



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and Date of Committee	<b>ECONOMIC &amp; SOCIAL OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 OCTOBER 2023</b>
Subject	<b>SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24 QUARTER ONE</b>
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	All accountable Executive Members.
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Purpose	To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter One (Q1).
Annex	Annex A – Service Dashboards
Recommendation.	<i>That the Committee Resolves to:</i> <i>1. Note the 2023/24 Q1 service performance report.</i>
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Putting Residents First</li><li>• Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All</li><li>• Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife</li><li>• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency</li><li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li></ul>
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The Council monitors service performance each quarter and a report on progress towards achieving the aim and priorities set out in the Corporate Plan is produced at the end of Q2 and Q4. On 13 July 2022, the Executive agreed to revise the Council Plan and develop an Action Plan that will set out how the priorities in the Council Plan will be delivered. Following consultation with stakeholders, a final draft was presented to the Executive on 11 January 2023 and adopted at Full Council on 18 January 2023.
- 1.2. A high-level Commissioning Framework was approved by the Executive in October 2020 which sets out the relationship between Publica and the Council and their respective responsibilities. Publica provides the necessary information, including a range of performance indicators, to the Council so it can assess whether the commissioned services are being delivered in accordance with the agreed quality and standard. The Council's Chief Executive Officer is responsible for reviewing and approving the information provided in this report prior to its publication.
- 1.3. The Council's Chief Executive has received a report on service performance and has assessed it in line with the high level Commissioning Statement. Particular attention has been drawn to the following:
  - i. Through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Council has been actively supporting Ukrainian families and individuals in finding permanent homes. Additionally, the Council provides assistance with sourcing furniture, white goods, and offers general support to ensure guests have everything they need to set up their homes.
  - ii. Forty-five of the targeted 69 affordable homes were delivered in Q1, including 22 for affordable rent and 23 for shared ownership. Some forecasted completions have been moved back to Q2/Q3 but the year-end total completions are anticipated to be up to target.

## **2. COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 2.1. The West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2023 – 27 was adopted at Full Council on 18 January 2023. This presents five strategic priorities, of equal importance, for the District:
  - Putting Residents First
  - A Good Quality of Life for All
  - A Better Environment for People and Wildlife
  - Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency
  - Working Together for West Oxfordshire
- 2.2. Portfolio Holders will work with officers to develop an Action Plan that will identify a range of actions to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond to make progress on the delivery of the Council Plan priorities.

## **3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

- 3.1. The Council's performance has been mixed, with progress in Land Charges Response Times and Planning Determination Times. However, the cost-of-living crisis continues to result in increased customer contact for certain services. The challenging economic situation has put additional strain on residents, leading to an upsurge in queries and concerns.

- 3.2. The Council remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and actively investing in the development and implementation of automation and self-serve options for customers. By providing accessible and efficient self-help tools, customers can address their queries and concerns independently, leading to a decrease in the need for repeated interactions with services. It will continue to monitor and assess the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

### KEY POINTS BY SERVICE AREA THEMES

#### 3.3. Development Management

- The service has performed very well processing applications within agreed times.  
61 minor applications were determined in Q1, compared to 90 applications in the same period of the previous year. 96.72% of these were determined within the agreed time (including EOT)  
9 major applications were determined in Q1, compared to 7 applications in the same period of the previous year. 88.89% of these were determined within the agreed time (including EOT)  
220 other applications were determined in Q1, compared to 310 applications in the same period of the previous year. 96.36% of these were determined within the agreed time (including EOT)
- Application numbers continue to slow but nonetheless, total income received for Q1 is £387,651 which is £84,651 above the target. Pre-App income was marginally below the target of £16,353 sitting at £15,093.
- There were 11 appeals decided this quarter, four of which were allowed. This equates to 36.36% of appeals allowed. As this metric is cumulative, it may well reduce throughout the year depending on how many appeals are received.
- The service reports a substantial reduction in enforcement cases this quarter.
- The key findings not requiring Member authorisation from the PAS report that went to cabinet this quarter have been implemented which has seen an upturn in performance.
- There was one complaint received in Q1, which was not upheld.

#### 3.4. Housing

- Homelessness continues to be an issue and the amount of homeless people presenting continues to be high.
- Hostels are still running at capacity. As there has been a reduction in homelessness at Cotswold, West households have been able to utilise them. There are 2 hostels in West, one which only has 60% capacity currently due to maintenance issues.
- Implementation of the Ukrainian Top Up Fund has been secured and will be used for additional specialist staffing to free up the wider Housing Team.
- Further funding to work with Housing Association partners has been allocated for properties for refugees. Depending on developers, these properties will become available in Q3/Q4.
- Properties continue to be added and removed from the Long-Term Empty Homes (LTE) list but there is an upward trend.
- Maintaining registers of long-term empty properties, can help monitor the situation, target interventions, and communicate with property owners more effectively.

- Forty-five properties including 22 for affordable rent and 23 for shared ownership have been delivered in Bampton and Witney.
- Forecasted completions at Eynsham and Carterton have been moved back to Q2 and Q3.
- Year-end total completions are anticipated to be healthy at this stage.

3.5. The service dashboards relevant to the work of this Committee are attached at Annex A.

3.6. As the new Council Plan and Action Plan adapt to address shifting priorities and dynamics, the performance indicators will need to be reviewed to provide assurance that the Plans are being delivered and to offer appropriate insights towards accomplishing the strategic aims.

#### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1. None

#### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

5.1. None

#### **6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

6.1. None

#### **7. BACKGROUND OPTIONS**

7.1. None