.55 | 6802.64 |

Changes in number of UK priority species

4.140 The number of priority species in West Oxfordshire is **145**.

4.141 Three species have been removed from the list, as no new records have been made within the last ten years. This does not mean that they are not present, only that no records have been added to the TVERC database since 2011.

4.142 West Oxfordshire District Council have a duty to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the district. The biodiversity duty was introduced in January 2024. Consideration will be given as to what actions can be taken to enhance biodiversity in West Oxfordshire. The District Council published its own Nature Recovery Strategy (2024 – 2030) earlier this year¹⁰ and will continue to work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to identify further priorities through the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.

4.143 During the monitoring period, money was secured, collected and spent on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) schemes in the district as set out in Table 26 below.

Table 24 - Funds secured, collected and spent for BNG projects 2024/25

| Planning Reference | Value | Purpose |
|--------------------|------------|--|
| 20/02654/OUT | £12,000.00 | Funds secured and collected for BNG relating to Land Southeast Of, Oxford Hill, Witney |

Sport and recreation (links to Policy EH5)

4.144 Funding has been secured and spent on a number of improvements and proposed enhancements to sports, recreation and children's play during the monitoring period which should support the integrity and ongoing use of community services and facilities in West Oxfordshire.

4.145 There were few planning applications for sport and recreation developments in West Oxfordshire during the monitoring period.

Table 25 - Planning approvals for sport and recreation developments, 2024 – 2025

| Proposal | Location |
|--|---|
| Reserved matters application for a sports pavilion and associated infrastructure including 65sq.m solar panel array (Amended). | Land West of Witney North of A40 And East of Downs Road |

¹⁰ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/nvtbk0ob/nature-recovery-plan-2024-to-2030.pdf>

Renewable Energy Provision (links to Policy EH6)

4.146 There were several applications for larger, utility scale solar scheme in West Oxfordshire during the monitoring period, many of which were approved.

Table 26 - Planning approvals for utility scale solar development 2024 – 2025

| Planning Reference | Location | Description | Decision |
|----------------------|-------------|--|----------|
| 25/00003/PN56 | Carterton | Installation of 150 Solar PVs as part of the Schools Energy Efficiency Programme. | P3APP |
| 24/01070/FUL | Ducklington | Engineering operations including the laying of underground electricity cables and associated infrastructure to connect the consented solar farm to the overhead line at the junction of Curbridge Road and A415 | Approved |
| 24/02457/NMA | Aston | Erection of 40 new dwellings with the provision of a new access and associated works and landscaping (amended plans). Non-material amendment to allow the removal of false chimneys (plots 6,9,22,23,24 and 40), additional solar panels (plots 6-9) and changes to internal space/household storage (plots 22-24 and 40) with the addition of a small, obscure glazed window on what were previously internal bathrooms in relation to house type 2). | APP |
| 24/01085/FUL | Little Tew | Installation of 10.44kW ground mounted solar PV system to serve 1-3 Showell Farm Cottages | APP |
| 24/03036/PN56 | Witney | Installation of 110no. Solar PV Array (48.4kWp) equipment on flat roofs of a non-domestic building (Wood Green Secondary School) | P3APP |
| 24/01101/FUL | Witney | Installation of rooftop solar panels on council offices. | APP |
| 24/03289/FUL | Eynsham | Installation of 8no. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging spaces, unmanned amenities building and PV solar canopy structure with associated substation, LV switchboard and ancillary works. Alterations to an existing access and creation of a new access onto B4449 | Refused |

Flood Risk (links to Policy EH7)

4.147 There were few approvals for residential development approved in areas at risk of flooding during the monitoring period.

- 4.148 Where planning application boundaries overlap with flood risk areas, these are often access points or form part of the residential curtilage or garden, rather than buildings being proposed in flood risk areas.
- 4.149 There were 7 approvals for residential development within Flood Zones 2 or 3 including at East Witney where part of the allocation on land to the west of the Stanton Harcourt Road is in the flood zone. However, the proposed area of built residential development would be located in areas of low flood risk. In addition to the East Witney approval, permission on sites FZ2 or FZ3 areas, totalled 5 further dwellings during the monitoring period¹¹. The majority of these approvals were for conversion or redevelopment of existing buildings.

Heritage (links to Policy EH9)

- 4.150 There were approximately 24 applications for new residential development approved within or on the edge of conservation areas in West Oxfordshire, totalling approximately 39 dwellings during the monitoring period.
- 4.151 There were 197 applications for Listed Building consent during the monitoring period. Of these, 192 were approved.
- 4.152 Historic England maintain a list of heritage assets¹² that are at risk to help understand the overall state of England's historic sites. The programme identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. There are 5 heritage assets on the heritage risk register in 2025. There is one listed building and 4 scheduled monuments. The number of assets at risk has declined since 2023 when there were 8 assets at risk in West Oxfordshire. The 3 assets were removed from the register, possibly as a result of changing agricultural practices and securing grant aid funding for nature conservation.

Table 27 - West Oxfordshire Heritage at Risk


| Designated Name | Heritage Category | Condition | Principal Vulnerability | Trend |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Church of St Nicholas | Listed Building grade II* | Poor | The floors are in poor condition and there are problems with damp. | Stable |
| Rectangular enclosures 1100yds (1010m) NW of Mount Owen Farm | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Arable ploughing | Declining |

¹¹ Calculated using GIS analysis – Any planning application boundary that intersects flood zones 2 or 3.

¹² <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?advsearch=1&county=Oxfordshire&searchtype=harsearch>

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Waterman's Lodge bowl barrow, one of a pair of Bronze Age barrows on the western edge of Wychwood Forest | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Animal burrowing - Badger - extensive | Declining |
| Medieval settlement and church of Asterleigh | Scheduled Monument | Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems | Deterioration - in need of management | Declining |
| Pair of bowl barrows immediately south of Blindwell Wood | Scheduled Monument | Extensive significant problems | Animal burrowing - Badger - extensive | Declining |

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|---|--|
|  WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL | WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL |
| Name and date of Committee | EXECUTIVE – 17 DECEMBER 2025 |
| Subject | WESTHIVE UPDATE |
| Wards affected | ALL |
| Accountable member | Cllr Rachel Crouch – Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities. Email: rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Accountable officer | Phil Martin - Director of Place Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Report author | Heather McCulloch – Community Wellbeing Manager Email: heather.mcculloch@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Summary/Purpose | To provide an update on the progress of the Westhive scheme to date and to set out the options for future delivery |
| Annexes | None |
| Recommendation(s) | That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enter into an agreement with Crowdfunder UK for a 3-year period to provide a funding platform. 2. Consider as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process making provision for platform hosting fees of £27,600 per year for a 3-year period. 3. Delegate the responsibility of working through the procurement of a new multi-year contract to the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and the Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities. |
| Corporate priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| Key Decision | NO |
| Exempt | NO |
| Consultees/ Consultation | None |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The contract with Spacehive is due to come to an end on the 30th April 2026. This report seeks to set out the features of several fund distribution options which have been considered in reaching the conclusion in 4.3.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** In April 2024, the Council introduced a revised approach to the distribution of community grant funding, to better align to the outcomes of the Council Plan and to foster a greater sense of community engagement and involvement. The Council's ambition is to play a key role in the maintaining of local community services delivered by the voluntary sector. The Council offers grant funding through a number of routes, supporting projects and activity of varying scale. The grants programme includes 3-year Service Level Agreements, the Westhive civic crowdfunding platform and the Community Activity Grants.

3. WESTHIVE

- 3.1** The Executive report of 13th November set out in detail the performance of Westhive up to Round 4. A total of 28 projects with a combined value of £948,172.00 have been successful during that period. Round 5 has recently been concluded with a further 10 projects receiving pledges from the Council and the Community Infrastructure Fund of £124, 649.
- 3.2** The Executive has agreed to continue to make grant funding available for community projects at the same level for a period of 3 years.
- 3.3** The contract with Spacehive commenced on 1 May 2023 for a 3-year period, ending on 30 April 2026 with the option to extend to 30 April 2027. The annual contract fee is £30,000 plus a one-year extension cost of £30,000 if activated. Spacehive fees have increased since the Council entered into the original contract and should the Council decide to enter into a new 3-year contract with Spacehive the costs, based on our population level, would be £40,000 per annum. There may be a possibility of a 20% reduction in the first year but this has not been confirmed at this time. The Council is required to inform Spacehive of its intentions by the 31st January 2026.
- 3.4** The Spacehive business model includes a fee to project creators of 7.5% plus VAT on funds raised on the platform – including on Council pledges. It has not been possible to negotiate a local charging arrangement to reduce the fee paid by project creators – in exchange for an increased fee to the Council. The reasons cited are that the fee structure is published on the GCloud framework and it would be hard for Spacehive to apply local arrangements.

4. FUTURE PREFERRED OPTIONS

- 4.1** Officers have considered four options:
- **Platform based**
 1. Westhive
 2. Crowdfunder UK

- **Non platform based**

3. Have funding hosted and distributed by a local grant giving organisation, separate to the Council
4. Bring the service in house

| Platform based | |
|---|---|
| <i>Option 1 – Westhive</i> | <i>Option 2 - Crowdfunder UK</i> |
| Fee paid by Council – flat £40k per year fee for multiple funds inc. verification and one workshop | Fee paid by Council – £27,600 annually to host two funds with receive comparable services. If less than one fund is hosted then fees are lower. |
| Fee for project creators – 7.5% plus VAT on funds raised on the platform – including Council pledges | No fee charged to project creators |
| Track record working with the Council – high number of successful applications | New approach and opportunity for fresh start – comms required |
| No application form element | Application form element |
| No other funders on the platform | Hosts funds from other providers such as Sport England, Aviva and British Airways and projects are auto-notified if their project might be relevant for other funds |
| <p>Platform based – harnessing individual giving</p> <p>On GCloud for procurement</p> <p>Work with other Councils</p> <p>Online help centre, helpline articles</p> <p>Stripe fees at 2.4% plus VAT on transactions</p> <p>Councillors have high level of involvement in decision making</p> <p>Account manager support</p> <p>Mainline online support – very limited in person support</p> <p>Verification provided</p> <p>Dedicated fund page</p> <p>National platforms – no local knowledge</p> <p>High visibility for all projects</p> | |

| |
|---------------------------|
| Non platform based |
|---------------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Option 3 - Have funding hosted and distributed by a local grant giving organisation, separate to the Council</i> | <i>Option 4 – Bring the process in house</i> |
| Fee to pay - % of fund | No fee to pay |
| Handling all management of applicants and processing of grants | All management of applicants and processing of grants done in house |
| High level of expertise in grant making | Some expertise in grant making |
| Low level of officer input | High level of officer input – would require additional officer resource |
| Little or no input by Councillors in decision making | High level of input by Councillors in decision making |
| Ability to link public funds with other sources e.g. other Council funds and private donors | Could be seen as a retrograde step – as performance was poorer in recent years |
| Not on GCloud – would require full procurement | |
| Application process known to local VCS | |
| Not platform-based | |
| High level of local awareness and understanding | |
| Application form-based scheme | |
| Face to face and phone call support | |
| No or little opportunity to harness individual giving | |
| Less visible than platform-based process | |

- 4.2** Taking into account the need to secure an ongoing legacy position to take this important support for our local residents beyond the vesting day of the new Unitary Authority(s) it would be more financially prudent and time efficient to establish a longer-term contract. Therefore, we would recommend the approval of a further 3-year agreement as part of the budget setting process for 2026/27.
- 4.3** Should the Council prefer a platform-based approach it appears that Crowdfunder UK provides better value for money for residents. It is estimated that between 3 and 4 months would be needed to mobilise a new scheme – including undertaking a GCloud procurement, setting up contracts, working with IT on the platform set up and undertaking necessary communication activity. Our target launch date would be May 2026.

