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WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Climate & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Held in the Council Chambers, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB at 2.00 pm on **Thursday, 23 June 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: Charlie Maynard (Vice-Chair), Alaa Al-Yousuf, Hugo Ashton, Michael Brooker, Andrew Coles, David Cooper, Harry Eaglestone, Ted Fenton, Andy Goodwin, Gill Hill, David Jackson, Michele Mead, Rosie Pearson and Ruth Smith.

Officers: Laurence King (Shared Principal Engineer), Phil Martin (Group Manager - Business Support), Bill Oddy (Group Manager - Commercial Development), Louise Oddy, Vanessa Scott (Climate Change Manager WODC) and Scott Williams (Business Manager - Commissioning Strategy), Michelle Ouzman (Strategic Support Officer), and Anne Learmonth (Strategic Support Officer).

1 Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

Councillor Michele Mead substituted for Councillor Norman MacRae, Councillor David Jackson substituted for Councillor Alaric Smith and Councillor Gill Hill substituted for Councillor Martin McBride.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

In the minutes held on the 23 May 2022, Councillor Coles noted that Councillor Graham was quoted as speaking where it was Councillor Goodwin that spoke. The minutes were corrected, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 Committee appointments and start time for civic year 2022/23

1. Councillor Fenton proposed Councillor Norman MacRae, this was seconded by Councillor Mead, was duly put to the vote which was unanimous and therefore **Resolved** that Councillor Norman MacRae be elected as Chair of the Committee.

The Vice-Chair asked for proposal for the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Councillor Goodwin proposed Councillor Charlie Maynard, this was seconded by Councillor Ashton, was duly put to the vote which was unanimous and therefore

Resolved that Councillor Charlie Maynard be elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

2. The Vice-Chair informed the committee that Councillor Norman MacRae had suggested that the committee in the civic year 2022/23 should start at 2pm. Councillor Ruth Smith stated that due to commitments she would prefer start time to be 3:30pm.

Councillor Mead proposed that the start time for the committee should be 2pm, this was seconded by Councillor Alaa Al-Yousuf, was duly put to the vote.

10 votes were in favour of 2pm, two votes against, and one abstention. **Resolved** the start time for the committee for civic year 2022/23 will be 2pm.

4 Chair Announcements

The Vice-Chair Councillor Charlie Maynard welcomed members, officers, speakers from the Environment Agency, officers from Oxfordshire County Council and members of the public to the committee, and thanking them all for attending.

23/June2022

The Vice-Chair introduced key attendees that were attending outside of West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC):

Evie Kingsmill and Joe Cuthbertson represented the Environmental Agency (EA)

Nick Mottram and Alice Dimaline attended remotely from Oxfordshire County Council.

William Wareing represented the Witney Flood Mitigation Group.

The Vice-Chair informed the committee that he had prepared three slides which would be shown during agenda item 7.

5 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

6 Participation of the Public

The Vice-Chair welcomed William Wareing to the meeting.

Mr Wareing representing the Witney Flood Mitigation Group (WFMG), addressed the Committee, and focussed on:

- Good Maintenance leads to Flood Risk Prevention
- Multi Agency Meetings
- Emergency Planning
- Maintenance
- Councillor Engagement

A copy of Mr Wareing's transcript is attached to these minutes.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mr Wareing for his participation.

7 Witney Flood Report Update

The Vice-Chair asked Environmental Agency (EA) for an update on the Witney Flood Report.

Joe Cuthbertson from EA provided a high level update to the committee, as one of the many agencies involved. The EA role is the organisation that has the strategic overview of all sources of flood risk, which means we support and work with risk management authorities like local flood and highways authorities to ensure that flooding from rivers, drains, road drains and sewage is managed effectively. The operational responsibility for managing response to each of those flood types falls with different organisations. The lead local flood authority would lead on the smaller rivers and surface flood waters. The EA would lead on the main rivers which Witney has and the EA has a role.

In response to the report Mr Cuthbertson briefed on the following:

- Flood warning was late – upgrades have been done to flood warning arrangements, to enable an earlier and more reliable warning in the future. The breach threshold has been lowered, upstream the flow gauge has an alarm fitted to ensure earlier warnings.
- Engagement with the Witney Flood Mitigation Group – meetings have occurred and EA will commit to continue engagement.
- Medium term – EA have made bids for funding for river maintenance for example removing some of the larger blockages, river banks are cleared, this is in addition to the maintenance plan. This is a limited source of funding and staffing to carry out maintenance, which has been extended for Witney, which is in place for this financial year, work has begun.

23/June2022

- Looking at riparian owners' rights – owners that have properties that back onto the banks of rivers, it is their responsibility to keep it clear. Working with the Witney Flood Mitigation Group to identify these owners. EA will advise these owners on how they can maintain the river banks to keep them clear.
- Longer term – EA are updating the modelling which informs the EA flood mapping which is published online. Updating this modelling for Windrush and smaller tributaries. This will give more accurate representation of what areas are likely to flood and when. Looking at levels of rainfall that are likely to cause flooding. New modelling expected early 2024, there is a limited team working on this for the whole country. EA is exploring every avenue it can to assist Witney residents. An economic assessment will then be made following the update to see what could be put in place for Witney.

The Vice-Chair thanked Mr Cuthbertson for the update and went onto announced that Councillor Enright was organising an Emergency Flood Planning meeting on 6 July, which will focus on human side of emergency planning, which all present was invited to. Today however should be focused on the division of responsibilities between the parties present at the committee in terms of maintenance of the rivers rather than the emergency actions, which will be Councillor Enright's focus on 6 July.

The Vice-Chair slides were then shown at the meeting, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

The Vice-Chair explained that the slide was EA data since 1950, Windrush river discharge data by day, available on line. The height of the floods have increased and the frequency of the floods increased, so it's a bigger problem today than in 20th century. Based on Oct 2021 data, of the 93 days since 1950 the discharge of the Windrush lower end was over 15 cubic meters a second, 89 of them were in the last 15 years, 21 of them in the last 12 months.

Next slide showed a EA map of South East West Oxfordshire, a map of main rivers, each blue line is a main river, which means a permit is required to dig out a ditch. The riparian owners are responsible to get the work done, to do the work you need a permit from the EA. A lot of ditches and rivers needing maintenance, a huge undertaking when you look at the scale and length of the river. The EA maps are available on line on the EA website.

The Vice-Chair invited questions from the committee to EA.

Councillor Pearson asked what were the criteria for permits being granted or not granted.

Mr Cuthbertson explained reason for permits is so that the flood risk could be assessed. This is called flood risk activity permitting. Riparian owners are liable for up to 8m from the bank of the river, an example is someone may want to build a jetty for a boat. Applications for permits are assessed to ensure that works do not increase flood risk at other areas of the river. Often work that is required is to reduce the risk of flooding. Determination timescale is typically two months from when the application is received, for complex cases it can take longer, sometimes it's because further information is required.

See link for further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permitting-regulations-exempt-flood-risk-activities/exempt-flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>

The Vice-Chair asked EA how many permits had been granted in the last 3 years and the distances in total.

Evie Kingsmill from EA took the question as an action to take away and come back on.

23/June2022

Councillor Ruth Smith asked for clarity, did human response to emergency flooding get considered at Social and Economic Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Oddy the Group Manager - Commercial Development, Leadership and Management Team, clarified that emergency planning and the impact on the community would generally be dealt with at Social and Economic Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Ruth Smith also commented that the Section 19 report that the LFA published was slightly different than the one that was published on the Agenda, and that she realised the dates were different but suggested members take a look at the one that LFA had published online.

Councillor Fenton asked EA about the riparian owners responsibility to keep the watercourses clear, and that they are encouraged to do so. What happens if they don't do it.

Mr Cuthbertson confirmed that it depended on the risk, they would offer advice and guidance. Enforcement is less well resourced, so on occasion EA had to go and do the work if the risks were high. On the whole though it was not a huge issue with riparian owners. EA rely on people reporting, but often its spotted by teams doing maintenance.

Councillor Al-Yousuf remarked that he had not received an invite to Councillor Enright's 6 July meeting, and added he would not be able to attend. Councillor Al-Yousuf also commented that he thought that the human response to flooding should really sit with the Climate and Environment Scrutiny committee.

