

Agenda



Listening Learning Leading

Contact Officer: Candida Basilio, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 07895 213820

E-mail: candida.basilio@southoxon.gov.uk

Date: 30 October 2023

Website: www.southoxon.gov.uk

A MEETING OF THE

Scrutiny Committee

**WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.00 PM
ABBEY HOUSE, ABBEY CLOSE, ABINGDON OX14 3JE**

To watch this virtual meeting, follow this link to the council's YouTube channel:
[South and Vale Committee meetings on YouTube](#)

Members of the Committee:

Ken Arlett (Chair)

Mocky Khan (Vice-Chair)

David Turner

Jo Robb

Tony Worgan

Leigh Rawlins

James Barlow

Kate Gregory

Katharine Keats-Rohan

Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, Braille, audio, email and easy read. For this or any other special requirements (such as access facilities) please contact the officer named on this agenda. Please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

To record apologies for absence and the attendance of substitute members.

2 Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters which the chair determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

3 Declaration of interests

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests or any conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4 Minutes (Pages 4 - 8)

To review the committee minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2023 and agree as a correct record.

5 Public participation

To receive any questions or statements from members of the public that have registered to speak.

6 Work schedule and dates for all South and Joint scrutiny meetings (Pages 9 - 10)

To review the attached scrutiny work schedule. Please note, although the dates are confirmed, the items under consideration are subject to being withdrawn, added to or rearranged without further notice.

REPORTS AND ISSUES FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 Financial outturn report 22/23 (Pages 11 - 22)

Scrutiny committee is recommended to note the overall outturn position of the council as well as the outturn of individual service areas.

8 Consultation and Engagement annual report (Pages 23 - 61)

Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the consultation and engagement carried out by the council during 2022-2023 and make any comments to Cabinet for consideration.

9 **Planning enforcement update report** (Pages 62 - 66)

Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the latest progress report of the new approach to planning enforcement (as set out in the [Planning Enforcement Statement 2021](#)) and provide any comments to the Cabinet Member for Planning.

(Nb: The link to the 2021 statement above is an appendix document for this item, also mentioned on page 66 of the agenda pack. It has not been included as an attachment, so please access it via the link.)

Patrick Arran
Head of Legal and Democratic

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Scrutiny Committee



held on Monday, 7 August 2023 at
6.00 pm in Abbey House, Abbey
Close, Abingdon OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: Ken Arlett (Chair), Mocky Khan (Vice-chair), James Barlow, Alexandrine Kantor, Katharine Keats-Rohan, Leigh Rawlins, Ed Sadler, and Tony Worgan
Officers: Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive Place) and Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer)
Guests: Councillor Robin Bennett (Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, and Deputy Leader)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Paul Fielding (Head of Housing and Environment), Nigel Bower (Housing Delivery Manager), and Susie Royce (Broadcasting Officer)
Guests: Andrea Powell (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Policy and Programmes), David Rouane (Leader of the Council), Anne-Marie Simpson (Cabinet Member for Planning), Sue Cooper (Cabinet Member for Environment), and Maggie Filipova-Rivers (Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, and statutory Deputy Leader)

8 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Turner, who was substituted by Councillor Ed Sadler. Councillor Kate Gregory sent apologies and was substituted by Councillor Alexandrine Kantor. Apologies were received from Councillor Jo Robb.

9 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements. There was no urgent business.

10 Declaration of interests

Councillor Ken Arlett declared an interest in item seven on the agenda, the Section 106 affordable housing funding item, as he was a trustee of Henley housing trust. However, as the trust was not affected by the passing of the policy, he would continue to sit on the committee during that item.

All members of the committee also noted that there were developments in their ward that had generated Section 106 funds but did not believe this to preclude them from discussing the item.

11 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023 as a correct record and agree that the chair sign these as such.

12 Public participation

None.

13 Section 106 affordable housing funding

The committee considered the report and policy document (plus application form) for Section 106 affordable housing funding and asked questions of the cabinet member for economic development and regeneration, Councillor Robin Bennett, who was supported by the Housing Delivery Manager, Nigel Bower, and the Head of Housing and Environment, Paul Fielding.

Firstly, Councillor Bennett outlined the current process for affordable housing delivery and noted that, in some instances, developers did not deliver affordable housing on the development site and so contributed to the Section 106 fund (S106). The committee was informed that this fund had reached £2.8m and was continually added to as more developments contributed to it. It was also noted that the council was now a registered provider of affordable housing. In addition, when the council tried to pay the money out of the S106 fund, they became aware of a lack of clarity in the process. Therefore, the proposed policy and criteria attempted to make the process as transparent as possible and less iterative for applicants and the council.

The committee also noted that the policy was ready before the May 2023 election but was called into the committee by Councillor Ken Arlett and would be taken to Cabinet later in the week. Councillor Bennett also confirmed to the committee that once approved, registered providers and community land trusts would be made aware of the policy change in order to increase the number of bids the council receives.

The committee then began scrutinising appendix 1 to the report which covered the proposed grant policy and application form. On point 4 of the policy, members discussed the replication of 'delivers affordable housing' and 'deliver affordable housing in perpetuity' in the list of the council's key priorities. When asked for clarification, the Housing Delivery Manager confirmed to the committee that the council would try to deliver in perpetuity, and although he believed these two points meant slightly different things, he had no objection to the removal of 'delivers affordable housing' and keeping the point about delivering in perpetuity. The committee then agreed to recommend to Cabinet for the removal of this point.