5. WHAT IS CROWDFUNDER UK

- 5.1** *‘Crowdfunder UK began with a simple mission to empower people to create change and now we’re the leading fundraising platform in the UK with a ‘crowd’ of over 3 million.*

Crowdfunder Connect brings councils, corporates and the crowd into one shared space where they can work together to make an even bigger impact. So far, our partners have helped raise over £400 million for amazing causes across the UK.

5.2 *Our society is facing more challenges than ever, which has led to increased pressure on councils to do more with less, but no one organisation can tackle it all alone. We are revolutionising the world of giving by providing a platform where councils, corporates and the crowd can come together to make a big impact by :*

- *Creating a more resilient funding ecosystem.*
- *Doubling the impact of funds through match funding.*
- *Bringing together council, corporate, and crowd contributions.*
- *Providing innovative solutions to make fundraising easier.*
- *Empowering and supporting local communities.'*

5.3 Crowdfunder UK is active in Oxfordshire with 97,000 + supporters having raised over £4.4M for 1,400+ projects. A collaboration of Crowdfunder partners such as Aviva, British Airways, Sport England, NatWest and Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment have contributed over £450k to this total. *'By partnering with Crowdfunder, you're able to harness this momentum being built by our partners and the public to support the incredible projects in your community.'*

5.4 Crowdfunder Connect can enable several different types of crowdfunding:

Live Match funding - a type of crowdfunding where a partner organisation matches public donations to a project in real-time as they are made.

Bridging Match – where a partner organisation adds 50% of a project's total target once it has raised its first 25%.

Grant funding – a partner organisation provides a grant to a project

5.5 How it works:

- Step 1 Allocate our fund - Set aside money for a local cause or priority area.
- Step 2 Design our application – Crowdfunder creates a dedicated page for our fund on the platform and a tailored application form – based on our requirements.
- Step 3 Match with projects – Crowdfunder notifies eligible projects where they are automatically matched and invites them to apply.
- Step 4 Review and manage - All applications come through to our management dashboard for our review.
- Step 5 Showcase our impact - Approved projects appear on our dedicated fund page. Example: [Crowdfund Salford | Crowdfunder.co.uk](#).

5.6 As a partner organisation the Council can distribute either by Open Funds or Funding Rounds. An Open Fund is where applications remain open all year-round until funds are allocated. Funding Rounds are where applications are only accepted during set time periods.

- 5.7** All organisations raising funds on the platform must comply with Crowdfunder UK terms and conditions and pass their due-diligence checks. These include:
- All project owners must provide a UK bank account as only UK accounts are accepted.
 - All project owners must provide proof of identity when required by Stripe, by uploading a copy of a UK Government issued ID such as a passport or driving licence.
 - All businesses, organisations and charities must provide registration details and a valid address.
- 5.8** Crowdfunder UK also complete additional checks on projects receiving partner contributions, such as confirming that payments are going to the intended organisation. Crowdfunder or the partner will then carry out eligibility checks to confirm that the project meets the agreed criteria. If the partner asks Crowdfunder to carry out these checks, the service is subject to an enhanced moderation fee which is referenced in 8.
- 5.9** All payments are handled securely through Stripe. During project setup, each organisation connects its own Stripe account to manage transactions. Projects can run on an 'all or nothing' or 'keep what you raise' model, determining whether funds are released or refunded if targets are not met. Partner contributions are held in a dedicated Stripe wallet and allocated to projects once a pledge is made, with funds transferred only when agreed conditions are met.
- 5.10** Crowdfunder Connect consistently sees council contributions more than doubled through additional contributions from other partners and the public. This collaborative model enables councils to support more projects, reach more communities, and address local challenges more effectively. The following examples illustrate this; for every £1 pledged by Cornwall Council, projects receive an additional £4, Salford Council see a return of an additional £2.20 for every £1 they pledge and Plymouth City Council receives an additional £2.55 for every £1 it pledges.

6. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT WITH CURRENT SCHEME

- 6.1** Round 6 will be the final funding round in the current scheme. Following a meeting with Spacehive and as part of our ongoing review process to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for projects creators, we have agreed to do the following to enhance the process for Round 6:

6.1.1 The Council to :

- Review the Council criteria to ensure the provider is clear and can advise project creators accordingly;
- Undertake a test application to best understand the project creator journey and make any appropriate recommendations to enhance the application process.
- Capture feedback and market research with project creators.

- Ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities to avoid extra work for project creators and the duplication of effort.
- Make early contact with project creators – as they first appear on the platform – to pick up any early queries.
- Review the decision-making process to ensure it is time effective within the terms of delegation.
- Build into the Comms plan a component to promote project campaigns mid fundraising.
- Work with Spacehive to increase return rates of Impact reports.

6.1.2 Spacehive to:

- Alert project creators to the fact that their project may not meet our criteria.
- Review the Creator workshop to introduce elements related to the process of how to apply.
- Make the types of eligible evidence clearer to avoid delays and confusion.
- Make verification robust and consistent.
- Consider including coaching questions to maximise the benefit of Help articles.
- Ensure enough time is given between pause deadlines and panel meeting for projects to secure pledge numbers.
- Work with the Council to increase return rates of Impact reports.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 The Council could decide to select an alternative approach to distributing funds. The various features are set out in 4.1.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 At the meeting of the Executive on the 13th November it was agreed that the Council would continue to make grant funding available for community projects at the same level for a period of 3 years.

- 8.2 The fees to the Council incurred by using the Crowdfunder UK platform would be as follows:

| | Pricing based on a G-Cloud procurement | | | |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Feature | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 | Option 4 |
| Number of funds hosted | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Enhanced moderation | N | Y | N | Y |
| Crowdfunder Connect Licence Fee (Hosted) | £12,000 | £12,000 | £12,000 | £24,000 |
| Additional Fund distribution and enhanced moderation | | £3,600 | £7,200 | £3,600 |
| Annual fee (£ ExVAT) | £12,000 | £15,600 | £19,200 | £27,600 |

- 8.3** The annual fee would be fixed for the duration of the contract when using the GCloud platform. Adding in the optional enhanced moderation service makes the offer comparable with the Spacehive service. This incurs additional charges as set out above. There would be no charges applied to project creators where they are a charity or non-profit except the transaction fee levied in relation to the Stripe account and this would be 2.4% plus VAT which is identical to the amount charged by Spacehive.
- 8.4** Extending the current contract with Spacehive for a further year, would incur a cost of £30,000. If the Council were to enter into a 3-year agreement the cost per annum would be £40,000 based on the G-Cloud Framework. There may be the opportunity for a 20% reduction in year 1 but this has not been confirmed. In addition, Spacehive would apply a fee of 7.5% plus VAT on all funds raised by all project creators on the platform. This fee is also applied to Council pledges.
- 8.5** The 3rd party hosting option would incur a fee to the Council – likely to be approximately 12% of the fund size. It is highly unlikely that charges related to transactions would be incurred by project owners. To bring the process in house would incur costs of additional officer time as this would significantly increase the workload internally.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** The current agreement with Spacehive comes to an end on the 30th April 2026. The ending or extension of the contract with Spacehive requires the Council to give notice by 30th January 2026. As part of the current contract the Council can extend for a further 12-month period.
- 9.2** Crowdfunder UK is on the government G-Cloud framework making the process somewhat simpler. Agreeing a new 3-year contract would require the support of the Procurement, Legal and ICT teams.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1** The options being considered have track record and represent effective models. We would expect all approaches to provide robust grant making services. Crowdfunder UK have experience of hosting local authority funds, and funds of national bodies such as Sport England and businesses such as Aviva and British Airways.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 11.1** The Westhive scheme has been designed to be open to geographical communities and communities of interest. Over 5 rounds a wide range of projects have made use of the platform to host successful crowdfunding campaigns.

12. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1** The SIAT is attached below. Whilst all actions were accepted following review, the assessor did comment that the benefits set out in the SIAT would not be achieved in the event of funding not being available in future years.



| ENVIRONMENTAL | Scores | Action | Justification | Reviewed | Recommendation |
|---------------------------|--------|---|---|----------|----------------|
| GHGs | 2 | No action required | Westhive has supported a high number of projects tackling the | Accepted | |
| Air quality | 2 | No action required | Funding is dedicated to projects which provide community bas | Accepted | |
| Sustainable Transport | 2 | No action required | Again it is difficult to predict what future funds will be availabl | Accepted | |
| Land use change | 2 | No action required | Again difficult to predict but expect, based on previous experie | Accepted | |
| Biodiversity | 2 | No action required | Again it has been difficult to predict the impact but we have me | Accepted | |
| Soil and waterway health | 0 | No action required. | Have not funded projects in the past where this has been a foc | Accepted | |
| Climate Change Adaptation | 2 | No action required | As above - we cannot guarantee the impact but we expect som | Accepted | |
| Energy Use | 0 | No action required. | It feels like a balance would be struck between some gains and This proposal relies on both renewables and fossil fuels. | Accepted | |
| Sustainable Materials | -2 | Review - identify possible improvements | As above it is difficult to predict but we would be encouraging | Accepted | |
| Waste | 2 | No action required | As previously mentioned we cannot guarantee what projects w | Accepted | |

| SOCIAL | Scores | Action | Justification | Reviewed | Recommendation |
|------------------------|--------|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Food | 2 | No action required | We cannot predict what projects will come forward in the futur | Accepted | |
| Health | 4 | No action required | The focus of the investment is community development and w | Accepted | |
| Housing | 0 | No action required. | I do not think that the scheme would provide any change in thi | Accepted | |
| Education | 4 | No action required | The focus of this fund is to build community capacity and supp | Accepted | |
| Built Community | 4 | No action required | The scheme has supported projects which improve the availabi | Accepted | |
| Cultural Community | 4 | No action required | The funding programme is focussed on enabling community act | Accepted | |
| Accessibility | 4 | No action required | The scheme actively addresses the need to tackle barriers to ac | Accepted | |
| Local Economy and Jobs | 2 | No action required | Again it is difficult to predict but projects coming forward may | Accepted | |
| Safety | 2 | No action required | Difficult to predict but based on past experience the criteria co | Accepted | |
| Democratic Voice | 2 | No action required | This is a funding scheme open to organised groups to apply and | Accepted | |
| Equality | 12 | No action required | Positive impact on groups with protected characteristics. Evidence: Recent research findings. Equality of opportunity is a key principle of the scheme. Project | Accepted Accepted Accepted | |

