



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Annual Monitoring Report

## 2020 - 2021

## Contents

<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Climate Action.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Background Context.....	5
What's happened in 2020/21? .....	9
<b>2. Healthy Towns and Villages .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Background Context.....	13
What's happened in 2020/21? .....	14
<b>3. A Vibrant District Economy .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Background Context.....	16
What's happened in 2020/21? .....	19
<b>4. Strong Local Communities.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Background Context.....	24
What's happened in 2020/21? .....	25
<b>5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Background Context.....	27
What's happened in 2020/21? .....	29
<b>6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Background Context.....	31
What's happened in 2020/21? .....	32
<b>Carbon Account Breakdown: By Scope .....</b>	<b>33</b>

## Introduction

This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The AMR has been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and provides information on the following:

- Progress of the Local Plan and any other related documents against agreed timetables;
- Implementation of Local Plan policies;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where this has been introduced; and
- How the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the Duty to Co-Operate.

The structure of the AMR is based on the six main themes of the [West Oxfordshire Council Plan](#) (2020 – 2024) which are as follows:

- 1. Climate Action** - Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.
- 2. Healthy Towns and Villages** - Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.
- 3. A Vibrant District Economy** - Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.
- 4. Strong Local Communities** - Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.
- 5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population** – Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.
- 6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance** – Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

There is a considerable overlap between the Council Plan themes outlined above and the Core Objectives of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Relevant Core Objectives from the Local Plan are therefore highlighted throughout the AMR as appropriate.

The AMR sets out for each theme an outline of the current district context in terms of background/contextual information, before considering what has happened during the monitoring period 2020/21.

The AMR is complemented by the [Annual Statement on the West Oxfordshire Council Plan](#) which provides a narrative on progress against the actions specified under each of the

Council Plan priorities. The set of actions specified in the Council Plan, together with the Local Plan as the spatial expression of these, highlights the extent of the ambition that West Oxfordshire District Council has for the area, its environment and its resident and business communities.

## I. Climate Action

*Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity*

### Background Context

- In recognition of the urgency needed to face the challenge of climate change, West Oxfordshire District Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency, committing to taking local action and leading the district to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- West Oxfordshire is a largely rural district with 34% of its land covered by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The ONS 2020 mid-year estimate of the district's population is 111,758<sup>1</sup> an increase of 1,958 people from the previous year. On the whole, the population is relatively sparse at approximately 155 persons per square kilometre.
- Climate action is needed to be taken by all who live, work and visit West Oxfordshire and therefore, although this monitoring report section focuses in the main on the District Council's actions and achievements, it also includes some facts and figures on the important work led by others working towards the same goal, at the district / county or more local geographies.
- Previous annual reports have shown a positive, yet gradual, decline in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across the district. Between 2005 and 2019 total carbon emissions have fallen from 785.6 to 536.4 (kt CO<sub>2</sub>), as broken down by source of emission in figure 1. Industry and commercial emissions saw the biggest decrease in 2019, falling 16% from the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> [ONS mid-2020 population estimates release](#)

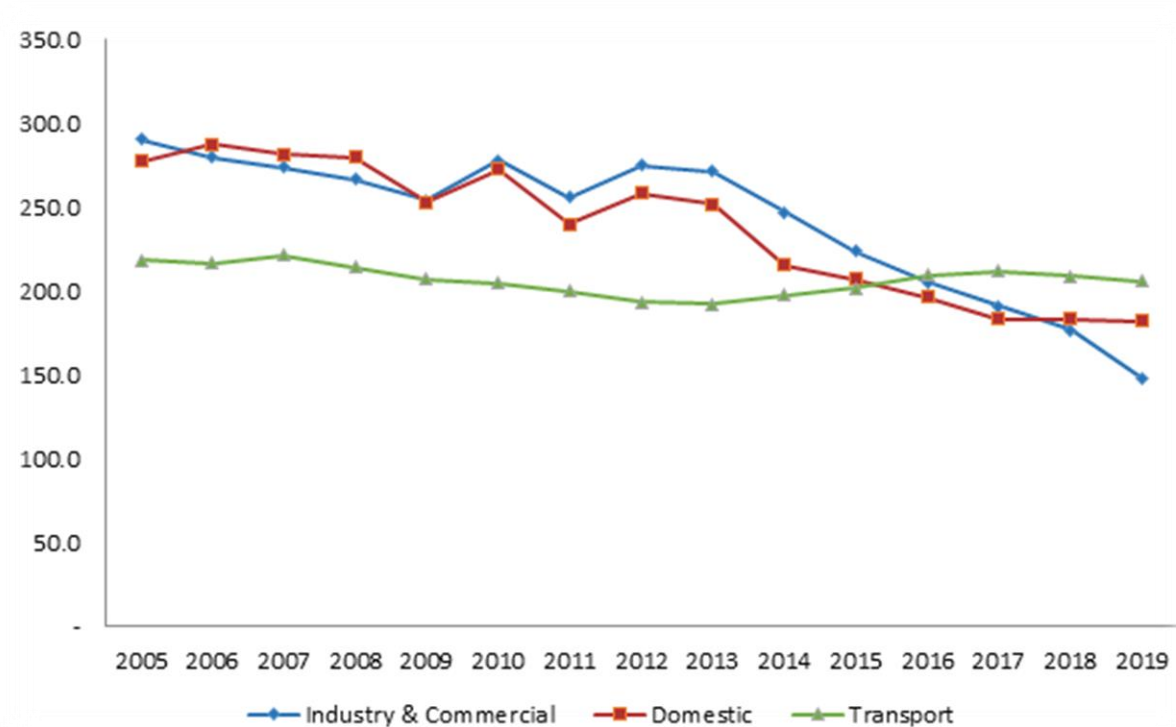


Figure 1: West Oxfordshire's Total kt CO2 Emissions within LA Scope of Influence, By Sector (BEIS)

- Renewable energy generation is becoming increasingly commonplace in the effort to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. As of 2019, there were 2,894 renewable energy sites in the District, 99% of which were Photovoltaics.
- As of October 2021, DfT [data](#) confirms that there were 20 public electric vehicle charging devices available in West Oxfordshire, the District being within the 20<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> percentile of UK local authority areas in terms of total provision.
- West Oxfordshire is covered by 6,584.4 hectares of woodland, which is 9.22% of the total land mass of the District. Woodland cover is defined as being areas of trees that are of at least 0.5ha, wider than 20 metres with a minimum of 20% canopy cover or the ability to achieve it, as presented by [Office of National Statistics Woodland Mapping](#).
- **West Oxfordshire's ecological network** is made up of sites designated for their international, national and local importance, including:

- One international site: a small area of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Two National Nature Reserves (Wychwood NNR and Chimney Meadows NNR)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The state of NNRs are measured by Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)

- 28 SSSIs wholly or partly in West Oxfordshire, representing approximately 0.02% of the land area. 28.2% of the total SSSI area within the district is in favourable condition. The method used to assess SSSI's has changed in the monitoring year. SSSI's are now split into 'units' of which there are 54 in the District.<sup>3</sup>
- 104 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), totalling 1,601 hectares. The area of these LWS has increased by 30 hectares since the last monitoring year with the new designation of Rushey Common and Tar Lakes as a new Local Wildlife Site.
- 16 Geological Sites, the combined area of which is 333.32 hectares
- 14 Conservation Target Areas (CTAs)
- Part the Cotswolds Valleys Nature Improvement Area (NIA) extends into West Oxfordshire, largely covering the valley areas of the Evenlode and Windrush rivers.

- The map at Figure 3 shows the levels of light pollution in West Oxfordshire. The darker shades of red show the areas which shine the most/brightest light into the night sky and the darker blue shades show the areas which have the lowest levels of light shining into the night sky.