Members then discussed another point in the key priorities list, the point that 'In area where there is a high level of demand and deficit of supply', and they made a point that affordable housing was needed in most areas of the district. To clarify, the Head of Housing and Environment confirmed that they would be using the housing register to understand where the demand for affordable housing was and that where there

would be a match between demand and a bid to provide affordable housing, it would score relatively higher than a location where there was less demand. Overall, members agreed that this point should be kept in the policy.

In response to questions about the 'not able to access Homes England funding' point in the key priorities list, the Head of Housing and Environment confirmed that there were typically no restrictions on funding sources and that a mix of funding was normal. Councillor Bennett also added that this was in the policy to prioritise bids which did not have access to the Homes England schemes, such as smaller schemes, and members were satisfied with these answers.

A point was raised about the number of questions required from bidders, which some members thought could be prohibitive. However, the officers confirmed that this was needed in order to be more transparent with their requirements and to reduce the iterative process they had found to be the case with past funding applications.

The committee asked a point of clarification about if the fund could be used by housing associations to purchase existing homes and convert them into affordable homes. The Head of Housing and Environment confirmed that this would be allowed but that this fund was aimed at creating new affordable homes.

On item 12 of the policy, about the industrial standard Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the bids would be assessed against, some members believed that this was not necessary as certain trusts did not work against KPIs. However, the committee agreed that these KPIs should be kept as they provided key financial details and ensured the council was investing prudently.

Members then discussed point 13 in the policy, the scoring matrix, and asked if there was a defined pass mark needed for successful bids, certain pass marks for each section, or just an overall mark. In response, the Head of Housing and Environment informed members that the scoring would be used by offers to help inform their decision as well as help inform the bidders about certain low scoring elements of their bids so they can be resubmitted, and therefore there was no minimum score. Although some members of the committee expressed a desire for certain bids to be excluded if they failed to meet a certain standard, they were content with the response from officers and Councillor Bennett that they did not want to exclude any bid at an early stage based on points that could be met later, as some organisations would learn from the initial bid and potentially resubmit a successful application later. Councillor Bennett also added that Cabinet would have the final say on bid and they could prevent funding for any bid they believed did not properly meet certain criteria.

When asked about the scoring point in the matrix, 'Unit and scheme costs demonstrating Value for Money', and what value for money was defined as, the Head of Housing and Environment responded to members that value for money was considered to be how much money would be needed to produce each unit of affordable housing, which was a comparable figure between bids. In addition, there would be other aspects considered, such as the value for money for the people who would live in those homes and what their bills would amount to. An example was raised that some houses might be more expensive but deliver higher quality offer to the tenant as they would have a lower monthly cost, and this would also be accounted for. Overall, the committee was satisfied with the concluding remarks on the issue by Councillor Bennett who stated that value for money would be assessed for its benefit to the council and to the tenants.

The committee then discussed including an addition point in the scoring matrix for a geographic link between the bid location and the source of the S106 funds. Although the Head of Housing and Environment mentioned that S106 could be applied throughout the district the committee agreed that having the information would be beneficial in order to help address housing needs.

Members then discussed a final point in the scoring matrix under scheme features, 'meets zero carbon or better' and questioned if this could be amended to account for bids working towards net zero. However, the committee was satisfied that the scoring of points between zero and three would account for such bids and so agreed to keep the wording.

On point 19 of the policy, on the number of payments made to successful applicants, members asked for clarity about the number of milestones applicants could expect. In response, Councillor Bennett agreed that the wording could be amended from 'typically' to 'up to' five milestones and the committee agreed to recommend this amendment to Cabinet.

Finally, members discussed point 22 in the policy and inquired as to whether there could be an inclusion of a maximum number for the timescale, such as, 'will endeavour to complete in six months'. The Head of Housing and Environment then confirmed that point 21 acknowledged the application within 10 working days but if they provided a timescale in point 22, they risked falling outside this and causing more confusion. Overall, the committee agreed to keep the wording of point 22 as it was.

The committee then discussed the accompanying report to the policy. Specifically, on point 13 of the report, members asked officers why the threshold for suspending the application window was £250,000 when they believed that this money could still be utilised for the provision of affordable housing. The Head of Housing and Development responded that this figure was chosen as most bids were received in excess of this figure, but Councillor Bennett confirmed that the figure could be reduced. Overall, the committee agreed that a smaller threshold figure of £50,000 should be implemented as this could support smaller applicants and use more of the S106 funds. Councillor Bennett also added that it was a rolling pot but that a regular update on the balance should be provided to members.

On point 17, members then asked if reference could be made to broader climate issues. However, they were satisfied with the response from Councillor Bennett that this would mostly be picked up by the planning service when applications were submitted.

Finally, members asked a question to the Head of Housing and Environment about who would assess a bid by South Oxfordshire District Council, and he responded that theoretically the council could put in a bid but that it would need to be assessed impartially by officers not involved in the application. He also noted that it would need to go through Cabinet and Council, so it would be a transparent process.

Overall, the committee accepted the report and policy but agreed to pass on a series of recommendations to cabinet for its amending.

RESOLVED: to recommend to Cabinet the following changes to the Affordable Housing Section 106 Commuted Sums Grant Policy:

1. That under point 4, the first item on the list ('delivers affordable housing') be removed as it is duplicated with the last item ('Delivers affordable housing in perpetuity')
2. That point 7 include reference to the fact that existing dwellings can be included with the category of acquisition.
3. That in the scoring matrix under point 13, an addition point be included under the 'Scheme features' heading titled, 'Geographic link to source'. This will detail how close the proposed dwelling is from the application that delivered the S106 funds.
4. That point 19 be reworded to say that, "... The key payment stages are up to five milestones".
5. In addition, the committee agreed that point 13 of the officer report, about at what level of funds the application window would be suspended, should be reduced from the proposed amount of £250,000 to £50,000.