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 None

(END)

| | |
|---|---|
|  WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL | WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL |
| Name and date of Committee | EXECUTIVE - 17 DECEMBER 2025 |
| Subject | ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT POLICY |
| Wards affected | All |
| Accountable member | Andy Graham – Leader of Council, Policy Framework Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Accountable officer | Claire Locke – Executive Director Email: claire.locke@publicagroup.uk |
| Report author | Amy Kemmett, Health and Safety Business Partner Email: amy.kemmett@publicagroup.uk |
| Summary/Purpose | Submit the Asbestos Management Policy to the Executive for approval. |
| Annexes | Annex A – W-HSP-03 Asbestos Management Policy Annex B – Sustainability Impact Report (SIAT) |
| Recommendation(s) | That the Executive resolves to: I. Approve the implementation of the attached Asbestos Management Policy |
| Corporate priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife |
| Key Decision | NO |
| Exempt | NO |
| Consultees/ Consultation | Consultation not required, this policy addresses a legal obligation that the West Oxfordshire District Council holds as an employer and property owner. |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** To support delivery of the Health and Safety Team Work Plan and ensure the Council's compliance with statutory requirements, a review has identified that the current asbestos guidance lacks sufficient clarity and detail regarding the allocation of responsibilities for managing asbestos and asbestos-containing materials. To eliminate any risk of misinterpretation of regulatory obligations, the Council will replace the existing guidance with a comprehensive policy. This policy will clearly set out the Council's duties—both as an employer and as a property owner—in controlling and mitigating the risks associated with asbestos and asbestos-containing materials.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Health and Safety (H&S) Team has identified that some existing documentation within the H&S Management System does not provide sufficient clarity to ensure effective compliance. To address this, a new Health and Safety Management Plan is being developed, comprising a comprehensive suite of documents. This plan will strengthen compliance with the Council's legal obligations under health and safety legislation and ensure that employees, councillors, contractors, and members of the public remain safe when on Council premises, working on its behalf, or engaging with its services. It also promotes consistent and effective safety measures across all activities
- 2.2** The Health and Safety Management Plan will consist of 52 different areas of consideration, supported by policy and guidance documents, templates and advice for managers and employees of the Council.
- 2.3** The Corporate Health and Safety Team have begun this piece of work by reviewing existing documentation relating to building compliance, with the preparation of policy and guidance documents to support relevant stakeholders and managers to fulfil their legal duties and obligations.
- 2.4** The previous guidance document lacked the clarity and detail necessary to meet legal requirements. In contrast, a policy establishes mandatory standards that must be followed, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and arrangements to ensure consistency and accountability. While guidance is generally advisory in nature, a policy is a formal statement of intent and commitment. It demonstrates that the organisation is fulfilling its legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated legislation.
- 2.5** Health and Safety legislation requires organisations to have suitable and sufficient policies in place. These include, but are not limited to, a Health and Safety Policy, Fire Safety Policy, Accident and Incident Reporting Policy, Lifting Operations Policy, Electrical Safety Policy, Asbestos Policy, and Water Hygiene Policy.
- 2.6** As a result of this, over the coming months, several policy documents will be proposed to the Executive for approval.

3. ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 3.1 This document lays out the Council's legal obligation under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 to manage and control Asbestos-Containing Materials, throughout the properties and premises owned and/or managed by the Council, where the legal responsibility lies with the Council.
- 3.2 This policy outlines the risks presented by asbestos, the legal and regulatory framework, roles and responsibilities of key individuals within the Council, what should be included in asbestos monitoring and management documentation, and training needs to ensure that necessary competencies are present within relevant Facilities and Assets teams. The policy also provides information regarding the emergency procedures should there be a suspected release of asbestos fibre where persons may become exposed.
- 3.3 The policy includes templates for monitoring and management documentation, based upon the Health and Safety Executive's Approved Code of Practice, as appendices.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations is a legal requirement and as such, it would not be appropriate to base our legal duty and responsibilities to comply solely with guidance, that could be open to interpretation, rather than a robust policy, which is auditable and includes mandatory standards

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Most of the measures covered by this policy should already be in place and therefore adequate resources should have been allocated to compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- 5.2 Some resource may be required to satisfy the training provision for Designated Asbestos Control Representatives; with either P402 or P405 qualification being a necessity for designated representatives. A full course is approximately £1000 and a refresher approximately £280. It is expected that this resource could be allocated from existing Continued Professional Development funds through relevant budget holders within the Council. It is expected that the Duty Holder undertakes a 'Duty to Manage Course', with the iHasco Asbestos Awareness Course being made available for those who indicated in the Policy Document.
- 5.3 Failure to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 can carry unlimited fines and up to 2 years imprisonment. In cases where death from workplace exposure to asbestos fibre is attributable through negligence, Corporate Manslaughter charges can also be brought.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This policy facilitates compliance with legislation, there are clear legal, both criminal and civil, implications should the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 not be complied with.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** Previously, broad guidance was issued regarding the management of asbestos within premises under the control of West Oxfordshire District Council. However, this guidance is now considered insufficiently detailed to enable risks to be properly assessed. This guidance has not specified the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the Council, set out the legal and regulatory frameworks of compliance or given the property and asset teams a structure by which to ensure appropriate management of this significant premises compliance risk.
- 7.2** The proposed policy will provide the Property, Assets and Estates Team improved understanding of the risks and sets out clear structure and direction, as to what needs to be implemented by relevant responsible persons to ensure compliance with legislation, in turn this will significantly reduce the risk of an incident associated with accidental release of asbestos fibres as a result of the Council's negligence.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** This policy protects everyone equally, regardless of whether they hold a protected characteristic or not. Asbestos and asbestos-containing materials present a real risk to all those who use or visit Council controlled premises and a properly implemented asbestos management plan mitigates this risk to its lowest possible level

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of this policy will not have any sustainability implications, please see Annex B for Sustainability Impact Report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

TITLE: W-HSP-03 Asbestos Management Policy**AUTHOR: Publica Corporate Health & Safety Team****DATE: September 2025****APPROVED BY:****REVIEW DATE: September 2026**

| Version | Status | Date | Reviewer | Purpose/outcome |
|---------|--------|------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1.0 | Draft | 29/09/2025 | Corporate Health & Safety Team | Review and update of existing policy |
| 1.1 | Draft | 12/11/2025 | Stan Akhurst & Claire Locke | Internal Review Prior to Submission to Democratic Services. |
| 1.2 | Draft | 17/11/2025 | Stan Akhurst | Final review |
| | | | | |

1. Purpose

This policy sets out West Oxfordshire District Council's approach to managing asbestos, where the duty to manage under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 lies with the Council. The Council will ensure that there is an effective system for identifying, monitoring and managing asbestos containing materials within its area of responsibility.

2. Statement of Intent

West Oxfordshire District Council are committed to managing the risks associated with Asbestos and Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACMs) in full compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

The Council prioritises the health, safety and welfare of employees, contractors, commercial and residential tenants, visitors and members of the public. This commitment includes the effective identification, management and control of Asbestos risks to ensure that exposure to harmful Asbestos fibres is reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

In order to achieve full compliance in implementing the Asbestos Management Policy, the Council has the following objectives:

- Conduct regular inspections and produce asbestos management plans for relevant properties in their charge and take steps necessary to comply with any recommendations made by such inspections.
- Identify materials that contain asbestos (and those presumed to contain asbestos) and take steps to communicate this information of the location, type and condition to employees, contractors, managing agents, and tenants and any other bodies such as, emergency services, that may be affected by it.
- Assess the risk of exposure to ACMs and identify and implement appropriate control measures to reduce the risk identified.
- Prepare and maintain in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, an asbestos management plan for the Council's assets. The plan shall set out how the risks from ACMs will be managed and prioritised. The Council will annually review, monitor and update the asbestos management plan following any relevant change in circumstances and ensure the plan remains up to date.
- Ensure information regarding the survey findings are accessible to all employees, contractors and any other person/s who may be brought into contact with asbestos as part of their activities. This information should also be accessible to other interested parties as necessary,
- Presume the building fabric of premises (pre year 2000 built) and other relevant construction materials contain asbestos, unless there is strong evidence that they do not.
- Identify the role and function of Duty Holders for all Council premises and ensure that they are fully aware of, and competent to carry out this role.
- Allocate sufficient resources to ensure the effective management of asbestos.
- Maintain records of the activities conducted while implementing the asbestos management plan.
- Retain all Asbestos documentation for the appropriate retention period, (40 years) as set out in the Council's retention of documentation policy.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to both properties owned, leased or managed by the Council, including emergency accommodation, commercial buildings and public facilities.

West Oxfordshire District Council shall ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable, no occupant of, or visitor to Council controlled premises should not be exposed to asbestos risk as a result of activities being undertaken within such premises or from its presence.

4. Definition of Terms

4.1 Asbestos – A naturally occurring silicate mineral that was widely used commercially within the building industry for their desirable physical properties of sound absorption, tensile strength and its resistance to fire, heat, electrical and chemical damage.

4.2 Asbestos Condition Monitoring Inspection - 'Condition Monitoring' involves a formal recorded annual or at any significant change point visual inspection of all asbestos containing materials (including materials presumed to contain asbestos) in Council controlled properties.

4.3 Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) – Asbestos products widely used in the building industry, examples include lagging for pipes, boilers, insulation boards, ceiling and floor tiles,

fireproofing on doors, wall sand other surfaces, building materials such as cement sheeting, roofing felts, mastics, artex and other fibrous materials that may have an asbestos fibre content.

4.4 Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) – the Asbestos Management plan identifies potential asbestos exposure hazards, sets out best practice for notifying to employees and occupants of the presence of ACMs, employees' awareness and operational training, recordkeeping and management of renovations and maintenance operations.

4.6 Asbestos Survey -Any property constructed prior to 2000 will need to undergo an asbestos survey, subject to archi-type survey proportionate to the building, its use, purpose and known or unknown ACM content. The type of survey necessary will be identified by either competent contractor or competent council employee. All management surveys will be carried out by a competent contractor. These surveys will form the basis of the Asbestos Register and Management Plan.

4.7 Duty Holder/s – The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 states the 'Duty Holder' should manage the risk from asbestos in non-domestic premises to ensure that ACMs do not present a risk or a potential risk to employees. The Duty Holder is a person or organisation that has a clear responsibility for the maintenance or repair of non-domestic premises by virtue of contract or tenancy. Therefore, the duty to manage may be shared between several parties, or one owner alone. The requirement of Regulation 4 states that duty holder must identify the location and condition of asbestos and to manage the risk to prevent harm to anyone who work on or occupies the building. For example, an owner may be responsible for the common areas whilst the leaseholder is responsible for the parts of the building they occupy. Regulation 4 also requires all parties to cooperate in these situations to enable the Duty Holder to fulfil their obligations under the regulations

5. Understanding Asbestos Risks

5.1 Exposure to asbestos fibres of any type, when airborne and respired may result in chronic diseases such as asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer.

5.2 There are three types of asbestos that were widely used in building and/or construction materials that may be present in premises under Council responsibility:

- **Chrysotile (White Asbestos)** – mainly found in asbestos cement products such as panels, boards, guttering, drainpipes, cold water storage tanks, roofing sheets, soffit boards, 'Artex' coatings etc. It was also a common filler or reinforcement in products such as mastics, adhesives and paints.
- **Amosite (Brown Asbestos)** – Mainly found in fire resistant insulation, wall panels, ceiling tiles and boards, it was also used in sprayed coatings and pipe and boiler insulation.
- **Crocidolite (Blue Asbestos)** – Mainly found in insulation mattresses and as reinforcement in cement and sprayed thermal and acoustic insulation.