The Vice-Chair confirmed that everyone was invited to the meeting on 6 July, and that following the meeting, it would still be picked up within this scrutiny committee.

Councillor Al-Yousuf also enquired why the meeting was being held outside the scrutiny committee. The Vice-Chair confirmed he would ask councillor Enright and come back with an answer.

Councillor Al-Yousuf added that he looked forward to hearing from the county council and others later in the meeting, and hoped that information goes beyond information exchange, and wants the outcome to be action plan and recommendations to the Cabinet. So far what he had heard was useful and informative but as a scrutiny committee we should be recommending. The Vice-chair agreed with Councillor Al-Yousuf comments.

Councillor Coles thanked EA for attending and was pleased to hear that work on Emma's Dyke was going to happen. However what was needed was a flood mitigation scheme, until Witney is given the investment for a scheme we are going to continue every few years to have major floods occurring.

Councillor Brooker asked EA is the investigation into the Hayley Road ditch up to the Colbert or is it just underneath the road, who is ultimately responsible. Mr Cuthbertson confirmed that he would need to check and get back to the committee.

The Vice-Chair introduced the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) virtual attendees Nick Mottram and Alice Dimaline, as OCC were the lead authority. At present it was an informal agreement, however there was a formal arrangement to be put in place, and asked if the formal arrangement could be finalised by the next month.

Nick Mottram referred to the Agency Agreement and agreed that at present it was operating on an informal arrangement. After reviews with legal teams and sign off it can be put in place. He would be open to review any outstanding items that WODC may have concern with.

The Vice-Chair invited Mr Mottram to explain to the committee how the lead authority works, and the dynamics of the team.

23/June2022

Mr Mottram explained that the lead local flood authority works under the Flood Water Management Act, It's there to ensure that various risk management authorities work together to manage risk, that they are working effectively together. There are inputs from EA a key partner, district councils, highways, emergency planning functions, and OCC. Delegated powers down the local authorities and the Section 19 Investigation reports. WODC Officers put together a very helpful flood investigation report, that's not quite the same as the formal Section 19 report that we need to issue on behalf of the RLFA, it provides a starting point. Section 19 reports are published on our website and additional information on management of flooding. Section 19 reports provides a more detailed framework for action, a whole suite of recommendations, and who consultations should be with. The recommendations are pretty much the same as the WODC Officers recommendations, there are slight adjustments where felt more appropriate, and change of wording slightly, however its very much the same document.

The Vice-chair referred to page 11 of the report where there were actions and progress, then on page 36 to page 38 there are main actions. There are no dates or timelines, or in some cases how, and does not say who would action. Having a specific title of who would be responsible for auctioning, would help. If EA, WODC, OCC were in agreement in the next month could 5.2 main actions be reviewed so that this information is reflected in the document, specifically time, how if relevant, and who is responsible.

Mr Cuthbertson commented that these were recommendations, and they needed to firm up actions, how and timescales are dependant. This would be the plan, and as the actions are updated it would be transparent and online.

Mr Laurence King the Shared Lead Flood Risk Management Officer, Development Management, commented on the EA key modelling exercise that was being done, he thought it would be helpful to the committee to have EA give expectations on timescales for the key modelling, as most recommendations lead on from the modelling.

Evie Kingsmill confirmed that modelling was underway, data collection would be occurring over the summer, the model would hope to be ready back end of 2023, which would be fairly detailed in nature., as a sound evidence base is needed to look at a viable business case for funding.

The Vice-Chair commented that it is uncomfortable to hear the length of timescales, especially when you look at 2007, 2014 and 2020 floods which all were supposed to be once in a 100 years, its concerning, time is not on our side. Are there not actions that can be taken now rather than waiting until end of 2023 just to get the model.

Mr Cuthbertson explained that the EA programme is the biggest in the EA history, and large spending the government requires spot on evidence, which is why they need the modelling. Climate change is causing a lot of the flooding issues and it was happening all over the country, he could assure WODC that modelling was not happening any faster anywhere else in the country. However its not to say that there aren't anything that can't be done sooner, around the maintenance and working with the flood mitigation working groups. It's a challenge, flooding is getting worse and its devastating when it happens.

The vice-Chair asked if as EA goes through the action plan can small stuff that could make an impact, can we be informed of what these are and what the costs maybe, as WODC and OCC may need to look at funding. A list would be appreciated of what could be done within the next twelve months.

Mr King confirmed that his team consistently looked for quick wins, if there is anything we could do locally we would do it to our best of our ability. If there are any quick wins the partnership identifies we will do it.

23/June2022

The Vice-Chair commented that the EA have maps that differentiate rivers by low, medium and high risk, is this right and could WODC have a copy, just for West Oxfordshire.

Evie Kingsmill confirmed that she could provide some links for the minutes and the committee, and there is an interactive map on line..

The Vice-Chair stated it would be helpful to have a view where there is a risk to property or life.

Evie Kingsmill confirmed that this was part of the modelling.

The Vice-Chair asked for the EA view of where there is property or life risk in West Oxfordshire only.

Mr Cuthbertson eluded to the emergency planning that they worked with partners that show vulnerable areas, populations within a flood plain, hospitals, schools.

Mr King added that the maintenance plan will go a long way to know where the risks are too.

Councillor Goodwin asked about the modelling, would it include all low, medium and high risk areas.

Mr Cuthbertson confirmed that the modelling would turn into maps to show low, medium and high areas. All new developments are looked at closely with the developer and EA often ask developers to do an in depth investigation into flood risks, which EA can assist them with.

Councillor Al-Yousuf asked that the committee to support the cabinet member with the portfolio of flood management with a set of recommendations. For the next committee could we have an opinion on the status of the agency agreement with OCC.

The Vice-Chair agreed and was hoping that with OCC agreement of one month for the final agreement to be in place would be confirmed.

The Vice-Chair guided the committee to page 49 of the report, which was the Thames Water answers to questions. He particularly highlighted the sewage treatment works spend in the last 15 years, and encouraged committee members to look at the forecast spend and the population numbers re capacity.

Mr Phil Martin the Group Manager - Business Services, Leadership and Management Team, introduced the Thames water report. Mr Martin stated that the Thames Water report was only received recently within the past few days, on page 50, they had flagged up what was being excluded, this was quite key in regards to failures. Whilst they did provide some information, especially on investment. We need to understand where the failures are, more data is required. We believe we have only a partial picture at the moment. We have been in contact with Thames Water about bringing them to the table, to talk about the information that has been omitted for whatever reason.

Councillor Fenton was concerned there was no investment in Clanfield and no future investment, and I know that works have been done.

Mr King agreed and said that they wanted to talk to Thames Water about the different departments within the organisation on how they work together and share information. Operational expenditures are not even mentioned in the reports, the true expenditure we have yet to get to. Maybe pick a pilot area to focus on expenditure.

Councillor Al-Yousuf was concerned about capacity of staff hours, technical expertise, analysing the data and information. WODC responsibility as a planning authority to ensure we check sewage capacity, do we have resource for this.

23/June2022

Mr King commented that planning are relying on expert opinion, Thames Water are not a statutory consultee, they do comment but not as a statutory consultee which needs to change. If they do comment and say there is a problem, it gives the opportunity to negotiate with the applicant for Section 106 money, once its got planning consent the water supplier accepts the connection. If Thames Water comments that a development wont breach the trigger would we question that opinion, we probably would not, it's a difficult situation.

Councillor Ruth Smith agreed that it stays into specialist scientific expertise that local authority does not have.

Mr Martin agreed all operational data would have been useful, and perhaps it was not available. It was a good start of the overall picture.

Mr King thought they could analysis the data site by site, however hydraulic models and validation of those would be challenging, time consuming and expensive.

Mr King added that there was going to be an open day at Witney Sewage Treatment Works soon so he thought Councillors would probably attend to ask questions.

The Vice-chair thanked Mr Martin for bringing the Thames Water report to the attention of the committee. Whilst officers continued to work with Thames Water, perhaps Mr Richard Aylard of Thames Water could be invited to the next committee.

Councillor Ruth Smith referred to the paragraph in the report on page 50 re the practicality of providing detailed reporting.