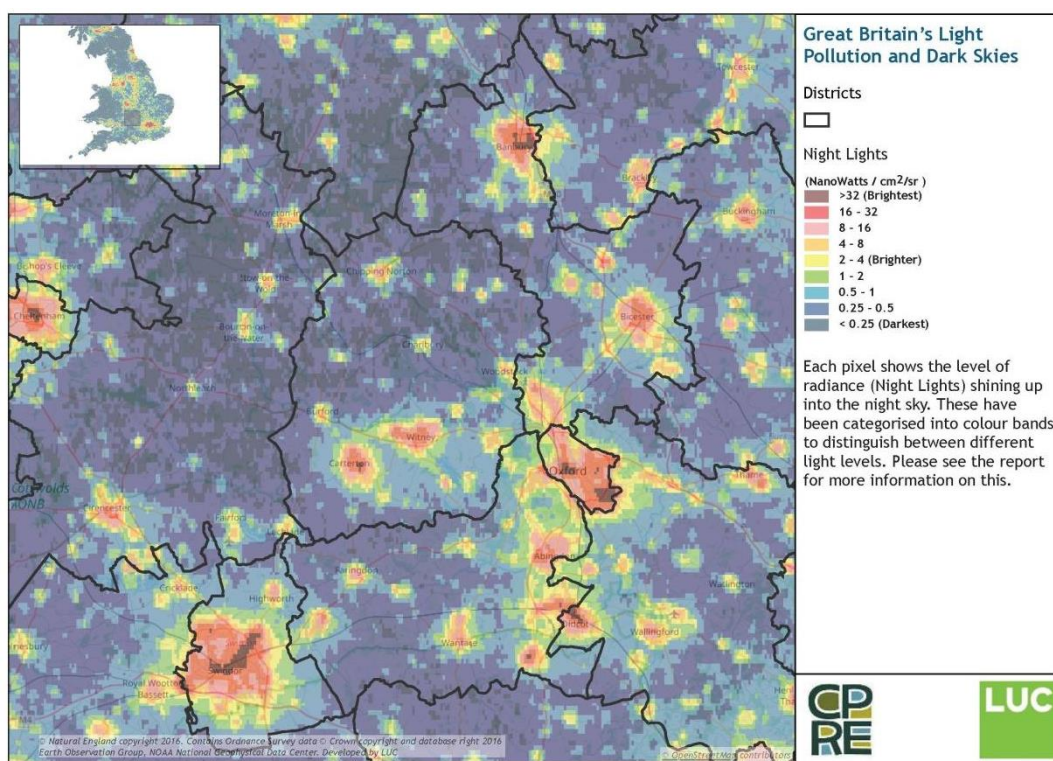


Figure 2: Light pollution and Dark Skies in West Oxfordshire

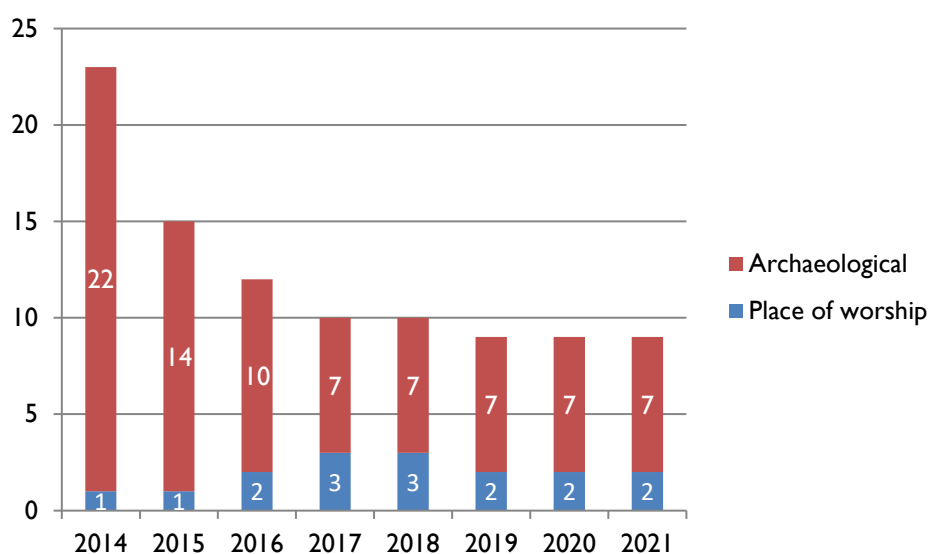
- The map shows that while high light pollution levels are recorded in Witney and Carterton and in particular the skies above RAF Brize Norton are among the

<sup>3</sup> Thames Valley Environment Records Centre (TVERC) Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2019-2020

brightest in the country, a large proportion of the most rural areas in the District have some of the darkest skies and lowest levels of light pollution.

- There is one Dark Sky Discovery Site in the district, located at the Rollright Stones Ancient Monument near Chipping Norton.
- There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the district, at Bridge Street in Witney and at Horsefair in Chipping Norton, both AQMA having been declared in 2005 and both having high levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollutants derived from vehicular traffic.
- Several rivers flow through West Oxfordshire providing important corridors for biodiversity, opportunities for recreation and forming part of the setting of many towns and villages. However they also present a flood risk, particularly:
  - High risk flood zone of the River Windrush, intersected by several developed areas in Witney. Much of the land adjacent to the Windrush is, however, rural agricultural.
  - Significant areas of functional flood plain in the south of the Eynsham-Woodstock sub-area associated with the confluence of the River Windrush and the River Thames
  - Large areas of River Thames functional flood plain in the south of the Carterton Sub-area, however again this land is largely rural and agricultural in nature.
  - Functional Floodplain associated with the River Evenlode at Shipton-under-Wychwood and its tributaries flowing from Milton-under-Wychwood.
- Flood defences in West Oxfordshire offer a standard of protection ranging from 2 to 100 years. Defences designed to a 100 year standard are found along the Upper Thames and are maintained by the Environment Agency, such defences include flood walls, embankments and stone revetments. Many of the other fluvial defences across the District have a design standard less than 50 years. Flood defences are mapped in Appendix B, figures 2A-F of the [West Oxfordshire Level 1 SFRA Update Report](#), Nov 2016.
- Water quality is measured on a river catchment scale and West Oxfordshire falls within two catchment areas: the Evenlode and the Windrush. The September 2020 Catchment Reports present data for both:
  - Evenlode Catchment: All 18 water bodies in this catchment failed their chemical status. In terms of ecological quality 6 were rated poor and 12 were rated moderate.
  - Windrush Catchment: All 19 water bodies in this catchment failed their chemical status. In terms of ecological quality 2 were good, 9 were moderate, 6 were poor and 2 were bad.
- There are currently 9 “At Risk” sites in West Oxfordshire included in Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register, including 2 places of worship and 7 archaeological sites. Although there was no change in the last year in the overall number of “At Risk” sites, the number of sites in the district has declined over the last eight years.





*Figure 3: No. of sites on the Heritage at Risk Register from 2014 to 2021*

- The Local Plan Core Objectives for protecting and enhancing our environment and reducing the impact from climate change are as follows:

<b>CO14</b>	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.
<b>CO15</b>	Contribute to reducing the causes and adverse impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.
<b>CO16</b>	Enable improvements in water and air quality.
<b>CO17</b>	Minimise the use of non-renewable natural resources and promote more widespread use of renewable energy solutions.

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- The District Council has calculated and audited its own carbon emissions for the 2020/21 period using the BEIS UK Government carbon emissions conversion factors (June 2021). The total reported CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent emissions) have decreased between 2019/20 to 2020/21 by 712 tonnes, which is a percentage decrease of 24%.
- The fall in CO<sub>2</sub>e between 2019/20 and 2020/21 can be attributed in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant shift in the number of staff working from home is considered to be the reason for electricity usage in Council offices falling by 22% and business travel falling by 68%. The reduced activity of the District Council's

leisure centres has also contributed to a significant reduction in gas and electricity consumption at these sites.

- A breakdown of the Carbon Account, by Scope and Location respectively, is provided at appendix I.
- No assessments of the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were undertaken by Natural England in the monitoring year 2020/2021.
- As reported by Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre (TVERC), in West Oxfordshire from 2020 to 2021, there was:
  - A small decrease in the number of priority species from 101 (2020) to 100 (2021)
  - A small increase in overall priority habitat from 4986ha (2020) to 4993ha (2021)<sup>4</sup>
  - 301 water vole surveys were undertaken in 2020 with 22 recording positive signs. This is a higher proportion of positive recordings than last year.
- Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network will need a doubling of land managed for wildlife by 2050. Nature continues to face an uncertain future, with many birds, butterflies, flowers and other wildlife disappearing from Oxfordshire's countryside at an alarming rate. The District Council has teamed up with experts from around the county to develop a [Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire](#). A first draft of a Nature Recovery Network Map has been produced to identify places where wildlife can be helped to return. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 provides an opportunity to use the Nature Recovery Network Map to help plan for nature's recovery at a county-wide level and to set the framework for future Local Plans, including the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2040.
- A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) mechanism was put into operation from April 2020, requiring major (and some minor) applications to demonstrate development proposals secure a positive contribution to biodiversity. In the first year of operation, 15 applications were submitted with BNG calculations. Of these applications 3 secured BNG onsite and 2 offsite. The other 10 are either pending or were refused.
- No Electric Vehicle Charging Points were installed on Council owned land in 2020/21.
- One standalone renewable energy scheme was permitted in 2020/21, an installation of a Net Zero Carbon project comprising Photo Voltaic solar array (PV Array), Battery Electrical Storage System (BESS), connecting cables, substation, heat pump, water source heat collector pipework, connecting pipes, removal of substation in Palace undercroft and associated works at Land Between Woodstock Sewage Works And B4027, Woodstock. It should be noted however that the majority of small scale energy schemes, especially solar PV schemes, benefit from permitted

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<sup>4</sup> changes most attributable to new information such as confirmation of boundaries or habitat types rather than the creation or loss of habitat

development rights and do not require planning permission. It is not possible to identify and record these installations.

- The latest report on air quality in the District (June 2021) indicates concentrations of airborne pollution is above the national objective levels at both of the District's statutory Air Quality Management Areas. This year annual average levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) are 37.9 ug/m<sup>3</sup> at Horsefair, Chipping Norton and 36.8 ug/m<sup>3</sup> at Bridge Street Witney, compared to last years recordings of just under 42 ug/m<sup>3</sup> this year at the Horsefair monitoring point, and 47 ug/m<sup>3</sup> experienced during 2018. Nitrogen dioxide levels in Bridge Street, Witney continue to exceed the national air quality objective. Although this represents a notable decrease in comparison to previous years (see Figure 4 for 2019 - 2020 comparative NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at Witney, Bridge Street) this is a consequence of reduced travel patterns arising from the pandemic Lockdowns. A comparison of the 2020 data with that of 2019 (our last full year before Covid-19) shows that recovery in NO<sub>2</sub> levels mirrors the relaxation of Covid restrictions and consequent increasing travel patterns. The 2020 data must not be taken as evidence of a significant and sustained emissions reduction in either Witney or Chipping Norton Air Quality Management Areas.
- Areas within West Oxfordshire which don't meet National Air Quality Standards have been declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Current Air Quality Action plans for Bridge Street, Witney and Horsefair and High Street, Chipping Norton are currently being updated and will identify the Nitrogen Dioxide source how to reduce concentrations of air pollutants to below National Air Quality Standards.