Although the above mentions common places where asbestos can be found, but due to its durability, flexibility in use, heat resistance, chemical resistance and thermal properties, it was used in many other situations. It is not always easily identifiable. Due to this, unless there is strong evidence that the material does not contain asbestos, the CAR 2012 regulations stipulate it must be presumed that asbestos is present, until confirmed otherwise not present by a competent authority.

5.3 Asbestos is only a risk to health if respirable asbestos fibres are released into the air and breathed in. As long as the asbestos is in good condition and is not disturbed or damaged there is no risk to health. However, when asbestos material is cut, ground or when an item containing asbestos is damaged, fine fibres are released into the air. These fibres are invisible to the naked eye but because of their size, they present a health hazard. Airborne fibres can then be inhaled and trapped deep in the tissue of the lungs, which can cause asbestosis and mesothelioma and lung cancer. The damaging effects of these diseases, may not become apparent for many years.

It should be noted: In 1999, Chrysotile was the last type of asbestos to be banned from import and use (there are some exceptions – MOD and chemical industry). Thus, any building constructed from 2000 onwards are unlikely to contain asbestos.

5.4 Crocidolite is considered the most hazardous due to the nature of the fibre itself, being very small in size, which enables inhalation deep into the lung and the sharpness/hook like structure of the fibre can cause scar tissue, resulting in disease.

5.5 All employees and anyone present near asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) may be at risk. However, people are considered to be more at risk, when undertaking the following activities as part of their job roles.

- Contractors undertaking refurbishment and demolition works.
- Contractors and Facilities Team employees carrying out or managing building fabric invasive works such as drilling holes to enable services penetrations to be fed through and connected, such as water or gas pipework, ICT data cabling through walls, ceilings or floors.
- Employees and associated waste contractors that deal with and respond to fly-tipped waste.
- Employees in undertaking Reception areas duties, should a member of the public unintentionally/or intentionally bring ACMs into Council premises which is foreseeable as it has happened in the past).

6. Legislation and Regulatory Framework

6.1 This policy is governed and informed by the Legislation:

- **The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – The Council, as an employer must ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees and others, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** .Under Regulation 3, the Council, as an employer, must carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to its employees and to others who may be affected by its undertakings
- **The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012** – All work with asbestos materials is strictly controlled by these Regulations and as such require an assessment to be undertaken by a competent person with respect to the likely exposure to employees prior to starting any work with asbestos or where asbestos may be present. The presence of ACMs must also be suitably managed in compliance with 'The Duty to Manage' to ensure that the risk from asbestos does not change.
- **The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015** – The Council must identify, assess and manage asbestos risks before, during and following construction work.

6.2 This policy has also considered the following HSE publications:

- [L143 – Managing and Working with Asbestos Approved Code of Practice](#)
- [HSG264 Asbestos: The Survey Guide](#)
- [HSG248 Asbestos: The Analysts' Guide](#)
- [HSG227 A Comprehensive Guide to Managing Asbestos in Premises](#)
- [HSG210 HSE Asbestos Essentials Guide](#) (the link is for the separate chapters that are available for free on the HSE website).

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Chief Executive Officer – holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 is adhered to and is therefore designated as the Duty Holder and Responsible Person.

7.2 Property Managers – Undertake the delegated responsibility of the Duty Holder from the CEO and with this shall:

- Provide sufficient resources for management of asbestos.
- Ensure themselves and their teams are suitably trained to the appropriate level for their job role.
- Ensure any contractors or sub-contractors are competent to undertake designated activities.
- Facilitate the production of an asbestos register and associated risk assessment for all applicable properties under the control of the Council, regularly review these documents and ensure they are kept up to date.
- Designate an Asbestos Control Building Surveyor, ensuring provision of the relevant training and/or refresher to ensure this individual is competent to fulfil this role.
- Facilitate the production of an asbestos management plan, ensuring adequate resources are available to deliver this plan, appropriate actions are taken to remove and/or render safe, and monitoring and inspection programmes should be implemented in line with L143 (linked in Section 6.2).
- Ensure any identified asbestos is appropriately identified within each property by means of labelling its specific location and identification on schematic building drawings. These should be regularly checked and maintained and made available to any contractors who may be undertaking work where ACMs may be present. In cases where the premises is open to the public, for example Council Offices, a record of ACMs should be readily available for review by any relevant person, for examples sub-contractors and other authorities such as The Health and Safety Executive or Fire and Rescue Service.
- Ensure that all appointments made for the removal of, handling of, and disposal of ACMs and suspected ACMs are carried out by an established, licensed and competent company.
- Ensure that sub-contractors undertaking works that are appointed by a main contractor have been assessed as competent, this assessment could include provision of training records, licensing documentation and review of qualifications prior to the commencement of works.
- Management surveys are undertaken by a competent provider for all premises under the remit and control of the Property and Asset Team. These assessments should be current, and recommendations identified in accordance with the risks are prioritised and actioned accordingly.
- Refurbishment and Demolition surveys are legally required under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and must be conducted before any invasive work into the fabric of applicable buildings proceeds, which will enable ACM's to be confirmed or discounted so

when present, can be safely managed or removed. These surveys should be undertaken when:

- A building or part of a building is being refurbished or demolished.
 - Significant structural changes are planned – such as removing walls, ceilings or floors/flooring.
 - There is a risk of disturbing ACMs during the work.
- Where any works are planned that involve ACMs, plans of work should be prepared and submitted to the HSE via [Notification of Asbestos Work Form](#).
- Inform the Health and Safety team of any suspected ACMs exposure.

7.3 Property and Assets Teams

Members of the Property and Asset teams have the following responsibilities under this policy:

- Attend all relevant training, including Asbestos Awareness training and obtain any other required training based upon level of responsibility within the team and job role.
- Draft Safe Systems of Work and procedures for the management of asbestos that are specific to individual premises, to allow for effective implementation in buildings, both occupied by or tenanted, under Council control.
- To monitor the effectiveness of procedures and review as necessary.
- Arranging asbestos surveys for Council controlled premises.
- To ensure routine condition inspections are planned and undertaken where ACMs listed in the asbestos register are carried out at least annually, more frequently for higher risk materials, dependant on condition/deterioration
- Update and maintain records in asbestos registers.
- Providing advice and information on ACMs to persons having an appropriate interest or connection, including undertaking or arranging a specific project site and inspections as necessary.
- Providing detailed procedures and guidance for tenants in control of premises and team leads located at Council-controlled premises to enable compliance with this policy in general and the requirements of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

In relation to projects and the employment of external contractors, the property and asset team will ensure that:

- Confirm that contractors have read the asbestos register and signed to confirm this, before the commencement of invasive works.
- Verify that all staff and contractors involved in the project have received asbestos awareness training.
- Ensure that those managing, disturbing or removing ACMs have received HSE-approved and certificated higher level training.
- If the asbestos register details that ACMs are present in the area of proposed building works, there may need to be changes to the work plan to ensure that the ACMs are not disturbed. Alternatively, arrangements can be made to remove the asbestos under licenced conditions before any work is undertaken.

7.4 Facilities/Premises Manager

Employees designated as the day-to-day Manager of a given premises, whether it is a formal position or acting as, are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of asbestos management procedures and guidance including:

- Liaising with the relevant Property/Assets/Estates teams and building surveyors regarding asbestos matters.
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place to implement and comply with all asbestos-related procedures and guidance issued by the Property team.
- Ensuring awareness and knowledge of the location of the asbestos register and identified ACMs within the premises.
- Acting as the point of contact for any person attending the premises to carry out work, ensuring that they are given access to the asbestos register and schematic plans and sign the contractor visitor book to confirm their understanding of the requirement to avoid disturbing ACMs.
- Appointing a responsible person in their absence to act as point of contact, ensuring continued access to the asbestos register, asbestos management plans and schematic plans detailing ACM locations.
- Ensuring routine inspections of ACMs listed in the asbestos register, at premises under their control, are carried out at least annually, and more frequently for higher risk materials.
- Reporting any damage or deterioration of ACM and any required amendments to the asbestos register to the Property team.
- Seeking advice from the Property team where asbestos survey information may be unclear or further reassurance is needed.
- Respond appropriately to any incident arising by isolating areas adjacent to any disturbed or damaged ACMs or suspected ACMs and immediately seek guidance from the Property team.

7.5 Project Managers/Contract Administrators

Project Managers and Contract Administrators are responsible for ensuring that:

- The project team and any consultants are aware of the [HSE Asbestos Essentials Information](#).
- Consider asbestos presence with all projects at the design stage and plan accordingly by
 - Properly inform the relevant managers within the Property and Assets team that a project is planned which may involve risks of exposure to asbestos.
 - At the earliest opportunity, consideration should be given to the possibility of disturbing ACMs in the course of the proposed works and that thereafter the requirement of this policy and the Council's management procedures are fully complied with until the project completion.

7.5.1 Early Identification and Planning

Project Managers will:

- Ensure that asbestos considerations are integrated in project planning from the outset.
- Review the Asbestos register and relevant survey reports before any design or construction work begins.
- Ensure that a member of the project team or Property Team arranges for an appropriate asbestos survey (management, refurbishment or demolition) to be completed by a competent contractor prior to the commencement of any invasive works, if indicated.
- Inform the Property and Asset team should surveys need reviewing and/or updating if there is a material change or if the existing assessment is suspected to be invalid.

7.5.2 Risk Assessment and Control Measures

Project Managers must ensure that:

- Asbestos related risk assessments are conducted and documented for all relevant works.
- Appropriate control measures to prevent exposure to ACMs are incorporated into project planning
- Identify in the issues log the need to ensure that property team or consultants acting on their behalf inform all contractors and relevant personnel of the presence and location of ACMs.

7.6 Designated Asbestos Control Representative – Facilities Lead/Building Surveyor

The role of the building surveyor designated to manage Asbestos on a day-to-day basis is to:

- When required, advise projects team on the requirement for management, refurbishment and demolition surveys for different projects.
- Plan and supervise a scope of work to obtain asbestos surveys
- Prepare asbestos management plans for relevant buildings.
- Plan and implement an inspection schedule to undertake condition monitoring surveys for premises that are under Council responsibility to control and have ACMs or suspected ACMs present.
- Prepare a scope of work to ensure that premises that require asbestos surveys and/or sampling will receive the required works, treating these premises as though asbestos is present until it has been ruled out.
- Any surveys or sampling must be carried out by a competent contractor in line with HSG264 (linked in Section 6.2), taking all appropriate precautions to prevent exposure of any person to hazardous asbestos fibres.
- Ensure asbestos registers and any site records are accurate and kept up to date.
- Where ACMs may have been disturbed, attend site and take control of the location, facilitating the isolation of the ACMs, provide recommendations and advice on remedial works.
- Provide advice and information site managers and nominated accountable persons regarding ACMs in Council controlled buildings.
- Establish clear lines of communication with other departments with regard to ACMs.
- Assist the Property/Facilities Maintenance Manager in the maintenance and further development of the Council's Asbestos Register.

7.7 Building Maintenance Officers

- All maintenance employees that may come in to contact with asbestos must receive Asbestos Awareness Training.
- Maintenance employees must not remove, handle or try and dispose of any from ACMs. Only authorised and licensed contractors who have specialist asbestos removal training can remove asbestos and this can only be carried out under specific agreed and permitted conditions.
- Some specific ACMs can be removed without the requirement of a licence but only within the strict guidance outlined by the HSE. HSG210 (linked in Section 6.2) details the substances and approved removal methods.
- No work can be undertaken unless the asbestos register for that building has been examined to identify where the asbestos is located.