Mr King also confirmed that Thames Water intend to hold surgeries possibly at Woodgreen WODC offices, where individual Parishes would be invited to come in and talk about local problems, probably in the autumn.

Councillor Brooker asked if WODC could request Thames Water to provide the information that we want.

Mr Martin confirmed they would push for information in consultation with Thames Water.

8 Annual Carbon Action Plan 2022/23

The Vice-Chair introduced the Climate Change Manager (WODC), Land, Legal and Property, Ness Scott.

Ness Scott gave the committee a verbal update on the Annual Carbon Action Plan 2022/23.

The Annual Carbon Action Plan is focused on decarbonising the Councils estate and reaching the target of carbon neutral by 2030. Within the plan WODC looked at scope 1 emissions, scope 2 emissions, and some of scope 3. Primarily all the councils fossil fuel, and gases and fuels used in the councils buildings and operations, including vehicle fleets, staff travel, business travel, Councillor travel, everything that will be included in the carbon account each year.

Carbon action plan split into three sections:

- council offices, property and sites
- leisure centre buildings
- waste vehicle fleet, machinery and all other vehicles owned by the council

The measures to decarbonise those areas are being carried out by teams that work across those service areas.

23/June2022

Each year the Council looks at how the carbon account figures have changed year on year, that work is being pulled together at the moment, hopefully figures to be completed by end of the summer.

Council offices decarbonisation the main areas are energy sustainability, will be fed into agile strategy, work is in progress as part of the agile project. There will be an impact where staff have been home working and some will continue to do so, also commuter mileage is taken into account. Encouraging staff to cycle or to walk to work, Publica have announced staff salary sacrifice for the purchase of low emission vehicles.

Carbon offsetting strategy, the team are looking at certified schemes to put into place for offsetting carbon.

Leisure focus is on the age of the heating system in our centres. Carterton Leisure Centre heating system approaching end of life. A successful bid for 1.3million contribution to heat pump alternative, with solar panels on the roof has been secured, in the process of developing a business case.

Council Waste Service review working with the management as new service will have a carbon impact and a key driver.

Climate change Strategy that was published last February, for example some of the works included the park and charge work that has just been completed,

Carbon Action Tool Kit has been put forward for an award with LGC Awards 2022.

Bia diversity on land management, great achievements this year, taking forward nature conservation for the councils estates, working with schools and communities, and in the autumn hedgerow planting.

The Vice-Chair thanked Ness Scott for the update and asked for councillors questions.

Councillor Goodwin asked about homeworking using more carbon at home and how that was being addressed.

The Climate Change Manager confirmed there was a balance to be struck, started with question and answer sessions with staff, posted advice to staff on how to reduce energy and how to save on bills at home. Publica have been really open and will support staff with options either working at home or within the offices.

Councillor Goodwin enquired if WODC were on track for the 2030 target and would the offset be high.

The climate Change Manager confirmed that systems may need replacing sooner rather than end of life, and offset maybe required, however it would be a short term off set arrangement, hence the strategy so that these can be considered.

Councillor Goodwin enquired if the heat pump replacement in the leisure centre would be net zero. The Climate Change Manager explained that the leisure centre was built in two phases and phase two was only 2019, the heating system in this building is not being changed. Decarbonisation is focussed on the pool area in the original building which is run on gas boilers, so it's not a complete net zero but a substantial change.

Councillor Brooker asked firstly, if the EV charging units were fast charge or standard charge. Neighbours that live at Woodgreen want to purchase E vehicles, however they have no way of charging at the moment. Suggestion that out of office hours could there not be charging points at Woodgreen for example for residents to use. Secondly, the green spaces at Welsh way, not all WODC land, lack of grass cutting, can we use the land to better use.

23/June2022

The Climate Change Manager confirmed that fast charges focus on overnight charging for local residents, they are not rapid charge points. They are more than capable of doing a top up in a short period of time. More information can be brought back from the park and charge team. Data would be useful, in three months' time there should be six months' worth of performance data. Hoping to produce a quarterly report moving forward. Sustainability measures in the agile workplace will be looking at greener solutions. Therefore what happens to Woodgreen carpark is part of the consideration within the agile project.

Councillor David Cooper asked that a lot of public buildings still have asbestos, the cost of removal and impact to landfill the cost of offsetting is this part of the carbon accounting, and at what cost.

The Climate Change Manager confirmed that staff that look after estates buildings have condition reports so any issues with asbestos would be flagged in this way. Estates team oversee all replacements of materials, the climate team make recommendations, and suggestions for advising on decarbonisation. The property and estates team are instrumental in making it all happen.

Councillor Coles during the development of the parking action plan, I suggested that the park enforcement team uses local buses to get about, a number of other authorities do this and let them travel free. Has this been in discussion.

The Climate Change Manager confirmed that it had not been discussed as yet, but she would take it away and talk to the parking team about it.

Councillor Pearson will there be more carparks that will have EV charge points installed.

The Climate Change Manager confirmed the initial project now completed, they would be monitoring the usage and uptake. They were also looking at joining up with the EV team at OCC, to extend EV parking to other sites, county wide.

Councillor Ruth Smith asked if Ness Scott could answer a question under the works programme.

Councillor Goodwin stated he thought that the meeting was not long enough to include the climate action points, it used to be a separate meeting and was at least two hours long. Merging the two meetings does not give enough time to address all items. The Vice-Chair suggested that climate action always be on top of the work programme moving forward.

The Vice-Chair had nothing but praise for all the work that had been achieved so far on WODC assets. And thanked Ness's team. WODC assets is only one percent of West Oxfordshire assets, the other for the other 99% we should lead the drive to address carbon neutrality within the district.

Councillor Brooker reminded about the question on land management.

Ness Scott stated that the land management plans were published at the start of the year in January, it's a five year management plan. It will evolve and grow and more areas will be added, need to ensure that its cost neutral and work with the grounds maintenance contractors. Year one we are seeing wild flower meadows are coming up,

Councillor Al-Yousuf mentioned that WODC had been nominated for LGC awards 2022, and he wanted to congratulate the team and wanted it acknowledged and noted.

A question was raised before the meeting in writing from Councillor Al-Yousuf:

"How is WODC performing with regard to its commitment to tackling the climate emergency compared to other councils in Oxfordshire? Climate Emergency UK has given WODC a score of 50%. Is this organisation reputable, and is its methodology credible?"

23/June2022

Answer from The Climate Change Manager:

For Oxfordshire, the running order was:

West Oxfordshire: 50%

Oxford City: 48%

Oxfordshire County: 43%

Cherwell District Council: 45%

South Oxfordshire: 0%

Climate Emergency UK, a sector-led organisation established in 2019 to track and record council's climate change commitments, launched their Council Climate Plan Scorecards on 27 January 2022. The scorecards are an assessment of all UK councils', publicly available, climate action plans and strategies. The findings are varied, with the average score for all council types around 50%.

The assessment was done after each council answered a questionnaire, signposting their strategy, action plans and funding commitments. (I can only assume South Oxfordshire did not complete theirs!)

For WODC, the main items used for assessment were:

- Carbon Action Plan, and pathway to carbon neutral by 2030 (published October 2020)
- Local Recovery Plan (published October 2020) – climate as a key theme and funding subsequently allocated to short term posts taking forward climate action
- Council Plan – climate as a key theme
- Climate Change Strategy, setting out the framework for cross-District priorities embedding the ecological emergency within that
- The Climate Action Survey (carried out in 2020 to inform the Climate Change Strategy objectives) – the fact the Council's strategy was developed from a public consultation and addressed the issues raised by consultees would have scored well.
- Climate Action Bulletins to the WO Climate Action Network (380 members) as ongoing communication with local communities

These were the main components WODC fed into the assessment.

It's a desktop study, informed only by the strategy and plans for each Council submitted as part of the questionnaire. They looked for demonstration that climate and nature were being considered as integral and that consultation plays a key role for Councils - we scored well on engagement as you can see and this would most certainly be down to the fact our climate action survey went on to influence a strategy and ongoing communications.

The Climate Change Manager thought it was as good an assessment as a UK-wide desktop assessment could be. It will obviously have its shortcomings, as all assessments will, but as a high-level indicator of progress I would say it's been a helpful benchmarking.