14 Work schedule and dates for all South and Joint scrutiny meetings

The committee noted the work programme and then discussed the council's housing mix policy and the issues they had experienced with it being out of date. Members mentioned that they would like to see this come to committee. They also discussed the climate action plan but noted that this was a matter for the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee.

RESOLVED: that committee noted the work programme.

The meeting closed at 7.33 pm

Scrutiny work programme

3 October 2023



Listening Learning Leading

MEETING	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE	CABINET MEMBER	CONTACT OFFICER
Scrutiny Committee 7 Nov 2023	Planning enforcement - performance update		Anne-Marie Simpson	Emma Turner emma.turner@southandvale.gov.uk
Scrutiny Committee 7 Nov 2023	Financial outturn		Pieter-Paul Barker	Simon Hewings simon.hewings@southandvale.gov.uk
Scrutiny Committee 7 Nov 2023	Annual report: consultations and engagement	This report provides the committee with details of the council's consultation and engagement projects carried out during 2022-2023	Andrea Powell	Mark Minion mark.minion@southandvale.gov.uk
Joint Scrutiny Committee 27 Nov 2023	Community Safety Partnership annual report		Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Diane Foster diane.foster@southandvale.gov.uk
Joint Scrutiny Committee 27 Nov 2023	Biffa annual performance report		Sue Cooper	Paul Fielding paul.fielding@southandvale.gov.uk
Joint Scrutiny Committee 27 Nov 2023	Joint Local Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 - to approve preferred options for consultation		Anne-Marie Simpson	Andrew Lane andrew.lane@southandvale.gov.uk

MEETING	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE	CABINET MEMBER	CONTACT OFFICER
Scrutiny Committee 6 Dec 2023	Cornerstone	Appraisal on future service delivery for Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot	Pieter-Paul Barker and Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Andrew Busby andrew.busby@southandvale.gov.uk
Scrutiny Committee 6 Feb 2024	budget setting		Pieter-Paul Barker	Simon Hewings simon.hewings@southandvale.gov.uk
Scrutiny Committee 6 Feb 2024	Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 approach		Andrea Powell	Tim Oruye tim.oruye@southandvale.gov.uk
Items for future meetings (dates to be determined)				
Scrutiny Committee	Corporate plan quarterly performance report	When quarterly performance management reports are reported to Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee members will be asked to review the report and confirm to the Scrutiny Chair if there are any elements of the report they wish to discuss at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting. The relevant Cabinet lead and contact officer will be notified.	Andrea Powell	Tim Oruye tim.oruye@southandvale.gov.uk
Joint Scrutiny Committee Early 2024 tbc	Transformation programme update	To note the progress of the councils transformation programme.	Andrea Powell	Tim Oruye tim.oruye@southandvale.gov.uk
Joint Scrutiny Committee 26 Feb 2024	Future items for Joint Scrutiny to be confirmed			

Scrutiny Committee



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Finance

Author: Richard Spraggett

Telephone: 01235 422505

Textphone: 18001 01235 422505

E-mail: Richard.spraggett@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet member responsible: Pieter-Paul Barker

Tel: 01844 212438

E-mail: Pieter-Paul.Barker@southoxon.gov.uk

To: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 7 November 2023

AGENDA ITEM

Financial outturn 2022/23

Recommendation(s)

Scrutiny committee is recommended to note the overall outturn position of the council as well as the outturn of individual service areas.

Note: If committee members wish to raise specific questions, please send these in advance to either the committee clerk or the Strategic Finance Manager (richard.spraggett@southandvale.gov.uk). Please be aware that if questions are not submitted in advance, it may not be possible to answer these in detail at the meeting. In addition, if committee members wish specific heads of service to attend the meeting this should also be raised in advance.

Purpose of Report

1. To report the final year end position for revenue and capital expenditure against budget for the financial year 2022/23.

Strategic Objectives

2. The allocation of financial resources within the revenue and capital budgets needs to match the objectives agreed by the council. The outturn report shows how these resources have been used in year.

Background

3. The attached papers contain summarised schedules of revenue and capital expenditure for 2022/23; they also present an explanation of the significant variances against budget. This is presented by service. All the figures in this report are pre-Audit and may be subject to some change following the conclusion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts.

Revenue outturn 2022/23

4. In February 2022 the council approved a net expenditure budget of £15.1 million. The budget was further amended to include one-off budgets that had been carried forward from the previous financial year. With the inclusion of budget carry forwards and other in-year changes, the working budget for 2022/23 was increased to £21.2 million.
5. Against the working budget of £21.2 million, net expenditure at year end was £17.8 million. This equates to a favourable variation of £3.4 million, which has been transferred to the council's reserves. A detailed summary by service is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: summary of revenue budgets and variance

Summary of revenue budgets and variance	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Notes
Strategic Management Team	852	839	(13)	
Corporate Services	2,702	2,446	(256)	
Development & Corporate Landlord	895	1,127	112	
Finance	462	324	(138)	(a)
Housing & Environment	5,856	6,159	303	
Legal & Democratic	1,313	1,307	(6)	
Partnerships	2,609	2,298	(311)	
Planning	230	732	502	
Policy & Programmes	6,807	2,523	(4,164)	
Contingency	(526)	0	526	
Service expenditure	21,200	17,765	(3,444)	
Investment income	(1,675)	(3,791)	(2,116)	(b)
Net expenditure	19,525	13,974	(5,560)	

Notes:

- a. Finance line contains housing benefits and rent allowances funded by government grant as shown in table 2 below.
- b. The council's treasury management outturn report will be considered by joint Audit and Governance Committee, Cabinet and Council.