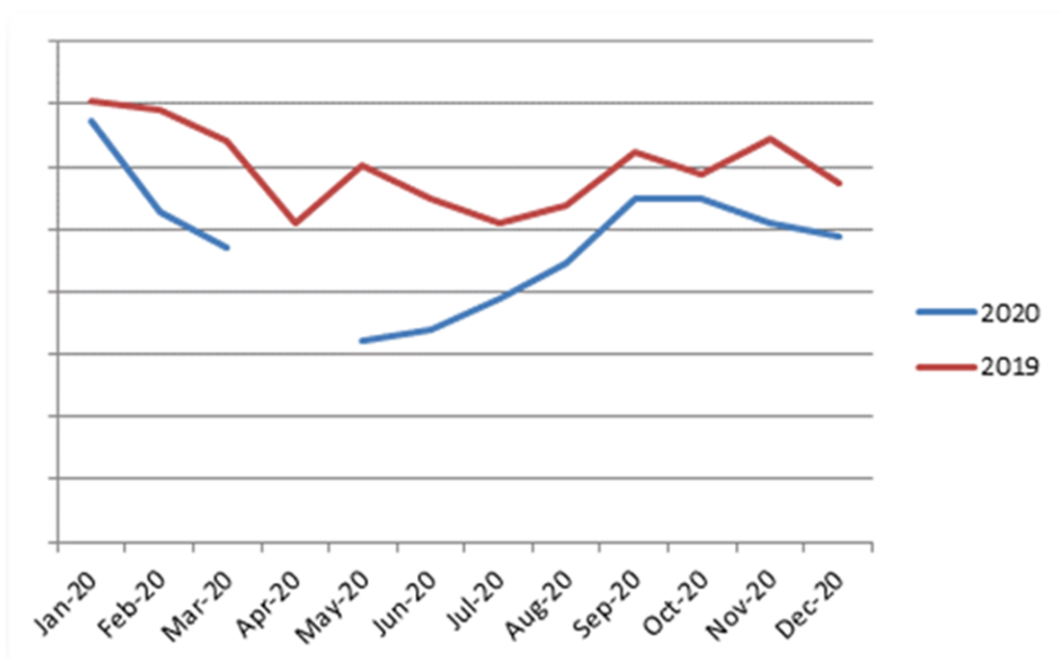


Figure 4: Bridge St, Witney Relative NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations 2019 and 2020

- No Conservation Area Appraisals were carried out in 2020/21 but there remains one appraisal in progress, Woodstock, work on which has paused.

- There were no heritage assets added to / removed from the “at risk” register in 2020/21.

## 2. Healthy Towns and Villages

### *Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone*

#### Background Context

- When assessed against the indicators for health and wellbeing from the Oxfordshire-wide Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2020)<sup>5</sup>, West Oxfordshire on the whole, performs better than, or similar to the national average on most indicators.
- The Coronavirus pandemic started immediately prior to this AMR period in late March 2020. Oxfordshire County Council's Covid-19 Dashboard recorded a weekly rate of Covid-19 cases per 100,000 of:
  - 36 on 1st April 2020
  - a peak of 483 on 4th January 2021
  - 41 on 31st March 2021
- One of the key indicators for health and wellbeing is life expectancy. Both female life expectancy in West Oxfordshire (84.9) and male life expectancy in the district (81.9) is higher than life expectancy nationally (83.5 and 79.6 respectively).
- Primary and Secondary healthcare provided across some 16 local GP practices in addition to the Witney Community Hospital and the War Memorial Community Hospital in Chipping Norton.
- The annual [Sport England Active Lives Survey](#) reported that 65-69% of the District's population are physically active, meaning they undertake 150 minutes weekly exercise.
- The updated (May 2020) [Loughborough University and End Child Poverty survey](#) presents the total number of children under 16 in households with incomes on net housing costs that are below 60% of the median (based on DWP/HMRC local indicators combined with information about housing costs at the local level to estimate poverty rates after housing costs), as a metric of poverty. It indicates that 20% (4058) of children in West Oxfordshire are therefore deemed to be living in poverty.
- Using a [single index for measuring levels of mental health need](#), the district's population has a poorer level of mental health than across Oxfordshire, however, national averages for need of mental health treatment remain higher than district and county levels.

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<sup>5</sup>9 Provided by Oxfordshire County Council, available at: <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>

- The Local Plan Core Objectives for strong market towns and villages are as follows:

<b>CO1</b>	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
<b>CO2</b>	Ensure that new developments are suitably located and well designed to protect and enhance the individual form, character and identity of our towns and villages as well as contributing to the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
<b>CO3</b>	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.

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- 191m<sup>2</sup> additional floor space for healthcare was permitted in the 2020/21 period, relating to changes of use to dental practices in Carterton and Curbridge.
- At least 192m<sup>2</sup> additional leisure floor space was permitted in the 2020/21 period as set out below. The loss of 91m<sup>2</sup> gym floor space was permitted as part of a change of use scheme at Wesley Walk, Witney.

Parish	Description	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Filkins and Broughton Poggs	Change of use of land from agricultural to class D2 use (Assembly and Leisure) and erection of building for outdoor wedding ceremonies together with associated landscaping.	16
Curbridge	Alterations to include erection of single and two storey extensions to provide enlarged spa, changing room and gym facilities.	176
Shilton	Conversion of agricultural barn to model aviation clubhouse - reception and rest/tea room, model aircraft workshop and storage area. (Retrospective)	Area unknown

- Consultants were appointed to develop a Built Leisure Facilities Strategy / Accessing Need and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) in March 2020 and significant progress towards this has been made during this AMR period. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be adopted by Council in early 2022.

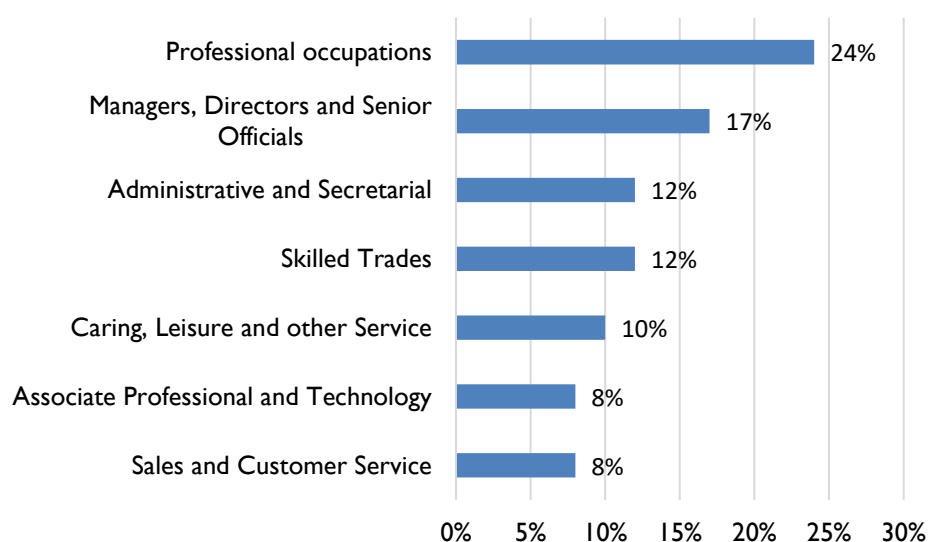
- During 2020/21 the leisure centres were opened only for approximately 5 months (under Covid-19 protocols with increased space, reduced numbers, bubbles etc.) due to the 3 National Lockdowns in April, November, and January. This led to a total attendance at the District's main leisure centres (Windrush, Chipping Norton, Carterton, and Bartholomew) of 111,622 visits which equates to 12% of the number of centre visits when compared to 2019/20.
- Since re-opening in April 2021 a total of 126,039 visits were recorded in Q1 of 2021/22 which whilst indicating a strong return in usage rates in comparison to the previous year, is still approximately 40% behind the usage figures of Q1 2019 - 2020.

### 3. A Vibrant District Economy

*Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy*

#### Background Context

- West Oxfordshire has a strong and diverse economy and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.
- According to the latest ONS experimental estimates of balanced regional gross value added (GVA), GVA in West Oxfordshire totalled 3.2bn (£29,269 per head) in 2016.
- In 2020, West Oxfordshire had approximately 52,600 employees a decrease of around 8% from 2019.
- According to the ONS, in 2019/20, 82.3% of individuals aged 16-64 in West Oxfordshire were economically active, lower than across the south east (86.9%) but higher when compared to the national figure (79.1%).
- As of 2019, of those who were in employment, almost a quarter were in professional occupations (see figure 5).

