



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and Date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6 DECEMBER 2023
Subject	SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24 QUARTER TWO
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader. Email: <a href="mailto:andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk">andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: <a href="mailto:giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk">giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Alison Borrett – Senior Performance Analyst. Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk">democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Purpose	To provide details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Two (Q2).
Annex	Annex A - Council Priorities report Annex B - Corporate Plan Action Tracker Annex C - Performance indicator report Annex D – Financial Performance Summary
Recommendation.	<i>That the Committee Resolves to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Note the 2023/24 Q2 service performance report.</i></li></ul>
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	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Publica Directors, Assistant Directors, Business Managers, Service Managers and Service Leads.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

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

## **2. COUNCIL PRIORITY REPORT**

### **2.1** Progress on actions in the Corporate Plan for Q2 include:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan has been created on the Modern.gov system but has not yet been published to the website.
- Outstanding information has been provided to consultants in relation to the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) alongside ongoing discussions with key stakeholders including landowners/developers with regards to development typologies to be tested and the approach to consultation with key stakeholders including landowners/developers.
- A Proactive Approach to Affordable Housing Delivery paper was presented and approved by the Executive on 15 November.
- Options for a new proposal of the new Net-Zero Carbon housing development at Waterbush Road, Chipping Norton is being worked up with Green Axis, the Planning service and Homes England.
- Improvement works to the bridges for the Deer Park South Access Project have been completed.
- Regulation 18 for the Local Plan is ongoing with four public exhibitions and three Town and Parish Council workshops undertaken during September and October.
- The planning application has been submitted in late August for the decarbonisation of Carterton Leisure Centre.
- Crowdfunding website, in collaboration with Spacehive, launched in October.

### **2.2** The Council Priority highlight report is attached at Annex A with an overview of progress against all actions in the Corporate Plan attached at Annex B.

## **3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

### **3.1** Service performance above target:

- Percentage of Council Tax Collected (64.26% against a target of 53%)
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected (63.85% against a target of 57%)

- Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events (3.25 days against a target of 5 days)
- Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay (0.11% against a target of 0.35%)
- Customer Satisfaction (96.51% against a target of 90%)
- Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (92.59% against a target of 65%)
- Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (86.39% against a target of 70%)
- Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (96.49% against a target of 80%)
- Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships (4313 memberships against a target of 3990 memberships and 179007 visits against a target of 184970)
- Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales (100% against a target of 95%)
- Percentage of high risk notifications risk assessed within 1 working day (100% against a target of 90%)

### 3.2 Service Performance below target:

#### **Processing times for Council Tax Support New Claims (23.98 days against a target of 20 days) and Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances (9.83 days against a target of 4 days)**

Q2's standalone figures show that Council Tax New Claims are being processed in 17.05 days, against the target of 20 days and Housing Benefit Changes of Circumstance are being processed in 6.07 days against a target of 4 days, however, as the targets are cumulative the rolling statistics are above target for average processing days.

(Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events however remains well within the target of 5 days.)

**The Resolution:** Following procedural changes to manage the work received directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and customers, we are now achieving a level of 60-70% of automation for the DWP work up from 40-45% in Q1 allowing for more focus on applications and other reported changes. The Universal Credit (UC) section of DWP is currently investigating improvements to the data that is sent through to local authorities via a Working Group. Once the improvements have been made there is the potential, in conjunction with our software supplier, to automate additional DWP work items.

The outstanding workload is reducing week by week and management of the resource to support the reduction is underway. The improvements to the automation system have freed up officer capacity to help reduce the backlog of claims. It is anticipated that the trial for reduced phone line opening hours will further free up capacity for officers to process claims.

Publica remains committed to further improving its performance and service delivery and is 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. Publica will continue to monitor, assess, and report on the impact of improvement programs in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational efficiency.

#### **Building Control Satisfaction (50% against a target of 90%)**

Two surveys were returned during Q2, one of which was satisfied.

**The Resolution:** Each month, the service conducts telephone interviews with customers who have received a completion certificate during the month. The customer rates the service on helpfulness of staff, quality of technical advice and other information, responsiveness, value for money, and overall satisfaction. Given the low numbers of survey returns discussions are proposed with ICT to investigate an SMS notification service linking customers to an online survey. The service retains a strong hold in the share of the market.

#### **Missed Bins per 100,000 (135.31 against a target of 120)**

The number of missed bins per 100,000 has increased since last quarter but is lower than this time last year. This has been attributed to the retirement of an experienced crew member and the misreporting of Service Failures, which were incorrectly logged as access issues in the in-cab technology (Alloy).

**The Resolution:** Additional training with crews and supervisors to bring the misses down. Performance will be continuously under review by the Contract Monitoring Team.

#### **Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days (83.58% against a target of 90%)**

The Councils performance has improved dramatically since last year but is lower than last quarter and below target.

**The Resolution:** Monthly performance meetings with the Assistant Director responsible for most of the answering teams have been set up, where issues are discussed to ensure the process runs efficiently and teams where delays are occurring can be identified and action taken to ensure targets are met. Tweaks to the current escalation process, has improved responses times so reducing delays and sessions lead by the Land Charges Team Leader has raised the awareness of the importance of responding to requests within the timescales set.

The service would benefit from all searchable records being digitised and standard procedures being in place for system use. This would in turn streamline searches. Further training and discussions with internal consultees are planned to ensure good practice. The migration of the local land charges register under the HMLR project was completed earlier this year.

#### **Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (126 against a target of 138)**

Eighty-one properties including 51 for affordable rent and 30 for shared ownership have been delivered at Woodstock, Witney, Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham during Q2 with forty-five delivered during Q1.

**The Resolution:** The service reports that completions fluctuate over the year. A housing development period is at least 12 months, with some schemes phased over several years. The slightly lower numbers are attributed to forecasted completions at Carterton and Enstone having been delayed. They are now due to be completed during Q3 and Q4.

- 3.3 A full report is attached at Annex C and should be looked at in conjunction with this report.
- 3.4 As previously agreed, where possible, broader benchmarking has been included in the full performance report to gain a more robust and insightful evaluation of performance. Where

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

**4. EXECUTIVE**

4.1 This report will be reviewed by the Executive at its meeting on 13 December 2023; and any comments from the Committee will be recorded and shared with the Executive.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Contained in this report.

**8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.1 None

**9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Contained in this report.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

(END)