Note – even comprehensive asbestos surveys may not identify all potential ACMs in a building, if there is any suspicion that ACMs are present, stop work, isolate the area and contact the Facilities Lead and/or Property/Asset Manager.

7.8 Employees involved in Waste & Recycling Management

All employees undertaking activities handling waste from unknown sources and those investigating fly-tipping and /or the unauthorised disposal of waste and abandoned articles, must have attended an Asbestos Awareness Training which should include:

- Identification of asbestos materials and ACMs.
- Risks to health from exposure.
- Relevant precautions to prevent exposure, when gathering evidence.
- Actions to take to ensure public safety.
- Arrangements required in accordance with HSG 210 (link in Section 6.2) to safely remove asbestos that has been fly-tipped.

7.9 All Employees

All employees are responsible for:

- Complying with asbestos related instructions issued by their Premises or Facilities Manager.
- Reporting any defects to known ACM locations to their manager **and** the Premises or Facilities Manager immediately, using the email address assets@westoxon.gov.uk. This ensures that a member of the Property Team is aware of the situation even if the team lead is unavailable.

7.10 Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Corporate Health and Safety Team are responsible for:

- Providing advice and assistance in support of this policy.
- Periodically auditing premises arrangements for asbestos management.
- Reviewing levels of completion of Asbestos Awareness training and other relevant accredited courses ensuring proportionality with the level of competence required. This should be undertaken in conjunction with the Corporate Training team.
- Reviewing this policy and keeping it up to date with current legislation and best practice to ensure that risks are managed and reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable.

7.11 Health and Safety Business Partners

The Health and Safety Business Partners allocated to the West Oxfordshire District Council will:

- Oversee the effective implementation of this policy. Provide competent advice when required.
- Comply with RIDDOR 2013 and report any unintentional release of asbestos fibres into the air when:
 - A work activity causes the accidental release or escape of asbestos fibres into the air.
 - The quantity released is sufficient to cause damage to health.
 - The release occurred due to a lack of suitable controls or failure of those controls.
- Monitor and review this policy annually or following any significant changes in legislation or Council Operations.

8. Asbestos Registers

8.1 An asbestos register should include the following information:

- Site name and address
- Name of duty holder or responsible person
- Details of Survey including:
 - Type of survey
 - Date of survey
 - Name of Surveyor and Company
 - Any areas not accessed during the survey and why.
- Details of Asbestos Containing Materials:
 - Specific room, floor or area ACM located
 - Type of ACM – textured coating, insulation board, pipe lagging
 - Asbestos type – Chrysotile, amosite, crocidolite
 - Information about the extent of the material
 - Condition – good, damaged deteriorating
- Photographs of ACMs and their locations.
- Annotated floor plans or diagrams
- Recommended Actions – monitor, encapsulate, remove.
- Action due dates.
- Evidence of completed actions
- Next condition assessment date if applicable.
- Any access restrictions or signage and barriers in place – this should be checked as part on the condition assessment.
- Communication records where staff and contractors have been informed of the location of ACMs.
- Records of training at all levels and renewal dates.
- Review and update logs.
 - Date of last update
 - Date of next scheduled review
 - Changes since the last review.

8.2 The asbestos register should confirm and demonstrate compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

8.3 The asbestos register must be maintained and kept to date for each applicable premises, details of any asbestos surveys and/or asbestos removal works should be recorded.

8.4 The asbestos register must be readily available and information regarding identification types, quantity and whereabouts must be accessible to all relevant persons, including internal or contracted maintenance employees, contractors which intend to carry out works within properties

8.5 All contractors undertaking invasive works, such as drilling or cutting into building fabric will read and sign the relevant form in the asbestos register to confirm they fully understand the whereabouts and type of asbestos or ACMs within the premises.

9. Surveys and Risk Assessments

9.1 West Oxfordshire District Council will ensure that appropriate asbestos surveys, whether management, refurbishment, or demolition, are arranged and conducted by competent providers.

9.2 These surveys will be carried out by qualified professionals and accompanied by risk assessments to identify and manage asbestos-containing materials (ACMs). Please see Appendix 1 for risk assessment template.

9.3 All surveys and assessments must be reviewed at appropriate intervals, at a minimum annually, and whenever there is a significant material change or reason to believe the current assessment is no longer valid.

10. Asbestos Management Plan

10.1 The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires managers of premises to prepare a written asbestos management plan. The plan should set out how the risks from asbestos are to be managed and the procedure for ensuring that employees or others do not disturb asbestos containing materials. The amount of information that needs to be provided in the plan will vary considerably depending on the size and complexity of the building.

10.2 Premises managers are required to monitor the implementation of the management plan and to conduct periodic reviews to ensure the on-going suitability of the actions recorded. Please see Appendix 2 for asbestos management plan template.

11. Training and Awareness

11.1 All relevant staff and contractors must receive asbestos awareness training to ensure they understand the associated hazards and risks.

11.2 Property/Estates Leads are responsible for identifying which team members require asbestos awareness or asbestos management training and for determining the appropriate level of training.

11.3 Additional, HSE-approved higher-level training is required for individuals involved in the management, disturbance, or removal of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), whether licensed or non-licensed. The Health and Safety Team can provide further advice

12. Emergency Procedures

12.1 In the event of accidental disturbance or discovery of suspected asbestos, the area should be appropriately evacuated and secured/cordoned off. Thereafter specialist contractors will be engaged to assess and remediate the situation in accordance with legal requirements. Specific emergency actions must include:

- 1) **Stop Work Immediately**
 - a) Cease all activities in the affected area.
 - b) Do not touch or disturb the suspected material further.
- 2) **Isolate the Area**
 - a) Prevent access to the area by others.

- b) Close doors and windows if safe to do so.
- c) Use signage or barriers to indicate a potential asbestos hazard – should this not be easily accessible, monitor the area and warn people of the risks, while not putting yourself or any colleagues at risk.
- 3) **Inform Relevant Personnel**
 - a) Notify your supervisor or manager **and** the property/assets team, ideally by phone, if they unreachable email assets@wextoxon.gov.uk subject line URGENT ASBESTOS RISK, mark the email as important.
 - b) Report the incident using the H&S incident reporting form available on the WODC portal
 - c) Contact the Health and Safety Team to report the incident.
- 4) **Assume the Material Contains Asbestos**
 - a) Unless confirmed otherwise, treat the material as asbestos-containing.
 - b) Do not attempt to clean up or remove the material yourself.
- 5) **Carry out a Risk Assessment**
 - a) Do not attempt to clean up or remove the material yourself.
 - b) Determine whether the work is licensable or non-licensable.
 - c) Decide on the appropriate control measures.
- 6) **Engage a Licensed Contractor if required**
 - a) If the material is friable or high-risk, a licensed asbestos removal contractor must be used.
 - b) Ensure the contractor follows the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- 7) **Decontaminate Affected Personnel**
 - a) This must be done as near to the site if potential exposure as possible without exposing other to the potential risk.
 - b) Avoid rubbing exposed areas — this can release more fibres into the air.
 - c) Remove contaminated clothing carefully, avoiding pulling garments over the head. Place clothing in a sealed bag and bag again to effect double bagging for safe licenced disposal.
 - d) Wet wipe exposed skin using a damp cloth with a gentle patting motion. Do not dry brush or scrub.
 - e) Wash exposed skin with copious amounts of water or soapy water.
 - f) Prevent asbestos fibres or contaminated water from entering **drains or surface water**.
 - a) If there is the possibility of asbestos contaminating the water system contact Emergency services may contact UKHSA for further advice via their **24-hour chemical hotline**: 0344 892 0555.
- 8) **Record and report the incident**
 - a) Document the event in the asbestos register and incident log.
 - b) Report under RIDDOR if exposure has occurred.
- 9) **Review and Update Procedures**
 - a) Investigate the cause of the incident.
 - b) Update training, risk assessments, and emergency plans as needed.

13. Monitoring and Review

13.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant changes in legislation or Council operations.

13.2 Regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance and effectiveness of asbestos management procedures.



Appendix One – Asbestos Risk Assessment Template

Health and Safety



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

TITLE: W-HSF-03-02 Asbestos Risk Assessment Template

AUTHOR: Publica Corporate Health & Safety Team

DATE: November 2025

APPROVED BY:

REVIEW DATE: November 2026

Location:

| Where | Product | How Much? | Surface Coating | Condition | How easy access? | Asbestos Type | Comment | Material Score | Priority Score |
|-------|---------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|---------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix One – Material Assessment Algorithm

| Sample Variable | Score | Examples of Scores |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Product type (or debris from product) | 1 2 3 | Asbestos reinforced composites – plastics, resins, mastic, roofing felts, vinyl floor tiles, semi-rigid paints or decorative finishes, asbestos cement. Asbestos insulating board, mill boards, other low density insulation boards, asbestos textiles, gaskets, ropes and woven textiles, asbestos paper and felt Thermal insulation (pipe and boiler lagging), sprayed asbestos, loose asbestos, asbestos mattresses and packing. |
| Extent of damage/deterioration | 0 1 2 3 | Good condition: no visible damage Low damage: a few scratches or surface marks, broken edges on boards, tiles etc. Medium damage: significant breakage of materials or several small areas where material has been damaged revealing loose asbestos fibres High damage or delamination of materials, sprays and thermal insulation. Visible asbestos debris. |
| Surface treatment | 0 1 2 3 | Composite materials containing asbestos, reinforced plastics, resins, vinyl tiles Enclosed sprays and lagging, asbestos insulating board with exposed face painted or encapsulated, asbestos cement sheets. Unsealed asbestos insulating boards or encapsulated lagging and sprays Unsealed lagging and sprays |
| Asbestos Type | 1 2 3 | Chrysotile Amphibole asbestos excluding crocidolite Crocidolite |
| Total Score | | |

Appendix Two – Priority Assessment Algorithm

Scores for each section need to be averaged before adding the average from each section together to get the total score. Please see [HSG 227](#) for more information.

| Assessment Factor | Score | Examples of Scores |
|--|------------------|---|
| Normal occupant activity Main type of activity in area | 0 1 2 3 | Rare disturbance activity (eg little used store room) Low disturbance activities (eg office type activity) Periodic disturbance (eg industrial or vehicular activity which may contact ACMs) High levels of disturbance, (eg fire door with asbestos insulating board sheet in constant use) |
| Secondary activities in area | As above | As above |
| Likelihood of disturbance Location | 0 1 2 3 | Outdoors Large rooms or well-ventilated areas Rooms up to 100 m ² Confined spaces |
| Accessibility | 0 1 2 3 | Usually inaccessible or unlikely to be disturbed Occasionally likely to be disturbed Easily disturbed Routinely disturbed |
| Extent/amount | 0 1 2 3 | Small amounts or items (eg strings, gaskets) ≤ 10 m ² or ≤ 10 m pipe run. >10 m ² to ≤50 m ² or >10 m to ≤50 m pipe run >50 m ² or >50 m pipe run |



| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Human exposure potential | 0 | None |
| Number of occupants | 1 | 1 to 3 |
| | 2 | 4 to 10 |
| | 3 | >10 |
| Frequency of area use | 0 | Infrequent |
| | 1 | Monthly |
| | 2 | Weekly |
| | 3 | Daily |
| Average time area is in use | 0 | < 1 hour |
| | 1 | > 1 to < 3 hours |
| | 2 | > 3 to < 6 hours |
| | 3 | > 6 hours |
| Maintenance activity | 0 | Minor disturbance (eg possibility of contact when gaining access) |
| Type of maintenance activity | 1 | Low disturbance (eg changing light bulbs in asbestos insulating board ceiling) |
| | 2 | Medium disturbance (eg lifting one or two asbestos insulating board ceiling tiles to access a valve) |
| | 3 | High levels of disturbance (eg removing a number of asbestos insulating board ceiling tiles to replace a valve or for recabbling) |
| Frequency of maintenance activity | 0 | ACM unlikely to be disturbed for maintenance |
| | 1 | ≤ 1 per year |
| | 2 | >1 per year |
| | 3 | >1 per month |
| Total Score | | |



Appendix Two – Asbestos Management Plan Template



TITLE: W-HSF-03 Asbestos Management Plan

AUTHOR: Publica Corporate Health & Safety Team

DATE: November 2025

APPROVED BY:

REVIEW DATE: November 2026

1. Name of Premises

2. Employee responsibilities

Name, date and signature of premises manager.