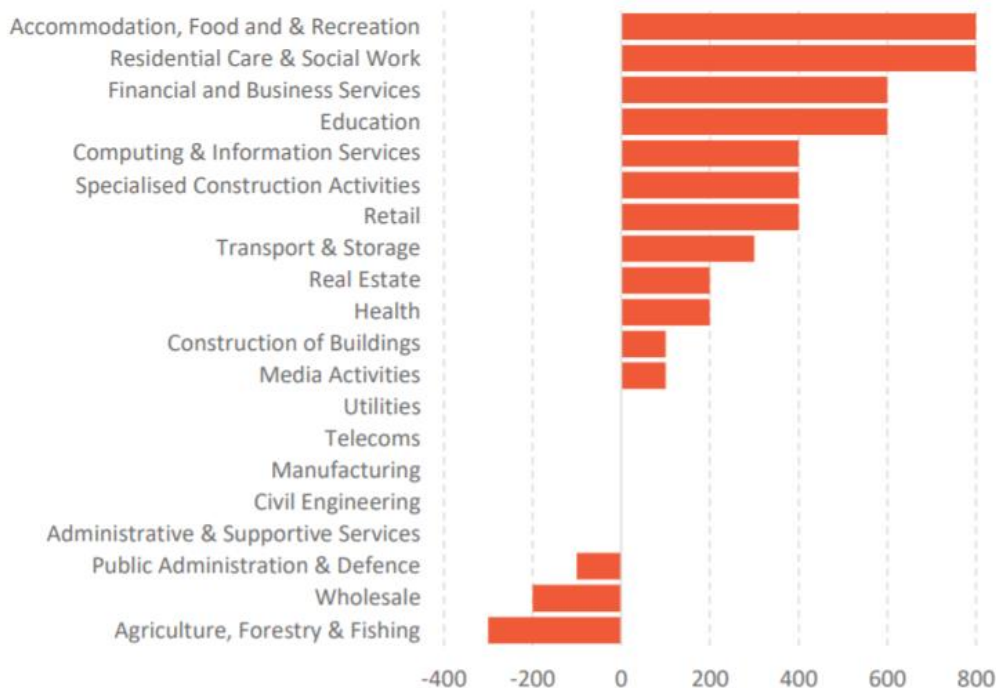


*Figure 5: West Oxfordshire workforce by occupation*

- Between 2018 and 2020, median earnings in West Oxfordshire decreased from £653.8 a week to £626 a week, previously having been higher than the south east average of £614.90 in 2018 and nationally (£570.50 in 2018), but becoming lower than the average across the region (£629 in 2020) yet still higher than national average (£587.40 in 2020).



- In terms of job growth potential, [the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village employment study](#) suggests that between 2018 and 2031 West Oxfordshire will see an increase of approximately 10,600 jobs. The projections assume that most of the growth will be driven by sectors such as Residential Care & Social Work, Financial and Business Services as well as Computing and ICT industries (see Figure 6). It is important to acknowledge that these projections provide only one view on how the District may grow in the future.



*Figure 6: West Oxfordshire Job Growth Forecasts by Sector (2018 to 2031)*

- Launched in September 2019, the [Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy \(OxLIS\)](#)<sup>6</sup> responds to the UK Industrial Strategy which aims to increase growth and productivity across the country and create more prosperous communities. The OxLIS presents a long-term framework against which private and public sector investment decisions can be assessed and there are a number of specific opportunities for West Oxfordshire, including:
  - The West Oxfordshire Science Park (part of the proposed Garden Village) and the Carterton & RAF Brize Norton Industrial Hub identified within a proposed network of global hubs and international clusters.
  - Involvement in the establishment of a Data and Mobility Living Lab

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.oxfordshirelep.com/lis>

- Figure 7 provides an overview of the businesses by employment size in West Oxfordshire. As it can be seen, approximately 86% are micro businesses, and this figure is slightly higher when compared to county and nation. In contrast, West Oxfordshire has roughly 7% of businesses employing 20 or more people, a lower proportion than nationally and county-wide. In 2019, there were 20 businesses employing over 250 people, including Owen Mumford, Siemens and Renault FI.

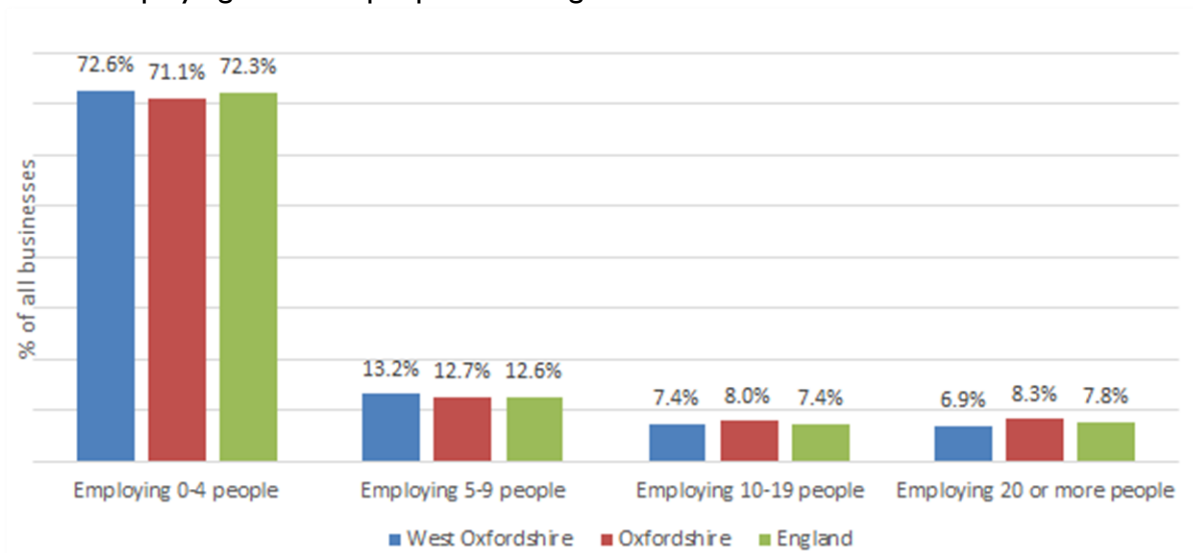


Figure 7: Business size by employees in West Oxfordshire (ONS 2020)

- In West Oxfordshire, enterprises have an average of 1.1 **local units**, lower than the national average.
- The 2015 [West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot](#) provides the most up to date detailed account of the **key employment locations** across the district. A high-level assessment of these key sites was undertaken in terms of their location, utility and quality (see figure 8). Sites in Carterton, Witney and Eynsham scored particularly well. Further, at the time of the last Census (2011), 18% of employed residents in West Oxfordshire worked mainly at or from home, which had seen an upward trend. The coronavirus pandemic has increased levels of homeworking, however locally specific data is not yet available.

Centre	Sites	Location	Utility	Quality	Total
Carterton	Carterton South Industrial Estate	0	-1	-1	-2
	Ventura Park	1	1	1	3
	West Oxfordshire Business Park	1	1	1	3
Chipping Norton	Elmsfield Industrial Estate, Primsdown Industrial Estate, Station Road Industrial Estate, Worcester Road Industrial Estate	0	1	0	1
	Cromwell Park	1	1	1	3
	Oasis Business Park	1	1	1	3
Eynsham	Elm Place	1	1	1	3
	Oakfields Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
	Old Station Way	1	1	1	3

<b>Long Hanborough</b>	Hanborough Business Park	1	0	0	1
	Blenheim Office Park	1	1	1	3
<b>Stanton Harcourt</b>	Lakeside Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
	Stanton Harcourt Industrial Estate	1	1	1	3
<b>Witney</b>	Bromag Industrial Park	0	1	0	1
	De Havilland Way	1	1	1	3
	Eagle Industrial Estate	-1	1	0	0
	Newland Industrial Estate	-1	0	0	-1
	Range Road	1	1	1	3
	Station Lane	0	1	0	1
	Windrush Industrial Park	1	1	1	3
	Network Point	1	1	1	3
	Compton Hay, Des Roches Square, Meadow Court, Spinners Yard, Thorney Leys, Waterside Court, Witney Office Village	1	1	1	3
	Blenheim Palace Sawmill, Clanfield Workshops, Crawley Mill	1	1	1	3
<b>Remote</b>	Enstone Business Park	1	1	0	2
	Langston Priory, Threshers Yard, Mount Manor	1	1	1	3
	Southill Business Park	0	1	1	2
	Groves Timber Yard	-1	-1	-1	-3
	Minster Lovell	-1	-1	-1	-3
	Wroslyn Road	-1	-1	-1	-3

*Figure 8: Key employment site assessment (2015 West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot)*

- The Local Plan Core Objectives for sustainable economic growth are as follows:

**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

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- The Covid-19 pandemic and the actions taken to contain it had a significant impact on the local economy, businesses, households and outlook of the district's towns and villages.
- To see the impact of Covid-19 on the workforce, unemployment claimant provides a different perspective. In June 2019, the unemployment claimant count was 730 and exactly a year later, the unemployment claimant count peaked at 2,500 (see figure 8).

Although it is important to note that these figures will have been influenced by the furlough scheme.