Table 2: housing benefits and rent allowances

	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000
Rent allowance payments	17,507	18,261	(754)
Government subsidy income	(17,054)	(17,745)	(691)
Rent allowance overpayments	(724)	(690)	34
Net Position	(271)	(174)	97

6. Appendix 1 analyses income and expenditure across service areas. This appendix shows that the expenditure budget was £62.1 million compared to an actual spend of £60.6 million. The income budget was £40.9 million compared to actual income of £42.9 million. The year-end variance of over £3.4 million is therefore primarily found in the income budget.
7. Table 3 below provides a further analysis of the revenue outturn position.

Table 3: variations between budgeted and actual revenue income and expenditure

Service	Total Variance £000	TRANSFERS		Net Variances after Transfers £000	VARIANCES BREAKDOWN	
		Under- spend c/fwd. to 2023/24 £000	Grant Income transferred to reserves £000		Employee Costs £000	Other £000
Strategic Management	(13)	41	0	28	(49)	77
Corporate Services	(256)	0	0	(256)	(190)	(66)
Development & Corporate Landlord	112	400	0	512	(2)	515
Finance	(138)	0	0	(138)	64	(202)
Housing & Environment	304	33	0	337	42	295
Legal & Democratic	(6)	63	33	90	144	(54)
Partnerships	(311)	0	0	(311)	15	(326)
Planning	502	0	0	502	10	492
Policy & Programmes	(4,164)	3,603	41	(520)	(11)	(509)
Contingency	526	0	0	526	626	(100)
Direct service expenditure	(3,444)	4,140	74	771	649	122
Investment income	(2,116)	0	0	(2,116)	0	(2,116)
Net expenditure	(5,560)	4,140	74	(1,345)	649	(1,994)

Budgets carried forward to 2023/24

8. As shown in table 3 of the £3.4 million favourable variance to budget, £4.1 million represents slippage in one-off budgets that have been agreed as budget carry forwards to 2023/24. A further £75,000 of unbudgeted grant income received in year has been transferred to reserves for future expenditure.

9. The most significant carry forwards were in Policy and Programmes, representing £1.6 million for Didcot Garden Town and Gateway projects, and £0.8 million for Berinsfield regeneration. The one-off corporate transformation budget was underspent by £765,000. Work on this project will continue in the new financial year and the full underspend is to be carried forward to 2023/24.
10. Details of all the carried forward budgets are included in Appendix 2. The unbudgeted grant income received in the financial year was £74,000. This income will be transferred to reserves and set against expenditure in 2023/24. The breakdown of this funding is shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Grant funding transferred to reserves

Grant	£
You Move funding	40,750
Domestic Abuse safe accommodation support	33,568
Total	74,318

Employee costs

11. Employment costs shows an overall overspend of £649,000 for the year, which is net of the managed vacancy factor set at the beginning of the year.
12. Corporate services underspent by £190,000. This was primarily because staff in Front of House were seconded to other services and recruitment for the vacancies proved difficult.
13. The over spend of £64,000 in Finance is due to the use of more expensive temporary staff across the service.
14. The overspend in Legal Services was primarily the result of vacancies, which were difficult to fill. The use of more expensive agency staff to provide the work resulted in the overspend of £144,000.

Other variances over £50,000

15. Excluding the carry forwards to 2023/24, grant income transferred to reserves and employee cost variances, net revenue expenditure was £213,000 overspent against working budget. The significant variations from budget are shown in table 3 and are explained below.

Development & Corporate Landlord

16. Cornerstone income has not shown the increase anticipated in the budget and the Arts Centre and café ended the year with a £430,000 overspend.
17. Use of car parks has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and despite an increase in charges income was down by £115,000 at the end of the year.

Housing & Environment

18. The waste service was overspent by £361,000. Waste collection and street cleansing services were overspent by £298,000. Costs associated with recycling were £167,000 above budget due to a higher indexation increase than expected to the contract payments and a decrease in recycling tonnage. On refuse collection there was an overspend of £25,000, again caused in part by the higher indexation increase, plus a reduction in bulky waste bookings. Street cleansing was also overspent by £105,000 primarily due to the indexation increase and towns and parishes leaving the dog bin emptying service.
19. The garden waste service overspent by £158,000. There were fewer customers than anticipated during the year, which resulted in a loss of income of £88,000. The additional costs of consultants and higher indexation to the contract payments resulted in an overspend of £66,000.

Partnerships

20. There was an underspend of £256,000 on the Five Councils' Partnership contract. We have reviewed contract payments made to date in light of services recently returned in house. We have reprofiled partner contributions across the life of the contract and made accruals for adjusted sums now due.

Planning

21. Planning income was under budget by £454,000. This is primarily a result of developers delaying major application submissions.
22. Spend on consultants for appeals work was overspent by £25,000. These costs are not budgeted and additional expertise is required to defend the council's decisions.

Policy

23. A one-off budget to fund climate change projects was not fully spent in year due to staff vacancies, resulting in a £212,000 underspend. £96,000 of this underspend has been carried forward to 2023/24.
24. Neighbourhood plans have progressed faster than anticipated, which has generated additional grant funding. This has resulted in a £100,000 underspend.
25. The Homes for Ukraine budget shows an underspend of £99,000. This is grant income that funds the work of officers supporting the programme in teams across the council.