Councillor Al-Yousuf asked if the 50% was a pleasing score. Does the methodology reflects urban versus city geographically, agriculture versus industrial.

Ness Scott replied that it was a strong start, which was also a strong start, and yes the scope was broad, but it still has value.

23/June2022

Sections	West Oxfordshire District Council	Cherwell District Council	South Oxfordshire District Council	Vale of White Horse District Council	Average district council score
<u>Governance, development and funding</u>	10/21	12/21	0/21	0/21	9.4/21
<u>Mitigation and adaptation</u>	8/18	8/18	0/18	0/18	8.1/18
<u>Commitment and integration</u>	3/7	5/7	0/7	0/7	3.8/7
<u>Community, engagement and communications</u>	★ 9/9	4/9	0/9	0/9	4.7/9
<u>Measuring and setting emissions targets</u>	4/5	4/5	0/5	0/5	2.6/5
<u>Co-benefits</u>	2/4	2/4	0/4	0/4	1.9/4
<u>Diversity and inclusion</u>	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0.5/5
<u>Education, skills and training</u>	1/5	1/5	0/5	0/5	1.5/5
<u>Ecological emergency</u>	2/4	0/4	0/4	0/4	1.8/4

The Vice-Chair thanked Ness Scott for her attendance and update.

9

Presentation on the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP)

2021/22 (Case Study)

Scott Williams the Business Manager - Contracts, Environmental Services Manager and assisted by Louise Oddy – the Service Designer, gave two slide presentation to the committee. The first on Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP), followed by the Waste Bin Placement and Renewal Programme.

Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) is a partnership between Cotswold District Council (CDC), Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), Publica and Ubico to deliver shared innovation projects.

Bill Oddy, the Group Manager - Commercial Development, Leadership and Management Team, added that WODC were spending £7.5 million per year and the service has an the impact on climate change.

The Contracts Business Manager focused on the main priority areas and ESIP Year I (2021-22) achievements, concluding that the initial targeted £400k worth of additional income/savings and have achieved £850k.

The next presentation was on the Waste Bin Placement and Renewal Programme, focusing on the programme, challenges and year 2 (2022/23) key projects.

Copy of the slides are attached to these minutes, with a copy of the case studies.

Following the presentations Mr Williams invited the committee to ask questions and comment on the service.

23/June2022

Councillor Coles thanked Scott Williams and Louise Oddy for their work and commitment, however he was not convinced that the service was not as successful as we thought, given the savings could more bins be provided. He did not believe the message take litter home was getting through, especially dog waste and questioned accuracy of the recycling waste as it was deposited into the same bin. Councillor Coles also reported that a resident had informed him that a call to WODC re bins was referred to Town Council. Problem is residents are being told to refer to Town Council and then Town Council are referring back to WODC. Councillor Coles also confirmed he had offered to meet Ubico to show them where a bin is desperately required near Springfield Oval.

The Service Designer clarified that waste was in clear bags so that when collected recyclable waste could be clearly visible, and therefore checked and can be delivered to recycling.

The Group Manager – Commercial Development stated all the bins are paid for, supplied by and installed by WODC, whether they are highways (responsibility of Town/Parish council), or on private land. Confusion may lie where bins lie on private land, collections are paid by Town/Parish Council but still done by Ubico. There has been an increase in capacity to reduce overflow bins and the data available suggests there is a dramatic reduction in reports of overflowing bins, so this is working. New dog waste bins are 90 litres, whereas the old ones were only 30 litres. Ubico will continue to look at locations to improve services as an on going process. In residential areas, a significant number of bins were located in ex council estates. The councils new policy is to encourage residents to take litter home, if there is a particular problem in a certain area we would look at it.

The Service Designer added that she speaks to every customer personally and responds to all enquiries. The Group Manager – Commercial Development added that some of the scripting in customer services where the complaints go initially have not been updated for a while. Therefore they would pick that up as an action to confer with customer Services and update them on the latest scripts, so that calls are directed to the right teams. Residents will not know which bin is responsible of WODC and which is Town/Parish council, WODC needs to take ownership of the enquiry and follow through to resolution, and we will contact Town/Parish councils if needed.

Councillor Ashton asked for clarification if the Town Council paid for bins on parklands for example. Group Manager clarified that all bins are paid for by WODC, the empty costs if on adopted highway land is the responsibility of Town Council, WODC would do this and recharge the Town Council. WODC were going to give Town and Parish councils time to budget for the recharge and this will be adopted next financial year.

Councillor Ashton added he had complaints of smelly bins. The Service Designer did clarify they had not received any complaints, however they would look at each complaint if it came through to them and ensure the bin was collected. Bill Oddy added that a service review was on its way and part of the review would be street cleansing. They wanted to introduce a new way of managing bin collection, for example some bins may have a seasonal collection type, bins emptied more frequently in the summer. This will involve the in cab technology solution that Scott Williams eluded to in his presentation. We will be able to identify hot spots, and target Ubico teams for collections, in a smarter way. Not only saving money but also saving carbon, not having to go to a bin that does not need a collection.

Councillor Hill congratulated the team on getting the new bins delivered and installed, and the fact that missed collections shows on line and that you can report a bin full on line.

The Group Manager confirmed that the on line facility will be promoted, as it was a new service.

23/June2022

Councillor Jackson wanted it on record his appreciation of Bill Oddy, Scott Williams and Louise Oddy, and the teams efforts, he had no complaints to the new open bins.

Louise Oddy thanked Councillor Jackson and thanked the Ubico teams for their hard work, in all weathers and all locations.

The Vice-Chair, thanked Scott, Bill and Louise for the update.

10 Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter Four

Bill Oddy the Group Manager - Commercial Development, introduced the quarter four Service Performance Report. He advised the Committee to focus on page 81/82 and 96, on the end of year report 2021/22. He added that there were challenges during the pandemic but it was good to see missed bin collections were reducing.

The Vice-Chair asked the committee if they had any questions on the report.

Councillor Coles noted that there were increases in fly tipping. The Group Manager – Commercial Development remarked it was most probably due to council sites being closed during the pandemic.

Councillor Jackson enquired if Councillors could be informed if bins were missed so that they could be pre warned before residents contacted them.

The Group Manager – Commercial Development confirmed that with the new in cab technology they were starting to use smart systems and were working towards Ward Councillors could be informed in future of missed collections. At present it is on the Council website, in the future we should be able to email individual residents.

11 Cabinet Work Programme 2022/23

The Group Manager – Commercial Development, Bill Oddy guided the committee to focus on the PSDS 3 Carterton, which was a huge project. Cabinet will also need to make decisions on the Waste Contract review, this scrutiny committee should will need to scrutinise that piece of work, as a priority, and probably for Finance Management Overview and Scrutiny committee.

The Vice-Chair noted that the contract partnership was a huge expenditure and was due for review, could there be a joint Committee meeting, between Climate and Environment and Finance Management scrutiny committees.

The Group Manager – Commercial Development reminded Councillors they could attend the finance Management Scrutiny committee if they wanted to.

The Climate Change Manager did not think PSDS 3 Carterton was ready yet to go to Cabinet in July so there was time.

Councillor Al-Yousuf reminded members that there had been a joint Economic and Environment Committee meeting earlier in the year, however there could be constitutional reasons why committees are separated, it would need to be looked into.

Councillor Coles reminded the committee they could have an additional committee meeting if necessary. Also this committee should look at approval of funding for West End Link, as there is a flood plain in the meadow for example which falls into this committees remit. Councillor Brooker and Councillor Pearson also referred to West End Link, and the Local Plan.

23/June2022

12 Committee Work Programme for 2022/23

The Vice-Chair looked at the provisional plan set out at the moment, but asked for suggestions from the committee for additional items to be added.

Councillor Goodwin raised that the Climate Action Working Group used to be a meeting on its own, separate from the scrutiny committee, he did not feel 25 minutes did the Carbon Action Plan justice, and wanted a separate meeting again for two hours where all climate issues could be focussed on.

Councillor Al-Yousuf informed the Committee that there had been several discussions on Councillor Goodwin's point. This committee if it feels it wants it could dedicate a meeting to one topic, or have additional meetings. It's a decision for the whole committee to decide. Additionally to form a separate working group is difficult in getting staff, and councillors together all at one time.