*Figure 9: Unemployment claimant pre and during Covid-19 in West Oxfordshire (ONS 2020)*

- In October 2020, the council published the West Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery Plan. This local strategy guides resource investment for four Covid-19 recovery themes, Economy, Community, Climate and Council, Service Delivery and Finance. The Economy Covid-19 Recovery aims include:
  - To support the recovery of the visitor economy – including, repurposing the sector for the domestic market and driving delivery of attractions including The Mullin Automotive Park and redevelopment of Eynsham Hall.
  - To work in partnership with others (including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) ensure that business support is available to all stages and sectors of business, and that to provide skills training opportunities which match the requirements of the local job market.
  - To support the recovery and longer-term vitality and viability of the market towns.
  - To pursue opportunities to deliver on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy, particularly in relation to the Garden Village Science Park and potential Carterton Technology Hub.
- In February 2021 the OxLEP published The Oxfordshire's Economic Recovery Plan. This County level strategy provides a well-supported and flexible economic route map for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and builds on the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy. Covering the period Spring 2021 until Spring 2023, specific proposals beneficial to West Oxfordshire are identified:
  - Enhanced reskilling opportunities, targeting specific set of skills required by the local jobs market

- The development and implementation of an active travel project aimed improved infrastructure for increased rates of walking and cycling as a means of town centre regeneration, improved air quality and reduced car congestion.
- To provide financial business support including business rate relief and discretionary grants
- A total of 8,320m<sup>2</sup> (6,625m<sup>2</sup> net) employment land (B use classes) was permitted in 2020/21, the majority of which (4,947m<sup>2</sup>) is located within the Witney sub-area.

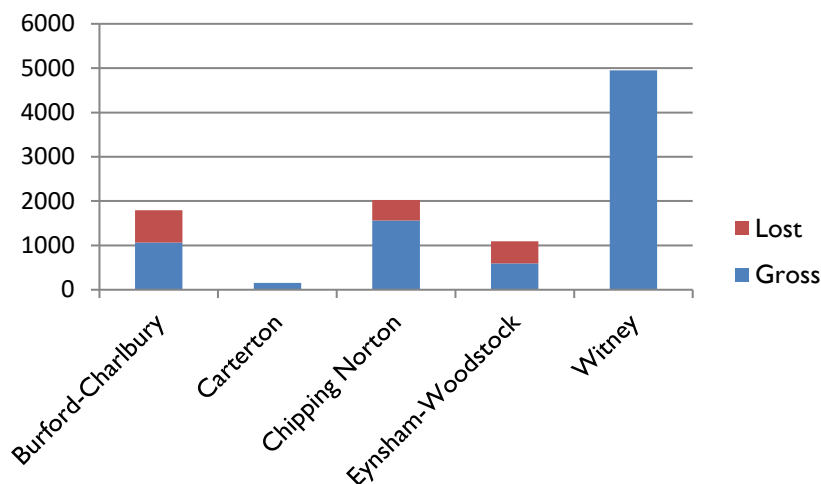


Figure 10: B use class floorspace permitted (m<sup>2</sup>) by sub-area

- A total of 2,139m<sup>2</sup> (net) of permissioned employment floorspace was completed, the majority (1,472m<sup>2</sup> net) being in the Witney sub-area.

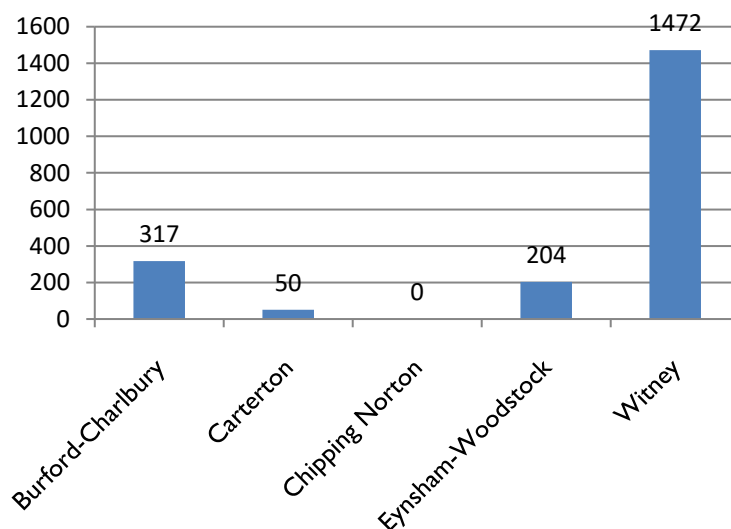


Figure 11: B use class floorspace completed (m<sup>2</sup>) by sub-area

- A total of two change of use schemes from employment to residential completed in the monitoring period resulting in a loss of 466m<sup>2</sup> employment floorspace (both B1a office uses in Kingham and Witney).
- Permitted changes of use to residential in 2020-21 would result in a loss of 418m<sup>2</sup>

employment floorspace, including a scheme to convert four commercial (B1a) units.

- Policy EI sets out the quantum of land available for business development at Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton and Eynsham. The following status of land detailed in Policy EI can be updated, as at 31 March 2021, as follows:

Sub Area	Location	Site Type	Site Area (Ha)	Updated Planning Status/Development Progress 2020/21
Witney	West of Downs Road, Witney	Industrial	2.10	Planning permission on part of previous Local Plan allocation for construction of B8 warehouse (planning reference 20/01338/FUL)
Witney	Land at Witney Football Club	Office	0.40	Residential element of permission under construction. Permitted employment development not yet implemented.
Witney	East of Downs Road, South of Burford Road	Commercial	1.81	Development completed
Witney	Land east of De Havilland Way	Business Park	0.47	Planning permission for new purpose-built facility comprising B1, B2 and B8 class uses (planning reference 20/02391/FUL)
Witney	West Witney SDA	Mixed use	10.00	Residential and phase 1 of employment development (planning permission 19/02011/RES) under construction. Planning permission for phase 2a of employment area (planning reference 20/01729/RES) under construction.
Witney	Former Supergas site, west of Downs Road	Industrial	1.15	No current planning status
Witney	Land Adjacent to Stewart Milne Timber, West of Downs Road	Storage and distribution	0.85	Development completed
Carterton	West Oxfordshire Business Park	Business Park	1.87	Partly completed
Carterton	West Oxfordshire Business Park	Business Park	0.58	Development completed
Carterton	Ventura Park, Carterton	Business Park	0.43	Development completed
Carterton	Land east of Carterton	Mixed use	1.50	Permission granted
Chipping Norton	Cromwell Park, Chipping Norton	Office	0.13	Permission granted
Chipping Norton	Land north of London Road, Chipping Norton	Business Park	9.00	Part of WOLP 2031 allocation (CN1)
Eynsham	Land north of the A40	Science Park	40.00	Allocated in WOLP 2031

- In the main towns of West Oxfordshire (Witney, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Burford and Woodstock), 340m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace was permitted. Conversions and changes of use permitted in the main towns would mean that there would be an overall net loss of -633m<sup>2</sup>.
- Outside of the main towns, 35m<sup>2</sup> (-145m<sup>2</sup> net) of A1 retail floorspace was permitted.

- A handful of schemes which would likely result in a net change in town centre development could not be included in the above figures as the relevant data had not been supplied on submission of the planning application.

	<b>A1 shops</b>	<b>A2 Financial and professional services</b>	<b>A3 Restaurants and cafes</b>	<b>A4 drinking establishments</b>	<b>A5 Hot food takeaways</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2020-2021</b>						
Witney	0 (-430 net)	0 (-116 net)	0 (-108 net)	26	0 (-69 net)	<b>26 (-697 net)</b>
Carterton	325	-190	0	0	125 (27 net)	<b>450 (162 net)</b>
Chipping Norton	15 (-182 net)	0 (-464 net)	105	0	0	<b>120 (-526 net)</b>
Burford	0 (-21 net)	0	21	0	0	<b>21 (0 net)</b>
Woodstock	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Other settlements</b>	<b>35 (-145 net)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>211 (66 net)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375 (-403 net)</b>	<b>0 (-770 net)</b>	<b>234 (-126 net)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>193 (-42 net)</b>	<b>828 (-1339 net)</b>

- A total of 22 schemes were granted permission during the monitoring period for tourism related developments. This included approval of construction of the Mullin Automotive Museum at Enstone Airfield. Most of the remaining tourism related approvals involved the provision of holiday accommodation.
- The Council's contract with Gigaclear to bring fibre access to 4,788 of properties across West Oxfordshire was successfully fulfilled shortly after the AMR period in June 2021.
- In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the District Council has paid a total of £39,595,446 in grants to local businesses.
- The Council worked to implement measures to support the safe reopening of the district's high streets. These included pavement widening, pedestrianisation, and changes to licensing, helping businesses to operate in compliance with Government directives.