NNDR

26. South achieved £2.6 million more NNDR income than anticipated in the 2022/23 budget. The favourable variance is primarily due to the release of business rates appeals provisions which were built up over a ten-year period against the 2010

and 2017 valuations. Continuing the process started last year, finance staff have been working with external advisors to review and release a significant proportion of these provisions.

27. This additional work carried out last year (the result of which wasn't built into the 2022/23 budget due to timing) to identify premises that should be paying business rates has resulted in an increase in NNDR tax base of £200,000.

28. This additional income, which is primarily one off also generated an additional £0.6 million credit from the Oxfordshire councils' business rates pooling distribution group.

Comparison to previous year revenue outturn

29. A comparison of the 2021/22 revenue outturn to 2022/23 is shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: 2021/22 and 2022/23 revenue outturn

	2021/22 Total £000	2022/23 Total £000
Income	(593)	(1,958)
Expenditure	(5,556)	(1,485)
Net position before carried forward Budgets	(6,149)	(3,444)
Carried forward budgets	4,003	4,140
Net position after carried forward Budgets	(2,146)	696

30. Although clearly unforeseeable at the time, the level of prudent provision for the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021/22, and the extent to which that contribution was required, contributed to the significant underspend in 2021/22.

Capital outturn 2022/23

31. The original capital budget for 2022/23, including growth, was agreed in February 2022 at over £33 million. Details of the changes to the capital programme in year are summarised in table 6 below:

Table 6: movement on capital programme

	2022/23 £000
Original capital budget	33,399
Roll forward from prior years	8,391
Schemes deleted	(400)
Additions in year (externally funded)	6,430
Additions in year (other)	15
Slippage to future years	(22,402)
Capital programme 31 March 2022	25,433
Made up of:	
Approved programme	13,627
Provisional programme	11,806
Capital programme 31 March 2022	25,433

32. Capital expenditure for 2022/23 was £9.5 million, a variance of £4.1 million against the approved programme for the year of £13.6 million. Details of these variances is shown in appendix 3 to this report. Capital projects span several years, and any underspends are rolled forward to the following financial year.
33. During the year, budget holders review their projects and identify those where delays mean that the current working budget will not be spent in year. The budget profile is then moved to reflect the new spend profile and budgets are slipped into future years if applicable. Slipped budgets remain committed for use in future years. During the year £22.4 million was slipped in this way. A list of these schemes is shown in appendix 4.

Capital receipts

34. Capital receipts in year amounted to £15,000. Repayments of Catalyst loans make up this total.

Financial, legal and any other implications

35. The financial implications are as set out in the body of the report. There are no other implications of this report.

Conclusion

36. The 2022/23 outturn position on revenue and capital was an underspend against working budget for the year. Details of major variances are detailed within this report and the appendices.

Appendices

1. Revenue outturn – expenditure and income variance
2. Revenue carry - forward 2022/23 requests
3. Capital outturn – summary and commentary

4. Capital outturn – slippage

Background Papers

- Budget Papers for 2022/23

South Oxfordshire DC variance by income and expenditure 2022/23

Service Team	Expenditure			Income			Total			Notes
	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	
Strategic Management	1,478	1,318	(160)	(626)	(478)	148	852	839	(12)	(a)
Corporate Services	3,889	3,865	(24)	(1,188)	(1,419)	(231)	2,702	2,446	(255)	
Development & Corporate Landlord	7,708	7,416	(292)	(6,693)	(6,289)	404	1,015	1,127	112	
Finance	19,689	20,431	742	(19,226)	(20,107)	(880)	462	324	(138)	
Housing & Environment	10,987	11,445	458	(5,132)	(5,286)	(154)	5,855	6,159	304	
Legal & Democratic	3,198	3,768	570	(1,885)	(2,462)	(576)	1,313	1,307	(6)	
Partnerships	3,070	2,801	(269)	(461)	(503)	(42)	2,609	2,298	(311)	
Planning	4,402	4,536	134	(4,171)	(3,804)	368	230	732	502	
Policy & Programmes	8,223	5,053	(3,170)	(1,536)	(2,530)	(994)	6,687	2,523	(4,164)	
Contingency	(526)	0	526	0	0	0	(526)	0	526	
Service Expenditure	62,118	60,633	(1,485)	(40,919)	(42,877)	(1,958)	21,200	17,756	(3,444)	
Investment Income				(1,675)	(3,791)	(2,116)	(1,675)	(3,791)	(2,116)	(b)
Net Expenditure	62,118	60,633	(1,485)	(42,594)	(46,668)	(4,074)	19,525	13,965	(5,560)	

Notes:

- a) Finance includes housing benefits and rent allowances funded by government grant
- b) The councils's treasury management outturn report will be considered by joint Audit and Governance Committee and cabinet and council

