



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and Date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 DECEMBER 2024
Subject	SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024-25 QUARTER TWO
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Alison Borrett – Senior Performance Analyst. Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2024-25 Quarter Two (Q2).
Annex	Annex A - Council Priorities report Annex B - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex C - Performance indicator report
Recommendation.	That the Committee Resolves to: I. Note the 2024/25 Q2 service performance report.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting Residents First• Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All• Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency• Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Public Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** The new Council Plan was adopted in January 2023 and the Action Plan, setting out how the priorities within the Council Plan will be delivered, then followed. Additionally, following on from the external audit report in August 2023 which included a recommendation to review performance management to match the Council Plan and measure performance, a new performance framework has been developed to include a Corporate Action Plan Tracker and a Priority Report alongside the service output metrics.
- I.2** A high-level Commissioning Framework was approved by the Executive in October 2020, which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica provides the necessary information, including a range of performance indicators, to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard.
- I.3** The Council's Chief Executive is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.

2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT

- 2.1** Progress on actions in the Corporate Plan for Q2 include:
- Public consultation on the draft CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) charging schedule took place during August and September for 8 weeks. Officers are currently summarising and analysing the responses received during this consultation period, with the aim of submitting the findings for examination in late October or early November.
 - A review of the enforcement process is currently underway, stemming from the efforts outlined in the Development Management Improvement Plan. As part of this review, we have introduced 10 key feedback points aimed at ensuring all stakeholders—including Councilors, complainants, contraveners, and town and parish councils—are kept well-informed about the progress of investigations.
 - Stage 3 of the Leisure Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) has been received and reviewed from the consultancy, Max Associates, with the final report due to go to Executive in November.
 - The Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 has concluded successfully, with the Council securing four additional housing units, bringing the total number of units to 27. This initiative supports local authorities in England in their efforts to obtain housing for individuals who are unable to find settled accommodation through resettlement schemes.
 - The review of Charter Markets in Witney and Chipping Norton has just been completed, with officers currently analysing the responses received. This review aimed to assess the current state of the markets, gather valuable feedback from both vendors and customers, and identify opportunities for improvement and growth.
 - Round 3 of Westhive is underway with nine projects actively fundraising. A creator workshop was undertaken in July with a further creative workshop, aimed at equipping residents with the tools and knowledge to develop their project ideas, to be held in October.
- 2.2** The Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex A with an overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan is attached at Annex B.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

3.1 Overall, the Council's performance for the quarter has been largely positive, with notable progress in Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days and the percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed. Planning Determination Times, Gym Memberships, and Land Charges Response Times remain high. Additionally, Customer Satisfaction continues to be strong, with the Council topping the Gov Metric league table in July and August. However, the Number of Affordable Homes delivered and Income Achieved in Planning are showing negative trends.

3.2 Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (59.05% against a target of 58%)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates Collected (60.92% against a target of 58%)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims (18.41 days against a target of 20 days)
- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3.08 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.34% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (97.52% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days (92.76% against a target of 90%)
- Building Control Satisfaction (100% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (80% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (93.83% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (96.81% against a target of 80%)
- Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative) (28.38% against a target of 30%)
- Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (90.24% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 90%)
- Missed bins per 100,000 (77.42 against a target of 120)
- (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (5,204 memberships against a target of 4,875 memberships)

3.3 Service Performance below target:

Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (5.06 days against a target of 4 days)

The Council has shown steady improvement in processing times for Housing Benefit (HB) changes, with an overall reduction of around 2 days compared to the same period last year. While current processing times are still above the target, this decrease reflects a positive trend and the Council's commitment to enhancing service efficiency.

In September, system errors in the automation process created a backlog, leading to longer processing times. This temporary setback has been addressed by the Council, which is actively collaborating with its partners to resolve the technical issues and prevent further delays.

Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (96 against a target of 138)

During Q2, a total of forty-eight properties were delivered across West Oxfordshire, bringing the year-to-date total to 96. This includes 35 Social Rent and 8 Affordable Rent homes, with 30 Social Rent homes delivered as part of the St Mary's redevelopment in Witney. The redevelopment incorporates sustainable features like solar panels, air source heat pumps, and electric vehicle charging points, alongside a 30-year biodiversity management plan to promote long-term environmental sustainability.

It's worth noting that completion rates vary throughout the year due to the nature of housing developments, which often span multiple months or even years. Some projects may be phased over several years, contributing to fluctuations in completion numbers. Delays in handovers, attributed to works required from statutory service providers, have impacted expected completions, pushing back these properties.

According to the 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), West Oxfordshire needs 660 homes annually through to 2031, including 274 affordable units. Since 2013–14, the Council has delivered 2,491 homes, falling short of the SHMA target of 3,083 by 592 units. Nevertheless, since adopting the Local Plan in September 2018, the delivery of affordable housing has accelerated, with yearly completions often surpassing targets. This progress is gradually closing the shortfall observed in previous years, and forecasts suggest the Council is on track to meet its year-end targets, provided no additional delays occur.

Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (75% against a target of 90%)

The Council received four notifications during Q2, three of which were reviewed within one working day.

The missed notification was due to timing and resource availability, the initial allocation did not necessitate immediate action, as the referral was linked to ongoing cases from Housing. This allowed officers to prioritise other pressing tasks, resulting in a delay in the timely follow-up, despite the notification being promptly acknowledged and allocated.

Number of visits to the leisure centres (189,466 visits against a target of 196,000)

Visits to leisure facilities experienced a slight decline compared to the previous quarter, although there was an increase of 10,000 visits compared to the same period last year. Despite this growth, the Council fell just short of its quarterly target, largely due to disruptions caused by three significant roofing and refurbishment projects carried out during the summer months. These included roofing works at Windrush Leisure Centre, refurbishment of the Artificial Pitch in Witney (which led to a six-week closure), and refurbishment at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre. Despite these challenges, the Council was only approximately 3% below its target for the quarter.

In contrast, Woodstock Open Air Pool had a successful season, benefiting from new initiatives such as the introduction of cold-water swimming at the start of the season and extended operating hours throughout the summer. Furthermore, the partnership with Yellow Submarine Charity proved to be a success, with the charity providing a full café service and offering approximately 120 hours of one-on-one training for individuals with learning disabilities and autism.

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. Where

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

4. EXECUTIVE

- 4.1 This report will be reviewed by the Executive at its meeting on 11 December 2024. The draft minutes of that meeting will be circulated to all Members and any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to the Executive meeting.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Contained in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 None

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Contained in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

(END)