## 4. Strong Local Communities

### *Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive communities*

#### Background Context

- There are roughly 130 separate towns, villages and hamlets scattered across the district with 83 parishes.
- The proportion of people '**satisfied** with their neighbourhood' (90.2%) is higher than the Oxfordshire average (86.5%)
- **Council tax** in West Oxfordshire is within the lowest five shire districts nationally.
- Since being introduced through the Localism Act 2011, there have been five Neighbourhood Plans 'made' (adopted) in West Oxfordshire. These are Eynsham, South Leigh, Hailey, Shilton, Chipping Norton and Charlbury. As of 31 March 2021, a further five Neighbourhood Planning areas are designated for the purposes of producing a Neighbourhood Plan (Brize Norton, Cassington, Ascott under Wychwood, Milton under Wychwood and Woodstock)
- There are 21 community transport schemes operating throughout West Oxfordshire<sup>7</sup>.
- Based on the MHCLG [Index of Deprivation](#), a greater percentage of Lower Super Output Areas in West Oxfordshire were within the 40% most deprived in 2019 (see figure 14) than in 2015. However, on the whole, the district remains largely within the least deprived local authority areas in the country.
- The Local Plan Core Objectives for sustainable communities with access to services and facilities are as follows:

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

**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.

**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.

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<sup>7</sup> 2020/21 Oxfordshire Community Transport Directory



## What's happened in 2020/21?

- The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new Community Right referred to as the Community Right to Bid which allows Town and Parish Councils and defined community groups to ask the Council to list certain assets as being of community value. In the year 2020/21, four further assets were added to the West Oxfordshire List of Assets of Community Value (ACV)<sup>8</sup>. These are:
  - Long Hanborough - public open space adjacent to Riely Close
  - Rose & Crown Public House, Shilton
  - The White Horse Public House, Stonesfield
  - Cassington Allotments, Cassington
- Five ACV's were removed from the West Oxfordshire List of Assets of Community Value during the 2020/21 period due to the expiry of their 5 year listing period:
  - The Bull Inn, Charlbury
  - The Hand and Shears, Church Hanborough
  - Fulbrook Play Park, Fulbrook
  - The White Horse, Stonesfield
  - The Falkland Arms, Great Tew
- In the AMR period for 2020/21, no Neighbourhood Plans were 'made' (adopted). This was because no referendums were permitted to be held during this period due to the pandemic. Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan however was recommended at Independent Examination to progress to referendum subject to a series of modifications and a referendum was duly held in June 2021 once restrictions were lifted. The referendum voted in favour of Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan and this was 'made' on 14th June 2021.
- A total of £986,491.41 was collected by West Oxfordshire District Council through Section 106 planning obligations in 2020/21.
- Of this total, the majority was collected towards sports, recreation and play facilities (£622,936.45) affordable housing (£164,563) public art (£61,652) and Kilkenny Country Park (£58,478).
- Consultation on a revised draft CIL charging schedule took place from 10 July – 21 August 2020. Just over 170 responses were received and these can be viewed [online](#).
- The Council awarded a total of £363,793.53 in grant funding in 2020/21 which comprised:
  - £186,949 in Community Revenue Grants
  - £176,844.53 in Community Facilities Grant
- 349m<sup>2</sup> community use floorspace was permitted from three schemes (an extension to St Michaels And All Angels Church, Great Tew, creation of a woodland retreat

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<sup>8</sup> Full listing available at: <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/communities/community-rights/>

and community building at Kencot Hill Farm and part change of use of a business premises on Mill Street, Eynsham to an art gallery. No floorspace for community use was lost resulting from planning approvals in 2020-2021.

- 1,874m<sup>2</sup> additional floorspace for educational uses was permitted, including construction of new classrooms at Bladon Church of England Primary School and Stanton Harcourt Church of England Primary School and construction of a new science building and replacement changing room building at Cokethorpe School.
- During the 2020/21 monitoring year, the Coronavirus pandemic shifted the District Council's focus towards supporting its residents, businesses and the community and voluntary sector, to mitigate the impact of the national lockdown. A detailed summary of this effort can be found in the [Council Plan Annual Statement April 2020 - March 2021](#).

## 5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

*Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire*

### Background Context

- There are approximately 49,000 **households** in West Oxfordshire, with around 900 Ministry of Defence dwellings (estimation based on a combination of Council Tax and Electoral roll data).
- As of 31 March 2021 there were 2,375 households on the **housing waiting list**, with 59% of these requiring a 1 bedroom property. A further 25% of households on the register required a 2 bed property. 11% required 3 bedrooms, 4% required 4 bedrooms and only 1% required 5 or more bedrooms.
- In 2020, full-time workers could expect to pay 10.8 times their annual work-place based earnings on purchasing a home in West Oxfordshire ([ONS, 2020](#)), an increase from 2019, where the property price to earnings ratio was 10.5, 2011 where the ratio was 9.1, and 1997 which saw a ratio of 5.1.
- The most recent assessment of **housing need** in West Oxfordshire identifies an objectively assessed need (OAN) for 660 homes per year from 2011 to 2031. Within this, there is a need for 274 affordable homes each year (excluding existing commitments).
- The West Oxfordshire Local Plan sets out that provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 - 2031, phased as follows:

	West Oxon's needs	Oxford City's needs	Combined annual requirement
2011 - 17	550 per annum		550 per annum
2017 - 18	550		550
2018 - 19	550		550
2019 - 20	550		550
2020 - 21	550		550
2021 - 22	525	275	800
2022 - 23	525	275	800

2023 - 34	700	275	975
2024 - 25	850	275	1125
2025 - 26	850	275	1125
2026 - 27	850	275	1125
2027 - 28	850	275	1125
2028 - 29	850	275	1125
2029 - 30	850	275	1125
2030 - 31	850	275	1125
Totals	13,200	2,750	15,950

- Over the last 10 monitoring years (2011—2021) there have been the following residential permissions and completions:
  - 8,697 dwellings granted permission; an average of 870 per year
  - 5,305 new homes completed; a yearly average of 531
- The Council is required to maintain, and update annually, a register of Brownfield sites that are appropriate for residential development and meet a number of criteria set by the government. The West Oxfordshire Brownfield Register, updated in 2020, contains 21 sites with a potential for between 482 and 582 dwellings to come forward over the plan period to 2031.
- There is a theoretical need for around 19 Gypsy and Traveller pitches for the period to 2031 however the requirement is likely to be much lower<sup>9</sup>. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 includes provision for at least 5 pitches and 5 plots between 2016 and 2031.
- As of 1st April 2020 there were a total of 682 registrations on the West Oxfordshire Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- [The Care Quality Commission record](#) at November 2021 indicated that there are 27 care homes in West Oxfordshire providing 1,235 care home beds.

<sup>9</sup> based on national evidence on those meeting the government's definition of travelling communities being only 10%

## What's happened in 2020/21?

- 868 new homes were completed in 2020/21. This greatly exceeds the Local Plan housing requirement of 550 homes for the monitoring year (West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, Policy H2), but is a marginal downturn since the previous monitoring year, largely as a result of the impact of the Covid pandemic.

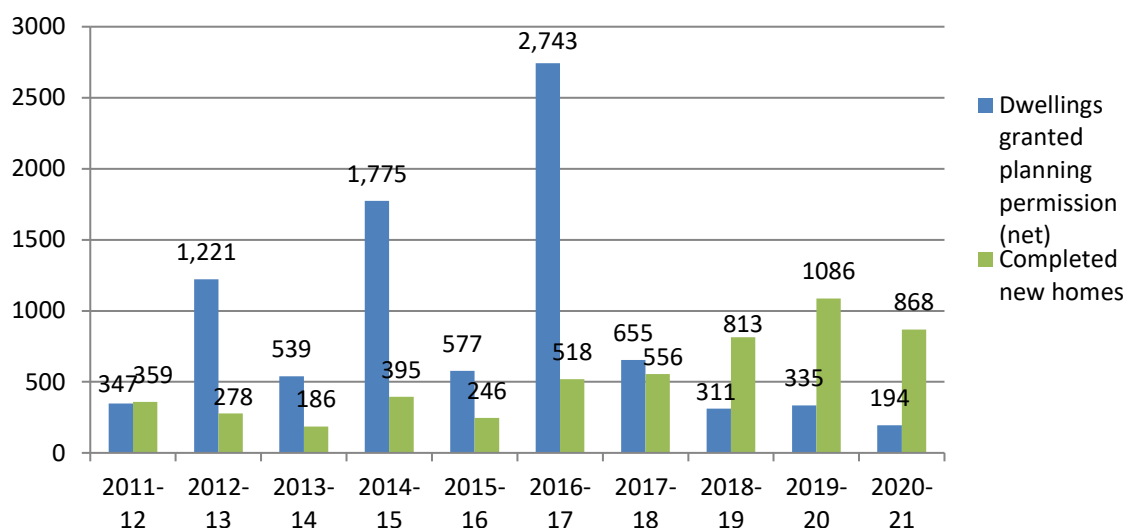


Figure 12: Residential permissions and completions 2011 - 2021

- 215 (25%) of completed dwellings were on previously developed (brownfield) land.
- Of the 868 dwellings completed in 2020/21, 352 were on allocated sites. This included:
  - 116 at North Curbridge (West Witney)
  - 86 at West of Thornbury Road, Eynsham (part of the West Eynsham SDA)
  - 51 at Land south of Banbury Road, Chipping Norton (part of East Chipping Norton SDA)
  - 33 at Land east of Woodstock
  - 29 at Former Stanton Harcourt Airfield
  - 24 at West of Minster Lovell
  - 13 at REEMA Central
- The total number of affordable housing completions in 2020/21 was 335 (38.6% of overall completions).
- 223 dwellings were granted permission, (a net total of 194, taking account of superseded permissions / amended schemes resulting in a net change of extant permissions).
- Previous AMRs have reported the proportion of dwellings granted permission that were on previously developed (brownfield) sites. This indicator is no longer

reported on as a result of this information no longer being provided consistently through planning application forms submitted to the Council.