Appendix 2

SOUTH Revenue Carry Forwards for Revenue Expenditure 2022/23 - Requests				
Budget code	Carried Forward From 2021/22	New Carry Forward (Spend) 2022/23	Total Carried Forward	Reason carry forward needed
	£	£	£	
Strategic Management Board				
1001 TM01		41,256	41,256	Salary budget for 1 year fixed term Climate Comms Officer was transferred to the budget part way through the year, so it needs to be carried forward to fund the remainder of the officer's fixed term.
	0	41,256	41,256	
Development and Corporate Landlord				
4655 MP11	37,700	4,043	4,043	Concerto upgrade project. Funded by virement from transformation budget. Budget required in 2023/24 to ccomplete the project
4655 MP11	34,631	21,881	21,881	Corporate landlord model design phase project. Funded by virement from transformation budget. Project paused, but budget will be required if gain approval for next phase - transformation and implementation
4655 LE01	37,500	37,500	37,500	One off budget to review and develop an active communities strategy
4054 WC99		13,160	13,160	One off budget for toilet cleansing
4665 AH02	165,727	105,151	105,151	One off funding for project on Broadway Didcot
4655 LE20	218,403	218,403	218,403	The underspend is due to the delay in Berinsfield co-location project delivery, which was caused by an uncertainty over housing numbers in/around Berinsfield and linked to the Berinsfield regeneration project. This is a one-off revenue budget for the project and, therefore, there is no 2021/22 budget available to fund the project
	493,961	400,138	400,138	
Housing & Environment				
4660 EH06	35,000	27,258	27,258	Air Quality is a Corporate Objective. We are about half way through this project of updating the council's Air Quality Action Plan. Budget was secured for this one off project which has been delayed, the intention had been to complete it in the 2022/23 financial year. This work is being completed by external consultants Atkins (further invoices to pay) and additional costs maybe incurred depending on the broader consultation process
4400 RC01	30,500	5,500	5,500	This relates to the one-off growth bid approved in 2020/21 for additional resource to support the project team that is reviewing the waste contract and considering options for future service delivery. As part of the project, work is also underway to secure a depot, this funding is required to progress this project.
	65,500	32,758	32,758	
Legal & Democratic				
4054 DR05		40,960	40,960	This is Community Safety Funding carried forward - local area award funding to the CSP (not district council) not allocated from previous years
9027 EL02		21,681	21,681	Grant for May 23 election
	0	62,641	62,641	
Policy & Programmes				
4655/CA02	349,914	349,914	349,914	Budget to advance growth for Didcot, specific areas within town centre including Jubilee Way Roundabout. Underspend, as awaiting Didcot Central Corridor OAR recommendations and report. This budget will be able to advance further design work on priority schemes.
4660 AH11	641,435	629,352	629,352	Didcot Gateway & town centre funding - Budget made up of grant funding for long term projects
AH03		578,087	578,087	DGT Homes England Funding/External Funding - Budget approved by cabinet June 2022, underspend as limited project delivery and resource as team recruitment took place in 22/23 Q4.
CA20	988,967	821,673	821,673	Berinsfield Regeneration grant funded budget to be carried forward
4020 HT01	91,866	91,866	91,866	One off budget for climate corporate planning
4400 SD01		68,586	68,586	COMF for Nature trails, orienteering and outdoor table tennis tables, including £22,735 from Active Travel for Didcot
4400 SD02		68,060	68,060	External funding for Move Together and You Move from Active Oxfordshire
4660 NP01		17,500	17,500	Simpler Approach Pilot Programme
4703 NP03	80,986	73,816	73,816	One off budget to fund neighbourhood plan
1001 CO20		138,898	138,898	COMF3
4066 TF30	170,000	170,000	170,000	Commercialisation Budget
4400 TF30	427,799	595,002	595,002	One off budget to fund transformation activities
	2,750,967	3,602,754	3,602,754	
TOTAL TO C/F	3,310,428	4,139,547	4,139,547	

South Oxfordshire DC 2022/23 capital budget monitoring

	Budget	Outturn	Outturn variance
	£000	£000	£000
Corporate services	98	77	(21)
Development & Corporate Landlord	2,160	505	(1,655)
Finance	6,554	6,526	(28)
Housing & Environment	4,211	1,879	(2,332)
Legal & Democratic	39	38	(1)
Policy & Programmes	565	478	(87)
Total working budget	13,627	9,503	(4,124)
Percentage			-30%

Note: Budget is the full year working budget, Percentage is the total variance excluding contingency as a ratio of the budget

Explanation of significant variances

Development & Corporate Landlord

Budgets for works to leisure centres have not been fully spent. The budgets will be slipped to 2023/24.

Finance

CIL expenditure totalling £4 million has not yet been requested by the CCG. This budget will be rolled forward to 2023/24.

Housing and Environment

The affordable housing scheme did not progress as planned in 2022/23. The budget will be carried forward to 2023/24.

South Oxfordshire DC slippage of capital schemes from 2022/23 to later years	
Development and Corporate Landlord	£000
Wallingford moorings access	74
Refurbishment of cemeteries	30
Car park resurfacing & improvement	42
Grounds team equipment	30
Electric vehicles	25
Flood alleviation Wheatley	54
Flood defence	15
Thame leisure centre - gym equipment replacement	1
Abbey sports centre - ATP	250
Thame leisure centre - replace CHP	180
Abbey sports centre - pool improvements	100
Didcot Wave - spin studio	140
Park leisure centre - roof replacement	250
Cornerstone roof replacement	250
Henley leisure centre - sports hall floor	200
Thame leisure centre - sauna & steam	55
Thame leisure centre - gym	350
	2,046
Finance	
CIL - CCG	5,242
	5,242
Housing and Environment	
DFGs	328
	328
Policy & Programmes	
Growth points	1,268
Didcot Gateway regeneration	6,800
Tree planting & biodiversity projects	14
Capital Grants - 18/19 Delegated Powers	12
Capital Grants - 19/20 Delegated Powers	39
Capital Grants - 21/22 Delegated Powers	135
Capital Grants - 22/23 Delegated Powers	318
NPR3	6,200
	14,786
Total	22,402

Scrutiny Committee



Report of Head of Corporate Services

Author: Hamera Plume

Telephone: 07512 716254

E-mail: hamera.plume@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet member responsible: Cllr Andrea Powell

Tel: 07882 584120

E-mail: Andrea.Powell@southoxon.gov.uk

To: Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7 November 2023

Consultations and Engagement Annual Report 2022-2023

Recommendation

That Scrutiny Committee notes the consultation and engagement carried out by the council during 2022-2023 as shown in **Appendix A** and makes any comments to Cabinet for consideration.