Councillor Ruth Smith knows the Cabinet member for Climate Change was asking how climate Change should be approached, so this committee could liaise or recommend suggestions to the Cabinet member.

The Vice-Chair asked the Group Manager – Commercial Development what his guidance would be with the Committee Work Programme. The Group Manager – Commercial Development eluded to the committee looking at cost, issues, procurement, and climate change decisions for the Work Programme. The committee here, is to add significant value and scrutiny to anything that comes its way, not to look into all the detail, the officers do that, but to scrutinise the higher level decisions. The Group Manager – Commercial Development also suggested that the Committee could if it wanted to, set up a small working group to work with the officers to report back to this Committee, that is all in the committees power to do so, however officers are more than capable in dealing with the detail and reporting back to the committee.

Councillor Coles added that the reason the Climate Action Working Group was set up, it emerged from a motion, and that motion has now concluded with the setting up of the Climate Action Plan.

Councillor Mead added that a working group is a task and finish group, there are no minutes that go out to the public domain, therefore you lose transparency and you are unable to have public engagement. Whereas this committee allows open and honest transparency and public engagement.

Councillor Goodwin hoped that the Cabinet Member for Climate Change would set the agenda for this so that it can be scrutinised.

Councillor Booker, stated that in September there are already many items on the agenda. Perhaps there could be one for Climate on its own once the Cabinet Member for Climate Change has announced the agenda.

The Vice-Chair stated these were pencilled in but it is open for discussion what the Committee wants to review in September and beyond.

The Group Manager – Commercial Development expected the Council to review its corporate plan, clearly that will have elements within it that the Committee should be looking at. That is a significant policy decision, and should be on in September. Look at where scrutiny can add most value.

The Vice-Chair stated he would want to look at the 99% climate challenges, as the focus is currently on 1%, and how this could be explored.

23/June2022

Councillor Ruth Smith had a suggestion for work streams, community energy, talking to other partners about what can be done for Witney, in affordable new energy. Delivering for residents as well as our own buildings.

The Group Manager, Bill Oddy explained that Councillors, would speak to the cabinet member, and if a policy decision was happening, this committee could call that in and scrutinise it.

The Climate Change Manager, Ness Scott informed the committee that Enysham was a pilot working with low carbon solutions, an action plan was in place, updates will be in the bio annual report.

The Vice-Chair concluded Councillors should email himself, Councillor MacRae and Democratic Services with any work programme requests.

The Group Manager suggested that as the September Committee is the next Committee that the order of what's on the work programme agenda could be drafted today. Council Plan and the Waste Service Review are significant items and should be scrutinised before it goes to Cabinet. Carbon Action Plan update also should be on the agenda.

The Vice-Chair agreed and suggestions from the committee should still come through to be looked at, and maybe there could be scope for additional committee, we await the Chairs return for his input.

13 Members Questions

Councillor Coles raised the following question:

“The last Air Quality records were published in June 2021. Could the Committee be given an expected date when the next one is due for publication please, bearing in mind that these records are always for the previous year?”

Officer's response:

1. The Air Quality report is operates on a calendar year basis. All Air Status Reports (ASR) should be submitted by June 30th each year. The report covers January – December of the previous year. So, this year's reports, which are in the process of being submitted, cover Jan-Dec 2021.
2. The WODC Team finalise a draft for DEFRA submissions by 30th June
3. DEFRA typically reverts within 1-3 months
4. WODC publishes the results by September/October

The Meeting closed at 5.06 pm

CHAIR

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Transcript of Verbal Submission to WODC Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 23/6/2022 at 14:00

Re: Update from Witney Flood Mitigation Group

William Wareing

Update from Witney Flood Mitigation Group

Dear Councillors and guests, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

I am one of the founders and spokesperson for Witney Flood Mitigation Group.

Firstly, I would like to welcome the newly appointed councillors to this committee, we look forward to working with you on the subject of flood prevention. I would like to thank WODC for the initiative taken to make this committee meeting part of the coordination of the recent Multi Agency collaboration following the actions highlighted in the 2020 Flood Report issued by WODC, which we of course had input to.

There are a number of matters I want to bring to your attention today.

Good Maintenance leads to Flood Risk Prevention - we have gained independent advice from an experienced and well-equipped river engineering contractor that better maintenance of the river is achievable (given the flood report stated the river is in poor condition) so the right solutions are simply about coordination and appropriate funding - but mostly about the drive to succeed in reversing past decisions.

Multi Agency Meetings - despite our flood group being a stakeholder, there has so far not been any engagement with us as party of the group - we ask that we are included in future meetings where we would hope to advise you and in turn communicate with the community on any progress made. We have had very good engagement and collaboration from the EA and expect the same from all other parties. So, what exactly is happening with the rest of the agencies? We certainly hope to find out today.

Emergency Planning - despite numerous requests and referring us WTC, we are yet to see any detail of a joined-up Emergency Plan for Witney, so that we can all play our part very effectively when the next flood event occurs. We have been advised that this is not publicly available however how can we work together and coordinate without that? Like all emergency plans, they are made up of joined up action at Town, District and County level along with the emergency services where everyone including us can play our parts. Once again, your engagement is requested. Working together, there are always numerous ways we can help our community such as joint communications and establishing a network of and training volunteer flood wardens.

Maintenance - once again I return to the subject of maintenance where after repeated requests for detail on maintenance, we have so far only received a broad list of areas maintained yet see little evidence of that so please provide those in detail. As highlighted to us by the Principal Structures Lead at OCC, de-silting under Witney Bridge at Bridge Street alone is pointless and needs to be part of a coordinated response to increase capacity of the channel, especially at the critical sections, working upstream from Farm Mill/the A40 underpass all the way to Bathing Place and beyond to New Mill.

Councillor Engagement - We of course are aware that a number of our councillors also hold positions at County level, and we ask that they continue to work on our behalf to best represent Witney's flood risk issues at County level and help us get more engagement and representation with the Lead Local Flood Authority, and of course OCC is ultimately responsible for Emergency Planning.