Name of person that produced this plan.

Name of the person responsible for

- a) managing asbestos in the premises,
- b) for updating the asbestos register (if any), and
- c) for reviewing this plan.

3. Reviewing this management plan

Date this management plan was first produced.

Date of last review.



| | |
|---|--|
| 4. How the location and condition of asbestos-containing material is recorded | |
| State how information about asbestos in the premises is recorded. | |
| State where information about asbestos in the premises is kept. | |
| 5. Results of the risk assessments and action required (if any) | |
| Briefly state the results of your visual inspection and risk assessment and the approximate date it took place. Any work that you have identified that still remains to be done should be added to the Action Plan. | |
| 6. Monitoring arrangements for asbestos | |
| State the arrangements for monitoring the known or presumed asbestos-containing materials to ensure that they remain in good condition and that there is no increased risk of disturbance. | |
| 7. How information about asbestos is passed to those that need it | |
| State how staff have been informed. | |
| State here what system is in place to control maintenance or building work. What is the procedure for ensuring that contractors and others check the asbestos register | |



| before starting work? Does the procedure allow for staff absence due to illness? | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|----------------|
| State here if warning labels have been used to alert workers to the presence of known asbestos. | | | |
| 8. Training | | | |
| State here who has received training on asbestos management, and approximately when it took place. | | | |
| 9. Action Plan | | | |
| Location and brief description of asbestos containing material | Remedial action required (To be agreed with Property Services) | Target date for action | Date completed |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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| | | | |
| | | | |



Appendix Three – Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form and Guidance



TITLE: C-HSP-03-03 Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form & Guidance – Instruction for Nominated Staff

AUTHOR: Publica Corporate Health & Safety Team

DATE: September 2025

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires that we manage the risks arising from asbestos in our properties. This includes monitoring the condition of any material containing, or suspected of containing, asbestos.

A full description of the duties of the Person in Control regarding asbestos management is contained in W-HSP-03 Asbestos Management Policy.

If you have been nominated to carry out the Condition Monitoring, This involves a visual inspection, determining the condition of the materials, and recording your findings.

Instructions:

- I. "Condition Monitoring" involves a formal and recorded annual visual inspection of all asbestos containing materials (including materials presumed to contain asbestos) in your property.

An "Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form" for each property will be made available to you as part of this guidance.

Some Important 'don'ts'

- **Don't attempt to access electrical panels or switch gear or lift machinery** where asbestos has been identified or presumed. Simply record "no access" on the Form.
- **Don't attempt to open ducts, hatch covers, ceiling voids, lift-up floor coverings, climb into lofts or enter into confined spaces.** Condition monitoring is concerned with assessing the condition of asbestos-containing materials in those areas of the building that you (and anyone else using or working in the building) can easily see or touch.
- **Don't take risks.** Where there is an item or area of asbestos containing material identified on the Monitoring Form that you cannot see or access, simply record "no access"
- **Don't disturb the fabric of the building.** Occasionally, items will appear on your Monitoring Sheet which may have been recently removed but records not yet updated to reflect that removal (e.g., asbestos containing floor tiles may have been removed and replaced with vinyl). Where you suspect this to be the case, simply record "not found".



2. For larger properties with multiple 'blocks', the condition monitoring should be undertaken on a 'block-by-block' basis over a 12-month period. Your supervisor or line manager will advise.
3. Complete the details at the top of the Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form.
 - **'Monitored by'** Name of the person who carried out the condition monitoring
 - **'Date Monitored'** The date you did the condition monitoring.
 - **'Register Expiry'** On-site register expiry date
4. **Assess the condition** of each asbestos-containing material (ACM) as listed in your Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form.
 - If you think the condition of any materials listed has deteriorated (or improved, perhaps because of recent encapsulation or decoration work) record this in the 'comments' column of the form against that material entry.
 - Where you record a new condition, please provide some indication of the reason for your selection e.g., "flaking paint", "water penetration", "vandalism", "wear and tear", improved decoration, encapsulation. etc.
 - Where there has been **no change** from the previous record, **please enter "no change"**. It is likely that the majority of your entries will be 'no change'.
 - **Never leave the comments section blank** – make an entry for every material listed.
5. **Change of Use** - Provide details where you are aware there has been a significant change of use of the room. E.g., a dining hall now also used for games would be designated "dining hall/games hall". (Where a dining hall is now being used for ball games an asbestos-containing ceiling or wall panel would then be at increased risk of damage.)
6. **Discovering Damage** – Where you think a material has been subjected to significant damage that is likely to result in the release of asbestos fibres, you must act immediately, **please see Section 12 of W-HSP-03 for Emergency Procedures**.
7. **Returning completed Forms:** Please send your completed Monitoring Forms(s) by post as soon as possible to: assets@westoxon.gov.uk

Additional Guidance

Some additional notes and guidance about the information contained in the Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form.



Address – this should be clearly stated on the top of the form and match the address listed on the Asbestos Register, this should include a room name or number.

Hazard Location – A specific description of where the ACMs are located - floor, floor duct, wall, heater, pipe work, ceiling, ceiling void, electrical equipment, boiler plant etc, this should match the description on the Asbestos Register.

Hazard Description – Specific description of the hazard - Vinyl tile, floor tile adhesive, asbestos insulation board (AIB) tile, asbestos cement (AC), heater panel, bitumen sink pad, textured coating, roof covering, pipe insulation, boiler etc, this should match the Asbestos Register.

Hazard Status – is describes whether there is confirmed ACMs present or the presumption of ACMs.

1. **Presumed** - A 'default' situation where a material is presumed to contain asbestos because there is insufficient evidence (e.g. no analysis) to confirm that it is asbestos free.
2. **Strongly Presumed** - in this case experience suggests it is an ACM, or that it might contain asbestos as sampled elsewhere in the property.
3. **Hazard confirmed** - Asbestos-containing material is present and has been confirmed via testing.

Condition – describe the condition of the ACMs,

1. **High Risk - High damage** – high damage or degradation of materials, sprays, and thermal insulation. Visible asbestos debris.
2. **Medium Risk - Medium Damage** – significant breakage of materials or several small areas where material has been damaged revealing loose asbestos fibres.
3. **Low Risk - Low Damage** – a few scratches or surface marks; broken edges on boards, tiles etc.
4. **Very Low Risk - Good Condition** - No Visible Damage



Asbestos Condition Monitoring Form

Monitored By Date Monitored.....

Address On Site Register Expiry.....

| Room | Hazard Location | Hazard Description | Hazard Status | Condition | Comments |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 127 First floor office | Ceiling | Textured Coating | Presumed | Very low risk – Good Condition | No change |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |




Project Brief

Ensure compliance with legislative obligations under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

| Criteria | Score | Justification |
|---------------------------|-------|---|
| Energy Use | 0 | Best practice suggests that leaving ACMs in situ with clear management and monitoring plan in place, this in turn removes the need for remedial works to take place and the subsequent energy use associated with this. |
| GHGs | 0 | There is a potential for future removal of Asbestos to produce some GHGs as disposal involves a specialist hazardous waste landfill, best practice to keep ACMs in situ and monitor the condition. |
| Air quality | 0 | Should disposal be indicated, ACMs will be removed by specialist HSE approved contractors, minimising the risk of asbestos fibres presenting a hazard to either Partnership staff or the general public. |
| Land use change | 0 | 0 |
| Soil and waterway health | 0 | Best practice suggests that leaving ACMs in situ with clear management and monitoring plan in place, this in turn removes the need for remedial works to take place and the subsequent potential impact on soil and waterway health that could be associated with this. |
| Waste | 0 | Best practice is to leave ACMs in situ and monitor the condition of the materials, however should degradation of the materials indicate removal is necessary, this could cause a short term increase in waste produced. The nature of ACMs necessitates disposal in specialist landfill site. |
| Sustainable Transport | 0 | 0 |
| Biodiversity | 0 | 0 |
| Climate Change Adaptation | 0 | 0 |
| Sustainable Materials | 0 | Although, the health and safety team would advocate replacing ACMs where possible with sustainable materials, decisions such as this are outside our scope. |
| Food | 0 | 0 |
| Health | 4 | Evidence suggests that employees are happier, have better morale and are more productive if they feel safe in their work environment. A sets out how ACMs should be managed will help to give employees a safe work environment. |
| Housing | 0 | No impact |
| Education | 2 | Advocates for a level of training required for nominated employees across the partnership, does have an affect outside of this. The Policy will result in improved knowledge and awarness of asbestos hazards and risks. |
| Built Community | 4 | By properly managing ACMs, council controlled buildings are safer spaces for communities to be and protects these assets for future generations and will support both community and tennant use of our facilities |
| Cultural Community | 0 | No effect on Cultural Community |
| Accessibility | 0 | Not applicable |
| Local Economy and Jobs | 0 | Not applicable |
| Safety | 0 | Improved the safety of those working in and around Council controlled properties, reduced risk of asbestos damage and accidental release of ACMs. |
| Democratic Voice | 0 | 0 |
| Equity | 0 | No impacts on groups with protected characteristics. |

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|---|--|
|  <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> | <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p> |
| <p>Name and date of Committee</p> | <p>EXECUTIVE - 17 DECEMBER 2025</p> |
| <p>Subject</p> | <p>PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) TO PROHIBIT PONY AND TRAP RACING AND TIME TRIALS ON A SECTION OF THE A40 BETWEEN BURFORD AND WITNEY</p> |
| <p>Wards affected</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witney West, • Burford • Brize and Shilton Ward • Hailey, Minster Lovell and Leafield Ward • Ducklington Ward |
| <p>Accountable member</p> | <p>Cllr Lidia Arciszewska, Executive Member for Environment Email: Lidia.Arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Accountable officer</p> | <p>Jon Dearing, Executive Director, Operations Email: jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Report author</p> | <p>Philip Measures, Service Leader, Environmental Protection Email: philip.measures@westoxon.gov.uk</p> |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p> | <p>To approve the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order.</p> |
| <p>Annexes</p> | <p>Annex A – Proposed PSPO Annex B - PSPO consultation Annex C – Equality Impact Assessment Annex D – Sustainability Impact Assessment</p> |
| <p>Recommendation(s)</p> | <p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Approve the Public Spaces Protection Order, Annex A, which prohibits the use of pony and trap carriage(s) for racing and time trials, as delineated on the plan of the Order in Annex A. |
| <p>Corporate priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All |