Purpose of Report

1. To update members on the projects that the Consultation and Engagement team delivered between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.
2. To inform members on the work to begin benchmarking demographic data to ensure the councils are reaching all relevant audiences, and to help measure if the councils are increasing engagement among audiences we've historically failed to reach, particularly young people.

Strategic Objectives

3. The activities detailed in this report supports the council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024. Carrying out effective consultation and engagement supports the Corporate Plan goal of openness and accountability.

Background

4. In the last financial year, the Consultation and Engagement team conducted 22 consultations, launched 21 feedback forms, and supported four neighbourhood plans consultations and five conservation area appraisals.
5. The team's new annual report (attached at **Appendix A**) highlights the key findings from each project and the actions the councils have taken thanks to the outcomes of these consultation and engagement activities.
6. The report has been put together to show the variety of engagement the councils carry out and demonstrate how consultation and engagement findings have led to changes in council services. For example:
7. 234 respondents helped us shape our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the feedback has resulted in the development of our Equality and Diversity database, consisting of local groups, charities and organisations that relate to the protected characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability. This database will help us ensure our consultations are shared across a broad spectrum of groups.
8. The 314 responses received to the Joint Local Plan Issues consultation have helped to shape the next stage of the Joint Local Plan Options consultation.
9. Crashing was a theatrical production, a live performance commissioned by the Community Safety team and delivered to Year 9 and 10 students. 81% of respondents said they think they would now be able to recognise the signs of CSE. The feedback shows that the production was successful at educating young people about child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the success of the production has led to plans for it to be repeated in coming years.

Next Steps

10. It is proposed that the report is on the councils' websites and circulated to our consultation databases to show how their support and feedback has been considered.
11. The report will also form the starting point for improved communications with our wider audiences on the benefits of community engagement, and to demonstrate the councils are serious about taking public views into consideration when shaping our services.

Climate and ecological impact implications

12. This report is provided for information purposes only and as such has no direct climate and ecological implications.

13. However, the report does refer to several projects which helped inform the council's ongoing approach to tackling climate change. For example, the Joint Local Plan consultation sought views on the themes of reducing carbon emissions and nature recovery and landscape. The waste and recycling sessions included in the report would also contribute towards reducing waste and protecting our resources.

Financial Implications

14. This report is provided for information purposes only and as such has no direct financial implications. All of the costs for projects covered in this report were conducted within service budgets.

Legal Implications

15. This report is provided for information purposes only and as such has no legal implications.

Procurement implications

16. This report is provided for information purposes only and as such has no procurement implications.

Risks

17. This report is provided for information purposes only and as such has no identified risk implications.

Conclusion

18. The new annual report will help us track the demographics of those responding to council engagement activities over time to ensure we're enabling all our communities to influence their council services them, not just those who are already engaged with council activities.

19. Publication of the report, and the associated improvement in communication around consultation outcomes, helps improve the transparency of council decision-making. In part it does this by showing stakeholders how we've listened to views and modified our plans, strategies, and policies thanks to public input.

20. We expect this to encourage more audiences to participate in future projects – both those who have previously responded to our engagement, and those who haven't, therefore widening our group of active consultees.

Background Papers

- Consultation and Engagement Annual Report 2022-23

Report checklist [This checklist must be completed and sent with your report to enable democratic services to issue the report]

REPORT TITLE: CONSULTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Press Officer communications@southandvale.gov.uk

Victoria Nickless	Communications	Date	13/10/23
-------------------	----------------	------	----------

Climate and ecological implications climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk

Chloe Bunting	Climate team	Date	16/10/23
---------------	--------------	------	----------

Financial implications finance@southandvale.gov.uk

Emma Creed	Accountant	Date	12/10/23
------------	------------	------	----------

Legal implications legal@southandvale.gov.uk

Patrick Arran	Solicitor	Date	14/10/23
---------------	-----------	------	----------

Other implications

Other than the above, I confirm that consideration has been given to the following. Any that impact on the item have been integrated in the report:

- Equality and diversity implications equalities@southandvale.gov.uk
- Health and safety implications healthandsafety@southandvale.gov.uk
- Human resource implications hadminandpayroll@southandvale.gov.uk
- Crime and disorder implications (anti-social behaviour, harm to local environment and substance abuse) communitysafety@southandvale.gov.uk
- Risk management implications risk@southandvale.gov.uk
- Union representatives unison@southandvale.gov.uk
- Relevant ward councillors

Hamera Plume	Author signature	Date	16/10/23
--------------	------------------	------	----------

Style guide

Report is in accordance with style guide Hamera Plume	Author signature	Date	16/10/23
--	------------------	------	----------

Agreed by cabinet member (if appropriate)

Cabinet member Date

Exemption/confidentiality

Is report exempt/confidential? If yes, state which paragraph of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

Democratic services officer Date

Report checked and cleared for issue by head of service

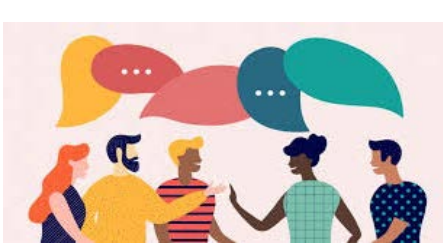
Head of service Date



Consultation and Engagement Annual Report

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023





April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

Introduction

This report provides an overview of all the projects that the Consultation and Community Engagement team delivered between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. It also includes a brief summary of the results obtained and how the councils have used these to support decision making or shape programmes and action plans.