- The breakdown of residential permissions by property size revealed a higher proportion of 1, 2 and 4+ bedroom properties compared to the Local Plan's indicative housing mix guidelines and a lower proportion of properties approved with 3 bedrooms, as set out below.

<b>Local Plan 2031 property size guidelines</b>	4.8% 1 bed	27.9% 2 bed	43.4% 3 bed	23.9% 4+ bed
<b>Housing permissions 2020/2021 property sizes</b>	15%	30%	26%	29%

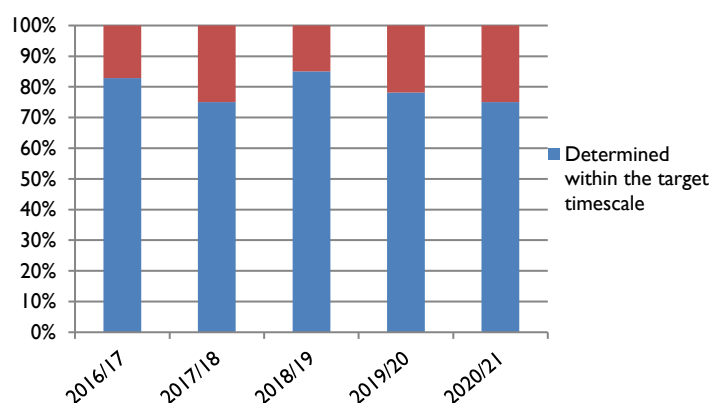
- Permission was granted for the provision of four residential caravan pitches as part of a change of use from agricultural land to enlarge an existing traveller community site at Minster Lovell.
- Between 1 April 2020 and 31st March 2021, there were 94 entries onto the Council's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31 Mar 2021 there was an increase in the number of people presenting themselves as homeless to the Council. This was a consequence of the pandemic and significant health implications on single person households remaining in informal sofa surfing arrangements with vulnerable relatives, and the [Governments 'Everyone In' directive](#). Throughout the year, an average of around 50 households at any one time were in some form of emergency accommodation. This represents an average increase of around 50% from previous years. With the added combination of the Eviction Ban and Housing Associations pausing all but essential repairs, moving people into longer term accommodation proved to be difficult with many households remaining in emergency accommodation for much longer than would have been the case pre-pandemic. Since the easing of the latest round of lockdown and Covid measures, numbers in emergency accommodation have stabilised to pre-pandemic levels.
- The number of empty homes in the District at 1st April 2021 was 532.

## 6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

*Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council*

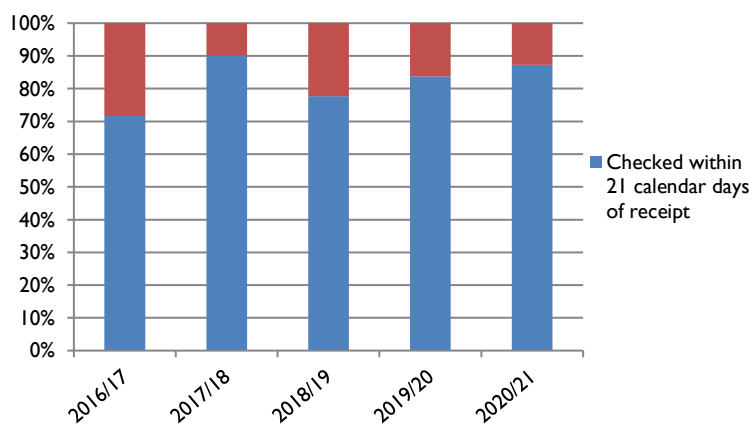
### Background Context

- West Oxfordshire District Council remains committed to delivering excellent services to its local communities.
- Over the past five years 79% of **planning applications** were determined by the Council in the target timescale (see annual break-down in Figure 13).



*Figure 13: Planning application determinations*

- The Council also provides a Building Regulation (Control) approval service, including Full Plan checks and Building Notices (typically for smaller works) and over 1,000 applications are processed each year. Over the past five years 82% of **Building Control Full Plans** were checked within 21 calendar days of receipt (see annual break-down in Figure 14).



*Figure 14: Building Control Full Plan checks*

- As of 30 April 2021, West Oxfordshire District Council owned 282 land/building holdings, of which 252 were freeholds and 30 were leaseholds.

### What's happened in 2020/21?

- No new Supplementary Planning Documents were adopted during the monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. However, good progress was made towards adoption of the Developer Contributions SPD and Affordable Housing SPD.
- The Council's current LDS (May 2021) identifies a further SPD for the Hanborough Station Masterplan, the timetable for its production to be confirmed. For further information and document timetables in full, please refer to the Council's Local Development Scheme approved in November 2020.
- A total of 1,369 planning applications were determined in 2020-21, 75% of which were determined within the target timescale (down 3% from 2019-20). 9% of applications were refused.
- 87.3% of building control full plans were checked within 21 calendar days of receipt.
- 99.7% of land charge searches were completed within ten working days.
- Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out a 'duty to co-operate' which essentially means that local planning authorities and other 'prescribed bodies' must engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to address cross-boundary issues of strategic importance such as housing and transport.
- The Council continues to actively engage with the other Oxfordshire Authorities<sup>10</sup> and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on various spatial planning and infrastructure matters (including the preparation of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and delivery of all other components of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal).
- The pre-submission draft AAP published in August 2020 was accompanied by a [Duty to Co-Operate Statement of Compliance](#) demonstrating how the AAP has been prepared in accordance with the duty to co-operate. A key aspect of this has been discussions with Oxford City Council in respect of various matters including housing need and a memorandum of operation has been prepared to outline the mechanism through which the allocation of affordable homes is expected to take place.

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<sup>10</sup> Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council



## Appendix I

### Carbon Account Breakdown: By Scope

Table I: Total Emissions by Scope

01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e
Scope 1	1,617,853
Scope 2	217,742
Scope 3	474,371
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,309,967</b>

Scope 1 emissions, associated with gas and liquid fuel, account for 70% of Council emissions.

Scope 2 emissions associated with the purchase of electricity from the National Grid account for 9% of Council emissions.

Scope 3 emissions associated with the transport of gas, electricity and liquid fuel (referred to as T&D, transport and distribution, and WTT, well-to-tank), water consumption, and transport miles for staff and Councillors account for the final 21% of Council emissions.

Figure 2: Total Emissions by Scope

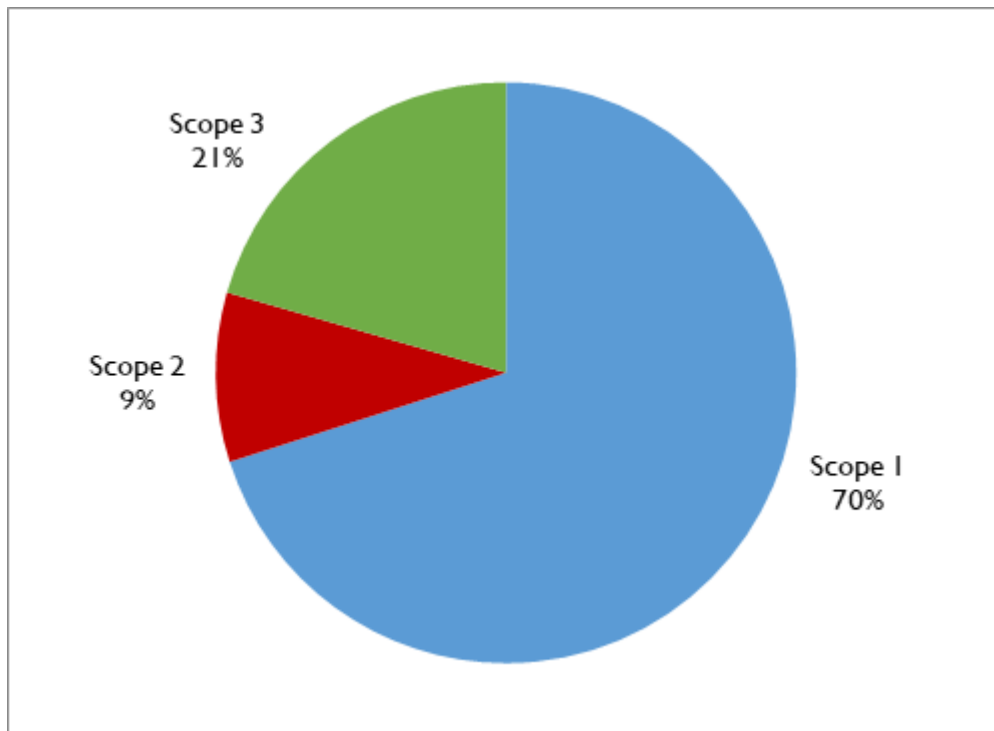
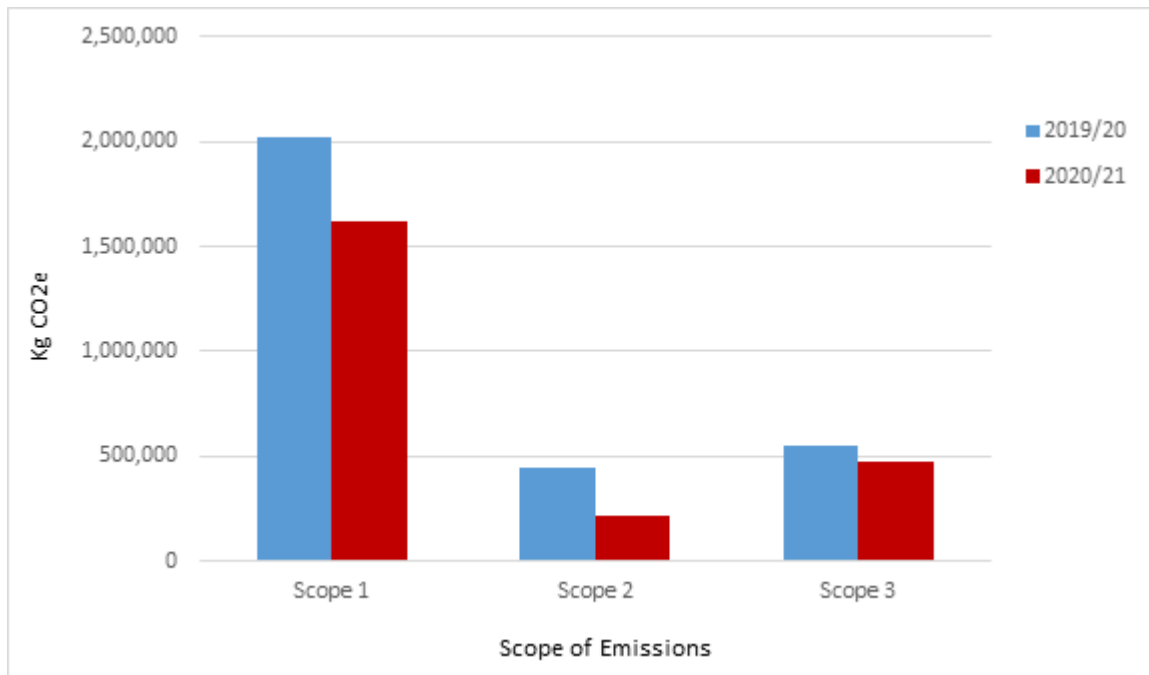