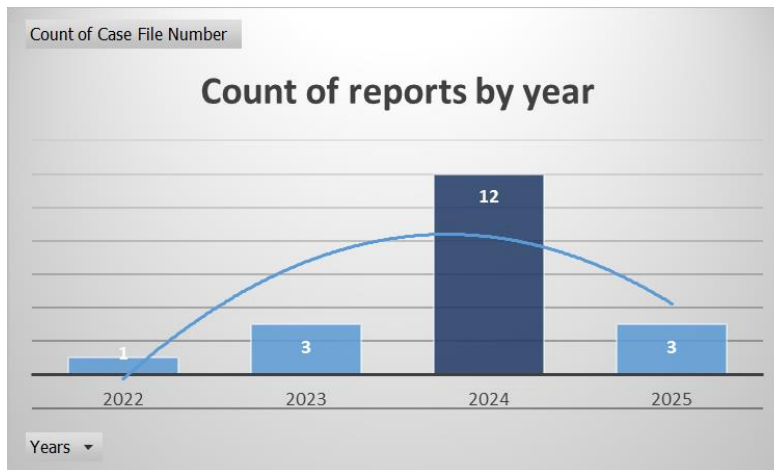
| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| Key Decision | NO |
| Exempt | NO |
| Consultees/ Consultation | <p>Public consultation : 10 October 2025 until 21 November 2025 https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/communities-and-leisure/community-safety/anti-social-behaviour/public-space-protection-orders/ Public consultation event at Windrush Church of England Primary School, Witney, on 29th October 2025, between 6 and 9pm. OCC Gypsy & Traveller liaison officer Oxfordshire County Council Highways Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Witney Town Council Burford Town Council</p> |

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I.1** The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides the legal framework for the creation of Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's). These control activities within defined areas that –
- Have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or it is likely that the activities will take place, and they will have a detrimental effect.
 - The effect of these activities
 - Is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature
 - Is, or is likely to be, unreasonable
 - Justifies the restrictions being imposed.
- I.2** PSPO's have a duration of 3 years. Prior to expiry they should be reviewed to determine whether they should be extended for an additional period (e.g. a further 3 years).
- I.3** Thames Valley Police, in response to a number of incidents on the A40, involving Pony and Trap racing on a section of the A40 extending from Downs Road Bridge, Witney to Asthall roundabout, near Burford, have requested that West Oxfordshire District Council arrange for the prohibition of this activity by imposing a PSPO. A draft order was made, and a public consultation exercise has been completed. There has been consistent support for the PSPO and the order is now ready for implementation pending approval. The Order is provided in Annex A and a summary of the consultation exercises is provided in Annex B.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Thames Valley Police have been involved in the policing of pony and trap racing along the A40 in Witney, West Oxfordshire. The organisers and individuals participating pull up in vehicles by the A40 / Downs Road; entrance to Peashell Farm and Centenary Way in Witney to unload their pony and traps before racing along the segment of dual carriageway between Witney and Burford. Alongside this behaviour, these individuals are suspected of engaging in the selling of horses and gambling on the races in the location. Despite the use of pony and trap being legal, the use of pony and trap carriages for racing and time trials poses a significant risk to other road users as well as risk of harm to the rider and the horses. The behaviour of gambling on the races, is however illegal.
- 2.2** Since 01/01/2020 there have been 19 reports to Thames Valley Police regarding Pony and Trap racing on the A40 in Witney. These reports relate to 18 separate incidents of racing, the selling of horses on the roadside before racing and gambling on the horses prior and between races. Most of these (83%) are classified as Road Related Incidents.
- 2.3** Since 01/01/2020 there has only been 2 intelligence reports regarding pony and trap racing on the A40, confirming there is a significant intelligence gap on the issue. There is another significant intelligence gap around the participants due to no names being attached in incidents; this makes it difficult to directly target the perpetrators without further intrusion on the general public. To better tackle the issue there needs to be a greater intelligence picture. This includes intelligence generated by police and partners as well as the public.



2.4 Chart 1. Incidents since 2022, up to month 2025. TVP 2025.

2.5 There were three main options considered to address this behaviour:

- Introducing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) banning the exercise of horse. This option has support from Oxfordshire County Council but is a slow process and cannot be introduced quickly enough to prevent expected future incidences. Fixed penalty amounts are less than with PSPO.
- Redesigning this stretch of the road to prevent this activity. This option carries a significant cost and if approved, could take years to come into fruition.
- Public spaces protection order preventing Pony and Trap racing on the A40. This option appears the most reasonable in terms of cost and timescale hence its' selection for consultation. The sole purpose of the PSPO being introduced is to tackle specific anti-social behaviour.

3. PSPO consultation

3.1 The Public Consultation took place between 10 October 2025 until 21 November 2025. The questions for focus were:

- Do you currently live, work, or run a business within West Oxfordshire?
- Before today, were you aware of pony and trap racing incidences taking place on the A40 dual carriageway specifically between Downs Road bridge in Witney and Asthall roundabout, Burford.
- Would you be in favour of a Public Space Protection Order to prevent the use of pony and trap carriages on this stretch of the A40?

3.2 The summary of the consultation is detailed in Annex B.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 The options considered are set out in section 2.5.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1** The results of the consultation are provided in Annex B and the percentage of respondents in favour of the PSPO was 97%. The consultation summary is provided in Annex B and a full copy is available upon request.
- 5.2** The PSPO is drafted with amendments from consultees, but no amendments have been made in response to comments from the 3% against the Order.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The creation of the PSPO and the administration of any fines and cases for prosecution are the responsibility of the Council and costs would be met from existing resources. The PSPO is specific to the location delineated and it does not have implications for additional work in other wards. There is a cost for signage which has to be placed on Highways Authority land controlled by Oxfordshire County Council that must comply with traffic signage legislation. Oxfordshire County Council will bear the cost of this signage.
- 6.2** Enforcement of the PSPOs will be the responsibility of Thames Valley Police because they have the necessary powers and processes in place to deal with illegal activity on highways. This cost for this enforcement activity would therefore fall to TVP. The Council would bear a resource cost in dealing with the administration and issuing of any fines based on the evidence provided by TVP.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced several new tools and powers for use by councils and their partners to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local areas. These tools put victims at the centre of approaches to tackling ASB, focussing on the impact behaviour can have on both communities and individuals, particularly on the most vulnerable. PSPOs are one of the tools available under the 2014 Act. These are wide-ranging and flexible powers for local authorities, which recognise that councils are often best placed to identify the broad and cumulative impact that ASB can have. The Act gives councils the authority to draft and implement PSPOs in response to the particular issues affecting their communities, provided certain criteria and legal tests are met. Councils can use PSPOs to prohibit specific activities, and/or require certain things to be done by people engaged in particular activities, within a defined public area. PSPOs differ from other tools introduced under the Act as they are council-led, and rather than targeting specific individuals or properties, they focus on the identified problem behaviour in a specific location. The legislation provides for restrictions to be placed on behaviour that apply to everyone in that locality (with the possible use of exemptions). Breach of a PSPO without a reasonable excuse is an offence.
- 7.2** The Council would be responsible for issuing any fines and any recovery action for non-payment together with the review of cases submitted by TVP for prosecution.

7.3 An interested party can place an appeal against the PSPO to the High Court within six weeks of the approved Order. The definition of an “interested person” is someone who lives in, continually works in, or regularly visits the restricted area.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 Taking no action carries a significant likelihood of a future incident involving both people and animals. To ignore the risk, despite being fully aware of it, could also expose the council to considerable reputational harm.

8.2 Although the alternative options offer potential longer-term solutions, they require medium to long term for implementation. In the meantime, taking no action would leave the council exposed to the risks outlined in section 8.1

8.3 The recommendation of the PSPO is proportionate in the circumstances.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 Please see Annex C

10. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed and no implications are identified. They are summarised in Annex D.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014
PART 4, SECTION 59
A40 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (2025)**

This Order is made by West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Section 59 ('the Act').

1. This Order applies to the specified area of the A40 delineated by a pink line on the Schedule of Land on the plan attached to the Order. Within this Order the area shall be referred to as ("The Restricted Area"), being a public place in the Council's area to which the Act applies:

2. The Council is satisfied that the condition as set out in Section 59(3) of the Act has been met in that:

- (a) the activities carried out within the "Restricted Area" described below have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, and that it is likely that these activities will continue and that the activities are unreasonable and that the prohibitions imposed by this Order are justified.
- (b) the prohibitions set down by this Order are reasonable to impose to prevent the detrimental effect of these activities from continuing, occurring or recurring, or to reduce the detrimental effects or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or recurrence

3. The following activity shall be prohibited within the "Restricted Area" from the date of this Order.

- (i) Use of pony and trap carriage(s) for racing and time trials

4. Any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the requirements of this Order commits an offence and shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(a) This Order applies to all times of the day and night

(b) This Order comes into force on **1st January 2026** and will remain in force for a period of 3 years from that date.

5. Timeframes

(a) This Order applies to all times of the day and night

(b) This Order comes into force on **1st January 2026** and will remain in force for a period of 3 years from that date.

6. Obstruction of Authorised Person

- (a) Any person who attempts to obstruct an Authorised Person in carrying out their duties under this Public Space Protection Order shall commit an offence.
- (b) Obstruction includes, but is not limited to, giving false information, physically obstructing an Authorised Person, and refusing to comply with any reasonable instruction given to ensure compliance with this PSPO.

7. Definitions

The following words/phrases within the Order can be defined as follows:

- (a) "The Council" refers to West Oxfordshire District Council
- (b) "Anti-social behaviour" means conduct that has caused or is likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
- (c) "Pony and trap" refers to a two or four wheeled horse or pony drawn carriage
- (d) "Authorised Person" means police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs), authorised contractors of the Council, or other persons authorised in writing by the Council.
- (e) "Restricted Area" refers to the area of the A40 delineated in pink within the Schedule of Land.

8. Criminal Offence

Section 67 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 states that it is a criminal offence for a person without reasonable excuse –

- (a) To do anything that the person is prohibited from doing by a public space protection order or
- (b) To fail to comply with a requirement to which the person is subject under a public space protection order

9. Penalty

A person found guilty of an offence under this Order shall be liable to a £100.00 Fixed Penalty Notice, or upon summary, conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 (£1,000) on the standard scale.

10. Challenging the Validity of the Order

An interested person may apply to the High Court to question the validity of –

- a) This Order, or
- b) A future variation of this Order

An interested person is someone who lives in, regularly works in, or visits the restricted area. An application must be made to the High Court within 6 weeks beginning with the date on which the Order is made.

Interested persons can challenge the validity of the PSPO on two grounds. Those grounds are that the:

- (a) Council did not have the power to make the Order, or to include prohibitions or requirements (or by the order as varied);
- (b) a requirement under Chapter 2 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 was not complied with in relation to the order or variation.