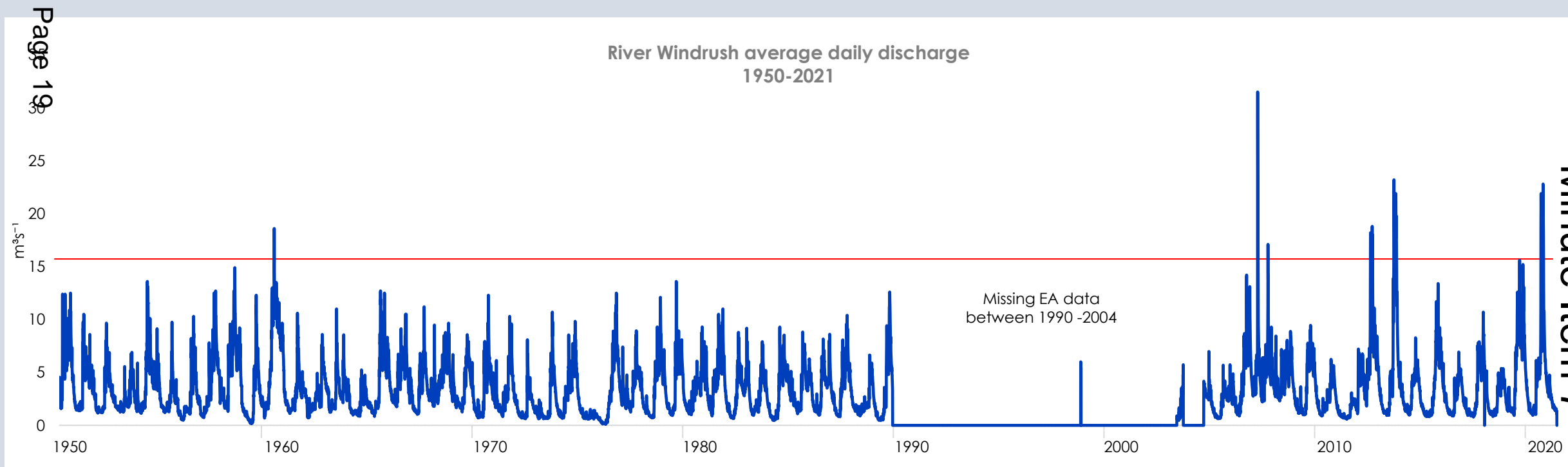
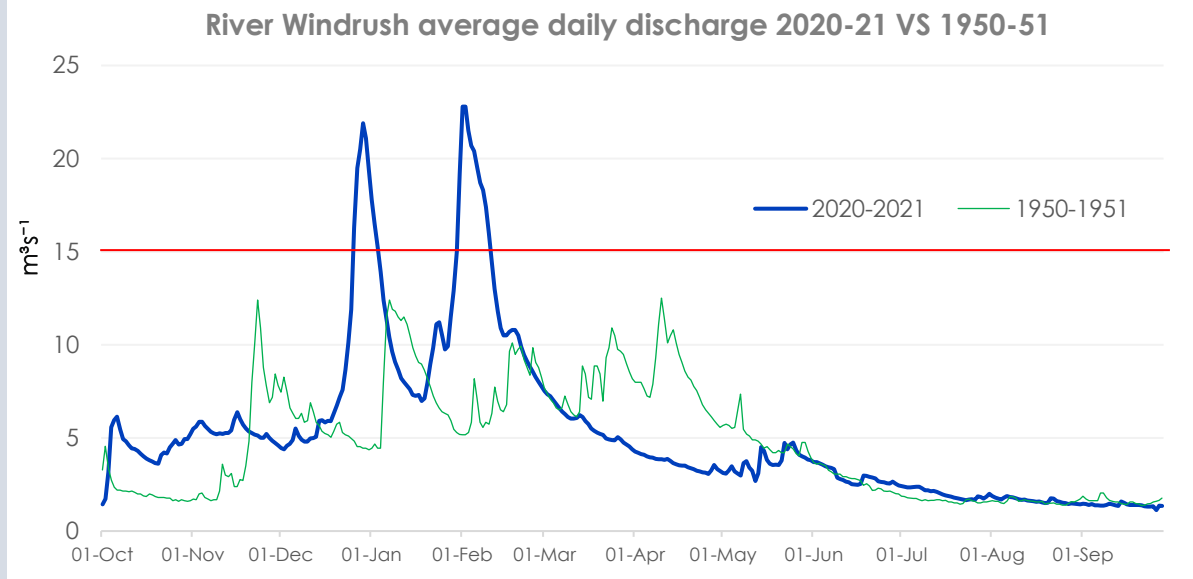
We are here today mostly to hear of progress being made of course however as you know we can only do that under participation of the public. Thank You.

River Windrush floods - increasing in both frequency and severity

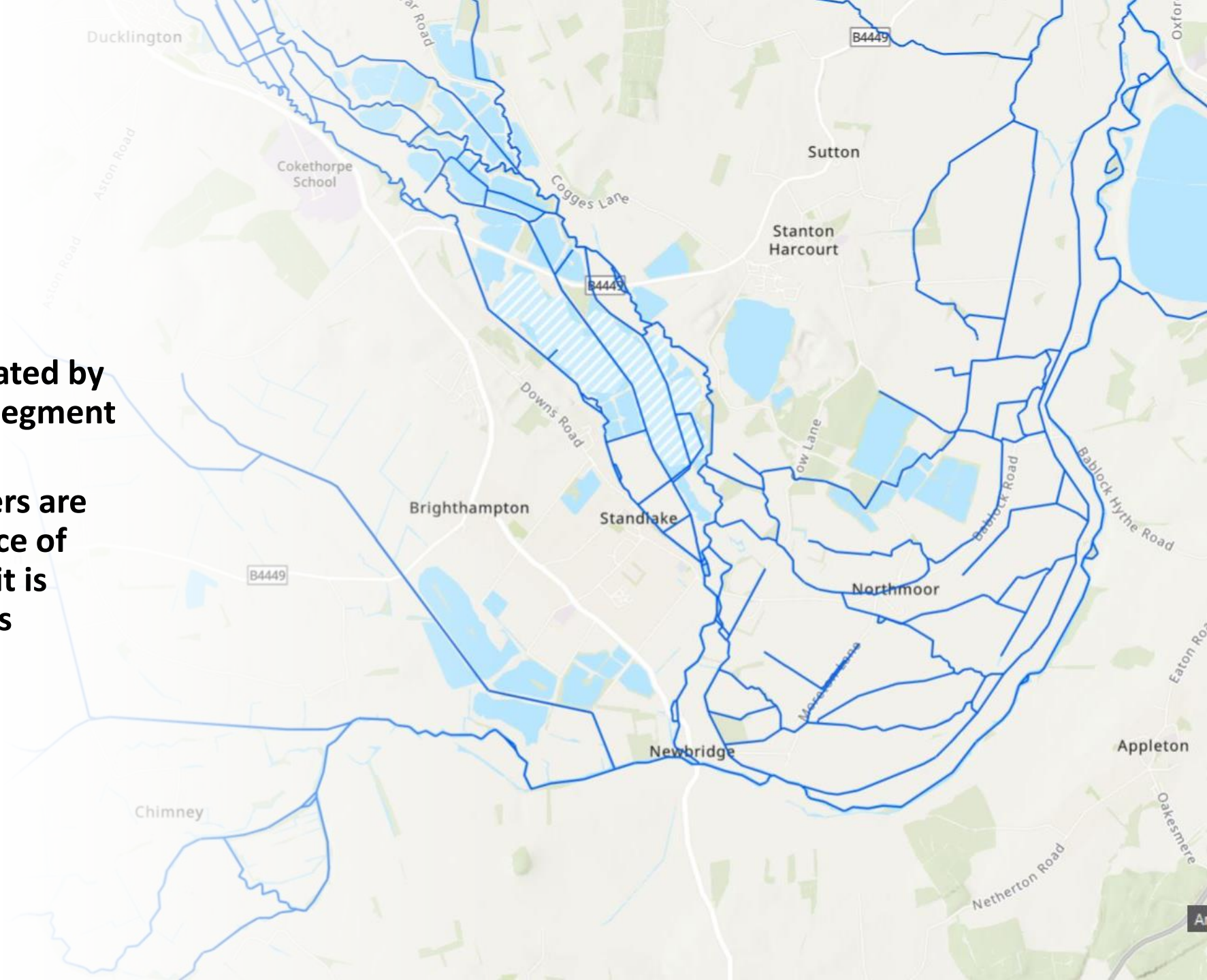
As per this data, since records began in October 1950, there have been:

- **93 days where the discharge at Newbridge has been over 15 cubic metres per second**
- **89 of these days have occurred in the last 15 years, with**
- **21 occurring in the last 12 months.**

How much is due to climate change and how much is due to land use change is debatable. What is not debatable is that both the frequency and the severity of floods has increased substantially. This deteriorating situation needs to be at the centre of all decisions relating to the river, including flood control, planning approvals and sewage treatment.



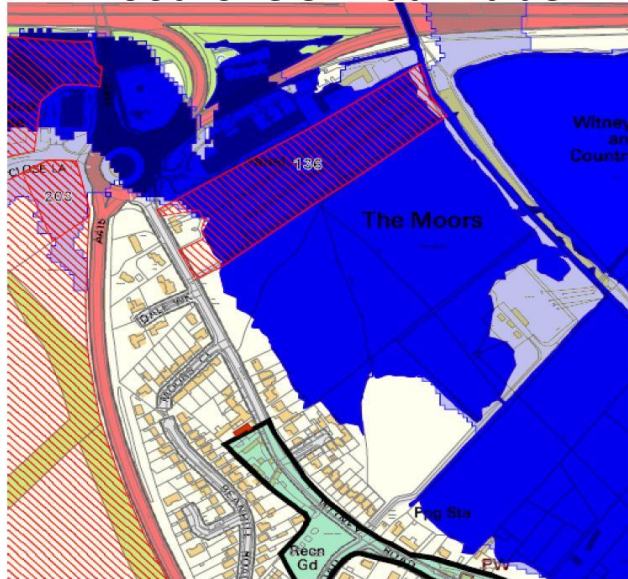
- “Main Rivers”, as designated by Environment Agency, in a segment of West Oxfordshire
- While riparian landowners are responsible for maintenance of “Main Rivers”, an EA permit is required before any work is carried out