Table 2: Comparative Emissions between 2019/20 Baseline Year and 2020/21

Scope	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2019/20	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2020/21	Change in Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e	Percentage Change
Scope 1	2,020,220	1,617,853	402,367	-20%
Scope 2	447,126	217,742	259,384	-51%
Scope 3	554,853	474,371	80,482	-14.5%

Figure 3: 2020/21 Emissions by Scope Compared to 2019/20 Baseline Year



Scope 1 emissions have fallen 20% from the baseline year as a result of reductions in gas consumption from leisure centres.

Scope 2 emissions have fallen 51% from the baseline year. This reduction in electricity use reflects the reduced building usage during the pandemic as more people stayed at home.

Scope 3 emissions have fallen 14.5% from the baseline year. This reflects reductions in T&D and VTT emissions which fall in line with energy consumption in Scope 1 and 2. There has also been a reduction in business travel among staff and councillors.

### Carbon Account Breakdown: By Location

Table 3: Total Emissions by Location

01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	Kg CO2e
Council offices, property and sites (excluding leisure)	311,805
Leisure centres and facilities	432,673
Council vehicle fleet and transport	1,565,489

TOTAL

2,309,967

Council offices, property and sites represent 13% of total emissions across Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

Leisure centres and facilities account for 19% of Council emissions, across all scopes.

Council vehicle fleet, machinery and transport, including Council-owned waste trucks currently operated by Ubico, account for 68% of Council emissions.

Figure 4: Total Emissions by Location

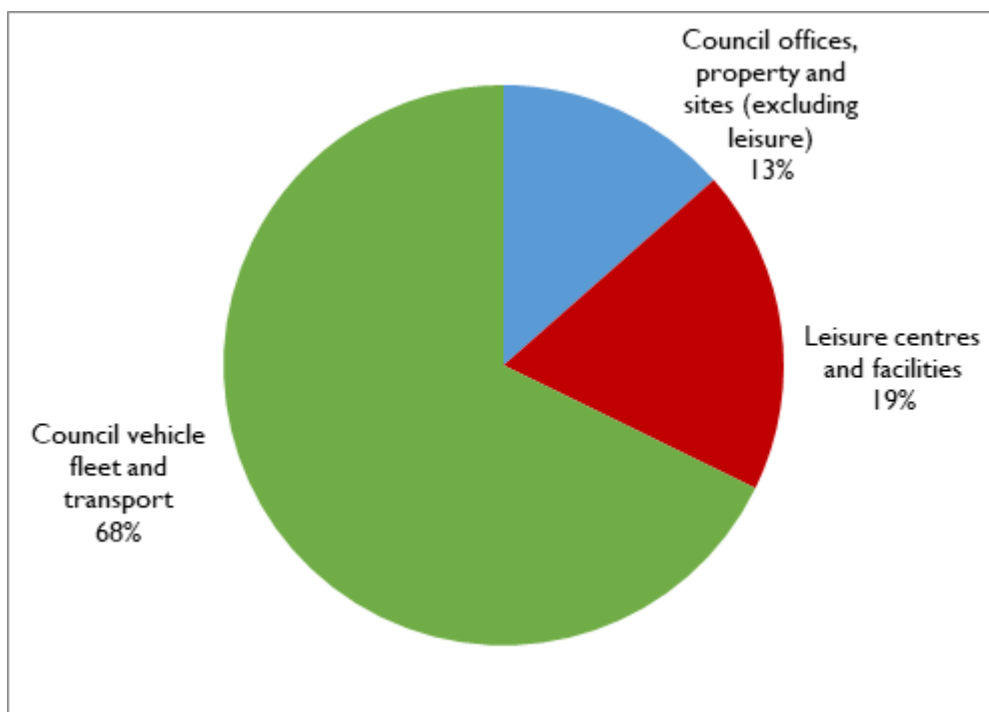
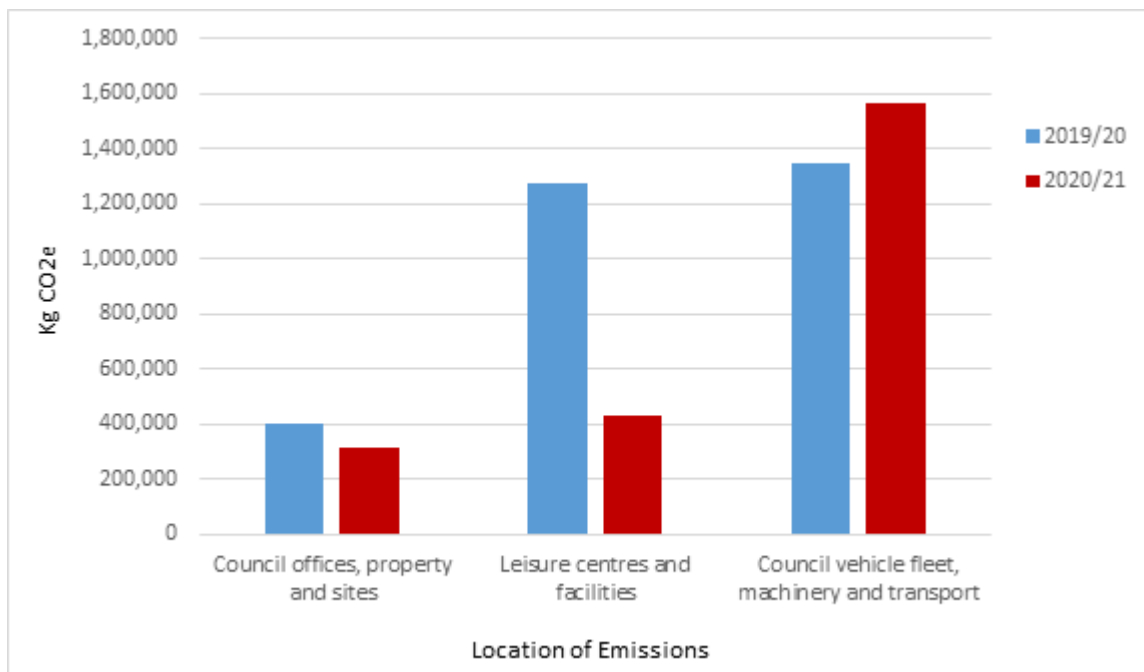


Table 4: Comparative Emissions between 2019/2020 Baseline Year and 2020/21

Location	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2019/20	Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e 2020/21	Change in Kg CO <sub>2</sub> e	Percentage Change
Council offices, property and sites (excluding leisure)	400,418	311,805	-88,613	-22%
Leisure centres and facilities	1,276,260	432,673	-843,587	-66%

Council vehicle fleet and transport	1,345,521	1,565,489	219,968	16%
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Figure 5: 2020/21 Emissions by Location Compared to 2019/20 Baseline Year



Emissions from Council offices, property and sites (excluding leisure) have fallen 22% from the baseline year. This is considered to be a result of changes in behaviour during the pandemic which resulted in reduced building use.

Emissions from leisure centres and facilities have fallen 66% from the baseline year as a result of reduced energy consumption during the pandemic.

Emissions from Council vehicle fleet, machinery and transport have increased 16% from the baseline year. This is due to the Council-owned waste trucks, currently operated by Ubico, accommodating the increased waste flows during the pandemic as more residents stayed at home.