Date:

Signed:

Position:

**THE COMMON SEAL of
WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL)**

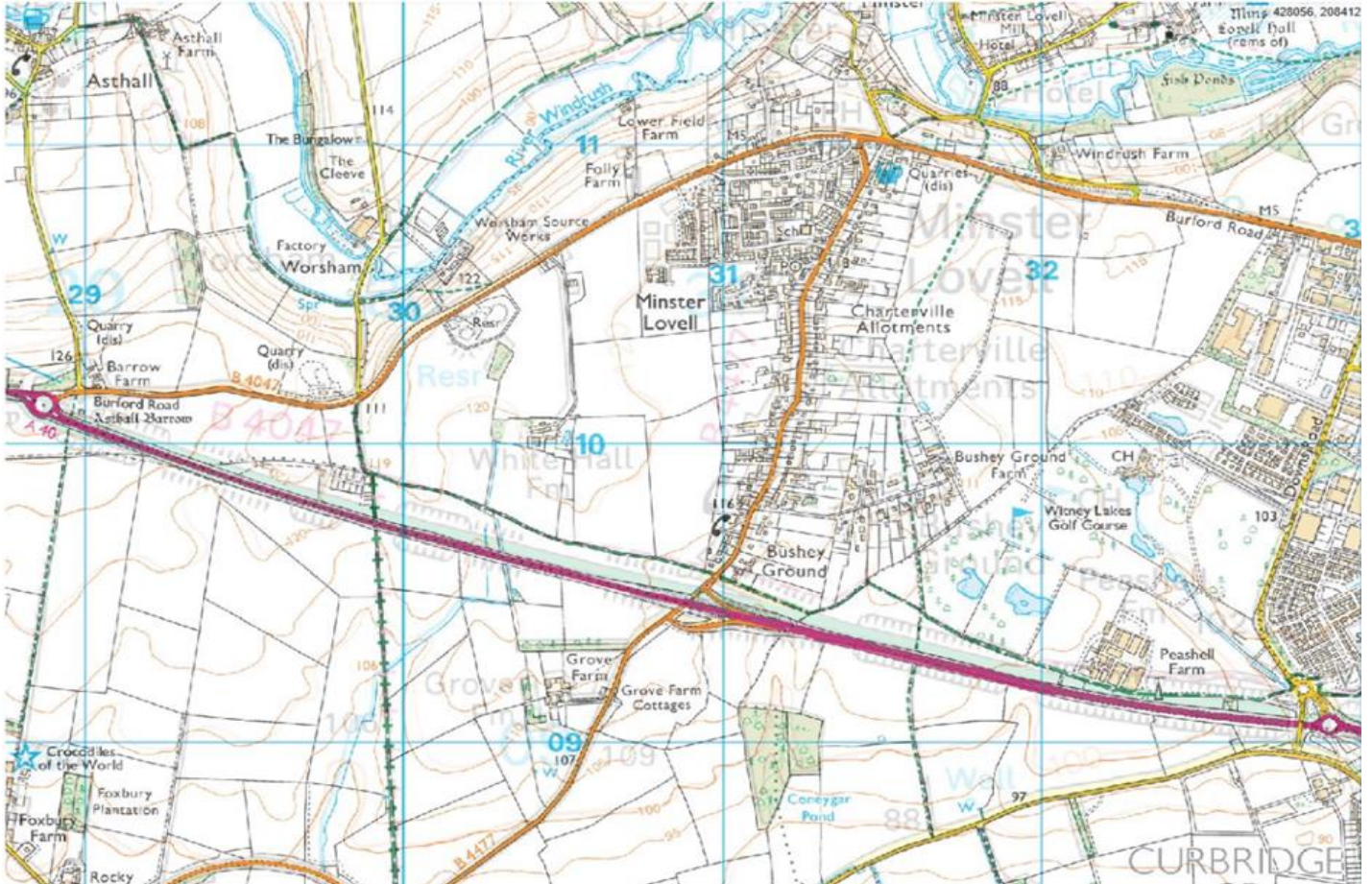
was affixed to this document)
which is executed as a deed by order)
of the Council in the presence of:)

.....
Nominated Officer

For and on behalf of

Schedule of Land

Restricted Area – area of A40 delineated in pink below



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Annex B PSPO consultation results

Response Overview

Consultation timeframe – October 10th to November 21st, 2025

Total Respondents to survey = 194

88% of respondents said that they either live, work or run a business within West Oxfordshire

84% of respondents said that they were aware before the survey taking place of racing incidences taking place on the A40 specifically between Downs Road Bridge and Asthall roundabout in Witney.

97% of all respondents were in favour of a PSPO to prevent use of pony and trap carriages on this specific stretch of the A40.

Five people said they would not be in favour of the order, and these were their comments:

1. I haven't seen any evidence in the public domain that makes me believe that these events are persistent, a requirement of the legislation. I am only aware of recent events which have appeared in social media. Do the police do not have legislation that already covers this type of event under road traffic law?
2. Traditions will be lost, but I worry about the care of the horses
3. I support the right of other cultures to express themselves even when I don't agree eg Pride, Halal slaughter, veganism.
4. Depends on if they're responsibly using the road and the ponies are healthy, and tack and carriages are in good order. Bicycles and horse carriage drivers still have road use rights.
5. I think we should embrace traditions within our communities and help them to carry this out safely, namely a road closure for a specific time.

If the respondent to the survey said that they were not in favour of the order – they were asked a further question about whether they feel an exemption should apply to the order when it came to use of a pony and trap for a wedding or funeral. These same people said yes to this option.

A full copy of the survey results can be made available for review.

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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 to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

| | |
|---|---|
| Names: Philip Measures | |
| Date of assessment: 12 th November 2025 | Telephone: Email: philip.measures@publicagroup.uk |

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

| |
|---|
| Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit Pony and Trap Racing on a section of the A40 between Burford and Witney |
|---|

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

| |
|---|
| To prohibit Pony and Trap Racing on a section of the A40 between Burford and Witney |
|---|

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

| |
|---|
| Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 |
|---|

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

| Source | ✓ | If ticked please explain what |
|--------|---|-------------------------------|
|--------|---|-------------------------------|

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Recent research findings including studies of deprivation | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Results of recent consultations and surveys | ✓ | Public Consultation Exercise |
| Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Oxfordshire | ✓ | Thames Valley Police evidence of incidents and the impact of those incidents on the local community |
| Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Analysis of audit reports and reviews | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

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

n/a

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

Public consultation : 10 October 2025 until 21 November 2025 <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/communities-and-leisure/community-safety/anti-social-behaviour/public-space-protection-orders/>

Public consultation event at Windrush Church of England Primary School, Witney, on 29th October 2025, between 6 and 9pm.

OCC Gypsy & Traveller liaison officer

Oxfordshire County Council Highways

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Witney Town Council

Burford Town Council

If NO please outline any planned activities

n/a

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

| Level of impact | Response |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff | <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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Please see attached EIA. The impact will be positive for both the local community and motorists using the A40. | |

9. Please see accompanying EIA detailed analysis.

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 | | | | | |
| Age – Old People | | | | | |
| Disability | | | | | |
| Sex – Male | | | | | |
| Sex – Female | | | | | |
| Race including Gypsy and Travellers | | | | | |
| Religion or Belief | | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | | | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Pregnancy and maternity | | | | | |
| Geographical impacts on one area | | | | | |
| Other Groups | | | | | |
| Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband. | | | | | |

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

| Action(s) | Lead Officer | Resource | Timescale |
|-----------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| n/a | | | |

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

No

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: | Phil Measures | 12/1 1/25 | 08/10/25 |
| Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer: | Cheryl Sloan | Date: | 13/11/2025 |

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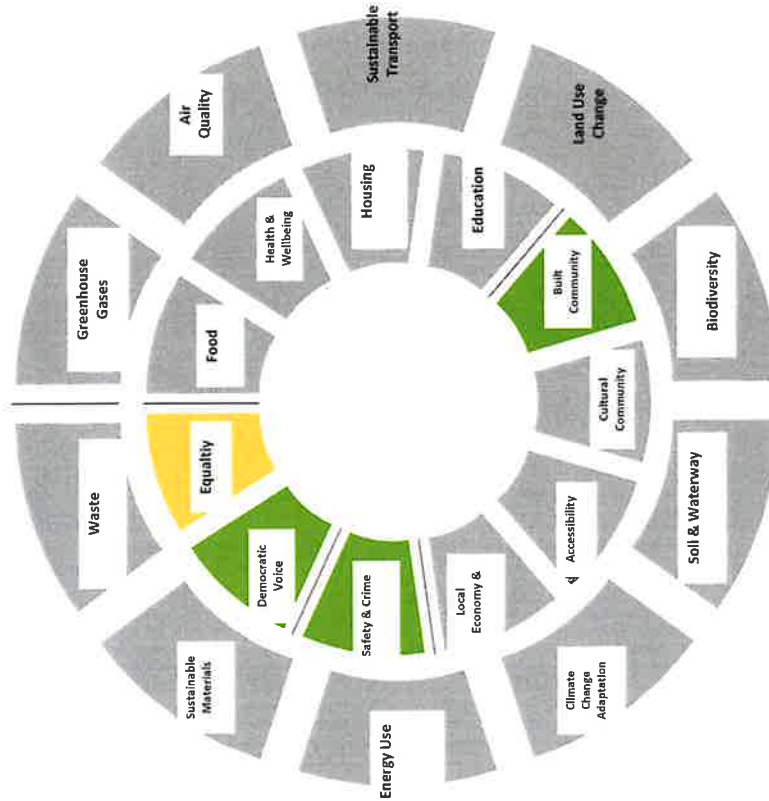
Annex D

| Project Brief | |
|--|--|
| Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit Pony and Trap Racing on a section of the A40 between Burford and Witney. | |

| Criteria | Score | Justification |
|---------------------------|-------|--|
| Energy Use | 0 | The PSPO uses neither in terms of relevance. |
| GHGs | 0 | The purpose of the PSPO is to prevent anti-social behaviour and danger to motorists and the public. There is no impact on climate change. |
| Air quality | 0 | The activity has no relevance to this. |
| Land use change | 0 | The PSPO does not create a change of use. |
| Soil and waterway health | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to soil and waterway health. |
| Waste | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to waste. |
| Sustainable Transport | 0 | This PSPO imposition has no relevance to sustainable transport. |
| Biodiversity | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to bio-diversity. |
| Climate Change Adaptation | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to climate change adaptation. |
| Sustainable Materials | 0 | The PSPO is not relevant to the use of sustainable materials. |
| Food | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to Food. |
| Health | 0 | The PSPO has no impact on living a healthy life, except with regard to road safety and the safety of motorists, the public and animals. |
| Housing | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to the provision of housing. |
| Education | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to education. |
| Built Community | 8 | The PSPO will improve road safety and the protect the local community from issues that arise such as parking and temporary disturbance to the neighbourhood when the PSPO is not relevant to the culture of the community, except with regard to the support the activity has for those organising it. |
| Cultural Community | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to accessibility issues |
| Accessibility | 0 | The PSPO has no relevance to accessibility issues |
| Local Economy and Jobs | 0 | This PSPO has no relevance to the local economy. |
| Safety | 8 | The purpose of the PSPO is to prohibit an activity which Thames Valley Policy advise is a risk to motorists, horses and the public. When an event occurs there is |
| Democratic Voice | 8 | To propose a PSPO require a public consultation with interested parties, and this consultation is detailed in the report. |
| Equity | -1 | Negative impact on groups with protected characteristics. |

NB: You can filter the justifications by colour using the filter option on the 'score' column.

For example, you can choose to only print red scores so that you can review them.



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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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