Example of major near term flood risk – The Moors field, Ducklington

2010 EA flood map

Floodzone 3 in dark blue



Current EA flood map

Floodzone 3 in pale blue



- Planning permission currently being sought for 120 houses (approx. 300 people) on a portion of The Moors field
- Application was unanimously turned down by Lowlands Planning Sub-Committee in February. However, flood risk could not be listed as an objection as neither the EA nor OCC (the Lead Local Flood Authority) raised any objections re flooding, unsurprisingly as the current flood map shows no problem. A planning Inquiry is now underway regarding the application
- As per WODC's Witney flood report:
 - The EA's 2014 model does not take account of tributaries - neither the Colwell Brook, nor Queen Emma's Dyke which join at the northern corner of The Moors, which then join the Windrush at the eastern corner of The Moors
 - The 2020 floods were a "greater than a 1 in 100 year" event; as were the 2014 floods and the 2007 floods
- This flawed EA flood model is what current planning decisions are being based on. As is clear above, this potentially puts a large amount of people at high risk

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Page 23

Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP)

Minute Item 9

Background

- West Oxfordshire District Council is a partner in Ubico Ltd (with 7 others)
- Ubico performs environmental services on behalf of the Council:
 - Waste & Recycling collection
 - Trade Waste
 - Street Cleansing
 - Landscape services
 - Container deliveries

Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP)

- Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) is a partnership between Cotswold District Council (CDC), Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), Publica and Ubico to deliver shared innovation projects.

Priority Areas

The ESIP programme focuses on 6 main priority areas:

- Increase service efficiency delivering reduced operating costs
- Reduce the carbon produced by environmental services
- Optimise and develop paid for products to increase income for shareholder councils
- Further innovation around systems, processes and structures building on Salesforce and In-cab technology
- Improve the customer experience
- Build on our use of business information to continue to make informed decisions

ESIP Year 1 (2021-22) Achievements

- ✓ Agreement of refuse and garden waste collection increase fleet size to reduce hire costs (WODC)
- ✓ Introduction of in-cab system (CDC & WODC) delivering a £25,580 fuel saving (62 ton CO2) in WODC, and contributing to a 47% reduction in missed bins in CDC
- ✓ Providing bulk stocks of litter picking equipment to parish and town councils in support of the Clean & Green programme (CDC)
- ✓ Garden Waste licence fee increase delivering £513k of additional combined income (All)
- ✓ IWaste and recycling container delivery charging (CDC) delivering £7,433 in income
- ✓ Grounds maintenance improvements to support biodiversity priority (WODC)
- ✓ Driver liaison post (CDC) delivering £14,959 fuel saving which equates to 36.6 tons of CO2
- ✓ Review of waste demand to inform follow on projects (All)
- ✓ Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme likely to deliver circa £70k of additional income in 2023 (WODC)
- ✓ Garden waste stickers implementation (FODDC) saving £6,500
- ✓ Removal of bring sites has led to the avoidance of up to £112k in additional cleansing work which was unbudgeted for (WODC)
- ✓ Garden waste reduced number of loaders delivering £67,486 (WODC)
- ✓ Supporting the Clean and Green Programme (CDC) in additional cleansing
- ✓ Vehicle maintenance - new ways of working (WODC) delivering a £34,000 saving
- ✓ DMR (Dry Mixed Recycling) new contract (WODC)
- ✓ Procurement of electric vehicles including a new sweeper at WODC

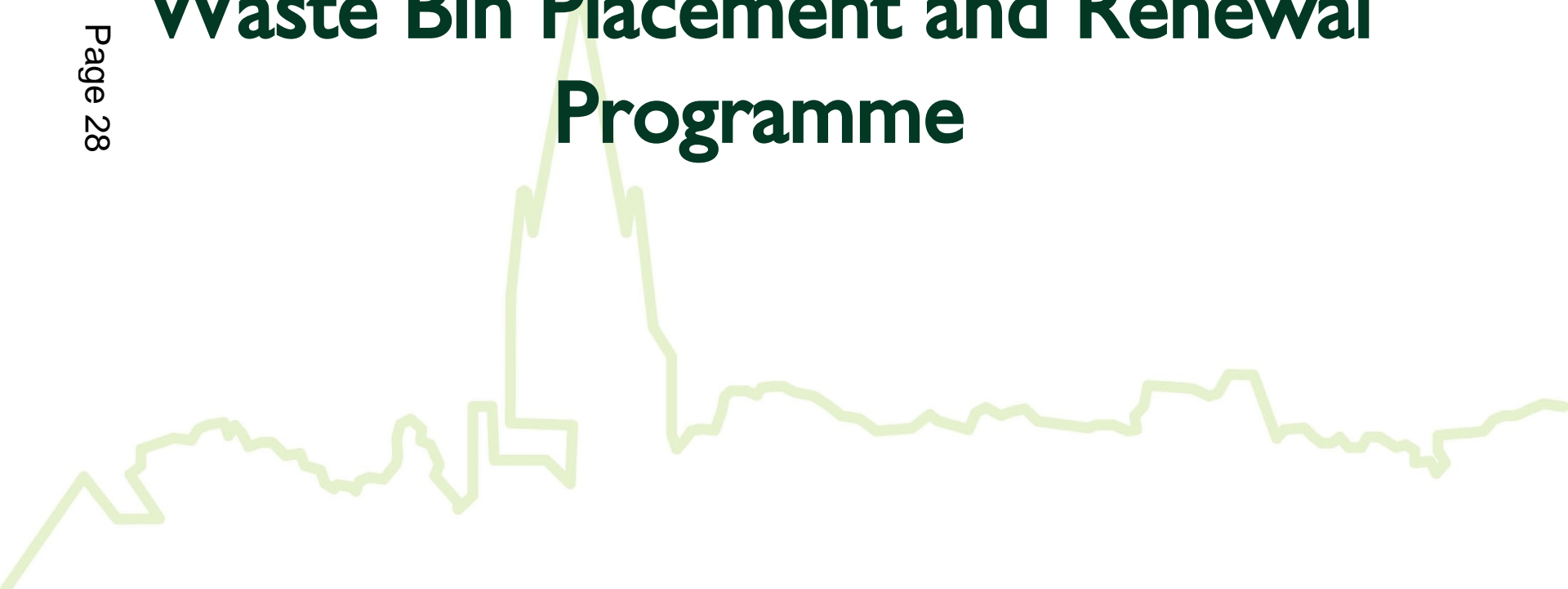
Targeted £400k worth of additional income/savings and have achieved £850k!



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Page 28

Waste Bin Placement and Renewal Programme



Background

- Council made decision to invest in replacing previous litter and dog bins with new dual bins
- Previously no guidance on locations
- No replacement programme
- Visually unattractive
- Total cost annually of circa £450K to empty (£377 each)
- Each bin costs £4k over it's life (10 year life)



Page 30



Programme

- ✓ Programme focussed on all 81 parishes
- ✓ Introduced a new emptying schedule for all bins
- ✓ Anyone can now report overflowing bins online
- ✓ New maps showing locations of bins
- ✓ Reduced costs and increased income for the Council
- ✓ Work completed by end of April 2022

Challenges

- Some negative feedback on social media but on the whole positive reaction
- Unreliable data regarding quantity/location
- Residents have strong views about bins
- Scale of programme and hinderance in staff numbers brought about by COVID!



“The bins look great and I have had lots of positive comments from dog walkers”

Parish Councillor

“The new bins through the village look so much smarter. We are delighted by these initiatives on the part of WODC.”

Chairman of the Parish Council



West Oxfordshire District Council
@WodcNews

Out with the old, in with the new!

Working with parish councils we have now installed over 100 new #litterbins & removed some of our more 'vintage' bins in the process.

We're investing £50k alone into improving our bins as part of our priority to improve the local environment.



12:15 PM · Sep 30, 2021 · Orlo

“Thank you for installing that bin by the stile so quickly”

Parish Councillor

ESIP Year 2 (2022-23)

- Building on the relationships and confidence and capability in the team built up in the first year
- Greater focus on efficiencies, benefits realisation, and traditional business reviews
- More robust approach to price (fee setting) in 2023/24
- Focus on short, medium, and longer term benefits
- Don't underestimate the scale (risk and opportunity)

Key Projects Year 2 - WODC Focus

- Waste & Recycling Service Review in preparation for 2024
- Trade Waste review
- Garden Waste licence renewal review
- Street Cleansing review
- Landscapes review



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Page 36

Questions



Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) 2021/22 - Year 1 Case Study

Overview

Waste and recycling collection represents one of the most fundamental municipal services that local government offers, presenting councils with huge challenges and potential opportunities in terms of emerging agendas around the environment, climate emergency, and digital services.

The Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) is a partnership between Cotswold District Council (CDC), Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), Publica and Ubico to deliver shared innovation projects.

The ESIP programme focuses on 6 main priority areas:

- Increase service efficiency delivering reduced operating costs
- Reduce the carbon produced by environmental services
- Optimise and develop paid for products to increase income for shareholder councils
- Further innovation around systems, processes and structures building on Salesforce and In-cab technology
- Improve the customer experience

- Build on our use of business information to continue to make informed decisions

Key projects and benefits ESIP has delivered in 2021/22 include:

- Alloy in-cab systems at CDC and WODC
- Waste service review in FODDC
- Over £850k of combined efficiencies or additional income for CDC, WODC, and FoDDC

Background

Working in partnership, officers from Publica and Ubico met with stakeholders to develop a 'long list' of potential opportunities, which could be introduced to meet one or more of the programme priority areas.

This 'long list' was then refined to identify the projects which could be delivered in 2021/22 and these were subsequently taken forward.

A total combined savings/additional income target of £400k was also agreed for the programme.

What we did

Following data collection, review and modelling, individual business cases were produced setting out any investment required and the likely outcomes and benefits which could be achieved. Partner authorities were asked to consider the business cases and the programme was updated accordingly.

Any good practice realised in one area/district is shared in the other districts to support commonality of service and also improve team resilience.

Results

The main projects which have been delivered during 2021/22 are:

- Agreement of refuse and garden waste collection increase fleet size to reduce hire costs (WODC)
- Introduction of in-cab system (CDC & WODC) delivering a £25,580 fuel saving (62 ton CO₂) in WODC, and contributing to a 47% reduction in missed bins in CDC
- Providing bulk stocks of litter picking equipment to parish and town councils in support of the Clean & Green programme (CDC)
- Garden Waste licence fee increase delivering £513k of additional combined income (All)
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- Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme likely to deliver circa £70k of additional income in 2023 (WODC)
- Garden waste stickers implementation (FODDC) saving £6,500
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- Supporting the Clean and Green Programme (CDC) in additional cleansing
- Vehicle maintenance - new ways of working (WODC) delivering a £34,000 saving
- DMR (Dry Mixed Recycling) new contract (WODC)
- Procurement of electric vehicles including a new sweeper at WODC

Wider benefits

The programme has exceeded the additional income/reduced expenditure target of £400k, delivering over £850k of combined efficiencies or additional income for CDC, WODC, and FoDDC

The introduction of Alloy in-cab technology at CDC and WODC will assist with future collaboration across the Ubico partnership and present greater opportunities.

Resources required to deliver

The Councils have made significant one-off investments in elements such as the Alloy in-cab system (CDC & WODC) and increased number of vehicles (WODC).

Ubico and Publica made a very significant resource investment to deliver the programme and the benefits, which have been achieved with no requirement for additional/external resources to deliver the projects.

Next steps

Year one of ESIP was completed in March 2022 and was largely an 'enabling' phase where the relationship and trust between the councils, Ubico and Publica was further developed and technologies such as in-cab and improved digital services were delivered.

Year two will build on this platform with a focus on strategic service change such as cross boundary working for Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council and service reviews in order to deliver larger benefits.





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DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLICA 

Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme Case Study

In December 2020 West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) adopted a new set of public waste bin principles which outlined where bins would be located in the future. The council took the decision to install new 90ltr dual litter and dog waste bins to replace the 'end of life' separate dog waste and litter bins.

Overview

In July 2021 the "Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme" started to remove and replace 1,200 litter and dog waste bins, completing the implementation phase of the programme in May 2022 and achieving the following results:

- A total of 631 new dual bins were installed in 81 parishes across West Oxfordshire.
- A reduction of 58.8% in reports of litter bins overflowing
- The programme implemented a structured and consistent framework to ensure bins were located strategically to meet local needs, ie higher numbers of bins in high footfall areas like town centres
- A new emptying schedule was published and made available to town and parish councils
- A digital map was created to show locations and condition of bins
- The council identified £70,000 of additional income to empty bins in locations that were not adopted highway e.g. play parks and recreation fields

Background

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, WODC is a "Litter Authority" and therefore responsible for cleansing of the adopted highway within its district boundary. This act includes providing and maintaining any street or public place receptacles for refuse or litter (referred to as litter bins) - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/litter-and-refuse-council-responsibilities-to-keep-land-clear>

It is the duty of a "Litter Authority", to make arrangements for regular emptying and cleansing of any litter bins provided/maintained by them. The regular emptying must be sufficiently frequent to ensure that no such litter bin or its contents shall become a nuisance or give reasonable grounds for complaint.

WODC had approximately 700 90ltr litter and 500 30ltr dog waste bins (total 1,200) in place across the district. The bins were in varying conditions and had differing levels of usage. Many of the receptacles were at end of life and this

reflected poorly on the Council and the District, which attracts millions of visitors annually. In many cases, there were multiple bins (dog and litter) in the same location and these were not accessible to people with physical disabilities.

Some Parish and Town Councils had requested litter and/or dog waste bins in their parks and playgrounds, which they are responsible for. In some cases, the emptying of these bins was being paid for by Parish and Town Councils and in some areas, the costs were being met by WODC.

The locations of litter and dog bins were inconsistent across the district and there was no proper maintenance or replacement programme. The dog bins were in many cases not accessible to all users as they were mounted on poles and to dispose of waste people were required to lift the lid on the top, presenting a potential public health risk.

Some Town and Parish Councils were not aware of when bins in their area were scheduled to be emptied and there was no proper system in place to request additional bins.

What we did

The council adopted a project management approach to deliver the programme, by appointing a sponsor and project lead, and project leads from the council's waste company, Ubico. The installation of new dual bins was done one parish at a time starting with A (Ascott -Under-Wychwood) and working through to W (Witney).

The programme implementation phase started in July 2021 and emails were sent to all town and parish councils informing them. Only 20% of town and parish councils responded to a request for information, despite being sent multiple requests. This subsequently caused communication breakdown in some parishes when the programme was implemented and changes on the ground started to occur. To overcome this, all Town and Parish Councils were emailed a few weeks ahead of the work starting in their area and in a number of cases, site meetings were arranged.

The project team held weekly stand-up review meetings initially and these increased to daily meetings during the final phase of the implementation due to the pace of implementation increasing.

The programme lead reported progress on several occasions to the Councils' Environmental Overview

and Scrutiny Committee, ensuring elected Councillors were kept informed. The Cabinet Member for Environment was briefed on progress every month and the team had a programme tracker.

The implementation phase across 81 parishes in the district, installing 631 new dual bins, was completed in May 2022, 10 months after it started.

A reduction of 47.4% in the number of bins across West Oxfordshire was the result of:

- combining litter and dog waste into a dual bin
- rationalising bins that were located at isolated bus stops and laybys; and removing bins that were located in residential areas

Residents of the district are encouraged to take litter and dog waste home and dispose of it in their grey refuse bin. As a result of the reduction in the number of public space waste bins there has not been a visual increase in the amount of littering.

Results

- A total of 1,200 litter and dog waste bins have been reviewed
- A total of 631 new dual bins were installed

Benefits

- The new dual bins improve the appearance of council assets and branding
- There has been a 58.8% reduction in complaints of overflowing bins (Q4 2021 compared to Q4 2022)
- A new emptying schedule has been published and made available to Town and Parish Councils
- £70,000 of additional income was identified

The implementation benefits outlined at the start of the programme have been over achieved. The secondary benefits will be identified as part of a review of the street cleansing service in 2022/3 as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP).

Next steps

The management of public bins was transferred to the contracts team to manage at the completion of the programme.