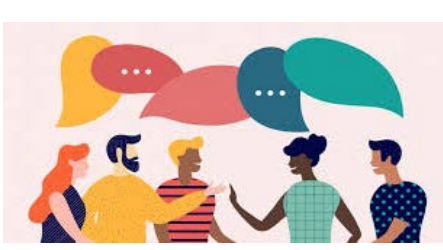
Over the last financial year we have launched, or helped develop, **22** consultations, **21** application/feedback forms, **4** neighbourhood plan reviews (two of which were still open while we were preparing this report so aren't included), and **5** conservation area appraisals. We assist the Conservation team with the preparation of conservation area reviews, and support the Neighbourhood Planning team with the launch of Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

We work hard to engage with all demographic groups in our communities, especially those that we've historically failed to reach, like young people and seldom heard groups to try and ensure that the responses we get are representative of the whole population.

As part of this work, we are establishing an Equality and Diversity database, which will allow us to share our consultations with local groups, charities and organisations that relate to the following protected characteristics: age; gender reassignment; being married, in a civil partnership, pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; race including colour, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

During the year covered by this report, we began routinely monitoring how representative our consultations are against the demographic in South and Vale. This information is helping us identify where there are gaps and develop a strategy to encourage participation from all demographic groups in our communities. You can find the data we have collected so far on this at the end of this report.

- Information in this report is organised in 13 sections, one for each month the year plus one other
- You can skip between sections by clicking on the tabs at the top of each page



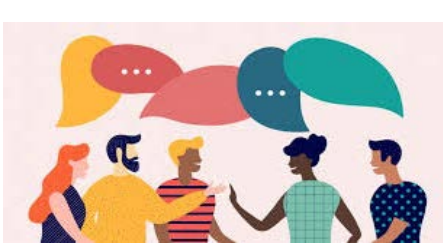
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ **Some highlights**

 <p>In 2022/23 we ran 22 consultations: 12 in Vale, 4 in South and 6 joint ones</p>	 <p>In addition to consultations, we produced 21 feedback and application forms</p>	 <p>We launched 5 conservation area appraisals: 3 in Vale and 2 in South</p>	 <p>We launched 4 neighbourhood plans - all of them were in South</p>
--	---	--	---

<p>On average over all consultations, 48% of respondents identified as male, 46% as female, 1% had another gender identity and 5% preferred not to say</p>	 <p>Those over 45 y/o made up 66% of all respondents. Under 45 y/o represented 25%</p>	 <p>70% of respondents identified as White British and 7% as White-other. Minority ethnic groups made up 11% of the total</p>	 <p>77% of respondents said they are not affected by disability or long term illness. 9% were affected and 13% preferred not to say</p>
--	---	---	---

<p>25% This is the average response rate to all consultations in 2022/23 (compared to the numbers we invited)</p>	<p>355 Attendance of the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework event in June 2022</p>	<p>234 This is the number of people who helped us shape our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</p>
--	---	--



April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

Key consultation projects in 2022/23

❖ Joint Local Plan: Issues Consultation (South & Vale)

314 Responses received. Of them, 38% were agents, developers and landowners, and 31% were individual members of the public.

85% Of respondents agreed with the overall vision for the Joint Local Plan.



The feedback obtained is helping to shape the draft Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. A consultation document that will set out the proposed policies and sites for development is expected to be published in the Autumn/Winter of 2023.



❖ Your views on the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (South & Vale)

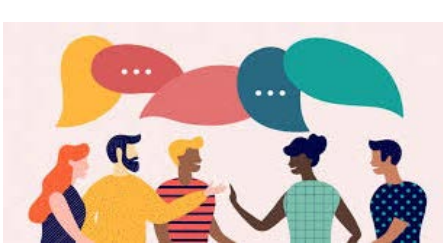
234 Responses received.

63% The average proportion of respondents who agreed with our approach towards the topics in our action plan, including involving our communities; responsive services and customer care; and having a skilled and committed workforce.



As a result of this consultation we have appointed some Equality and Diversity Champions, who will work as ambassadors within the councils to promote equality actions across teams and service areas.





April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Review of the Great Coxwell Conservation Area Appraisal Document – Vale of White Horse



We asked: We worked with the Conservation team to gather residents’ views on the proposed changes to the conservation area appraisal document, which includes a review of the boundary in the burial area and field south of St Giles Church, and along the south side of the Cherry Orchard and west side of Dark Lane.



Your views: **81%** of respondents agreed with the proposal to change the burial area and field south of St Giles Church, and **82%** agreed with the proposed changes to the area along the south side of Cherry Orchard and west side of Dark Lane. The comments received were generally supportive of the appraisal document saying that it helps manage change and protects the natural environment. The Conservation Team have responded to all comments received.



Actions: The boundary revisions were adopted by the Vale of White Horse District Council on Friday 30 September 2022 and the new designated conservation area is effective from this date. Here is the [Cabinet report](#) which summarises the changes to the draft appraisal.



❖ Crashing – South and Vale



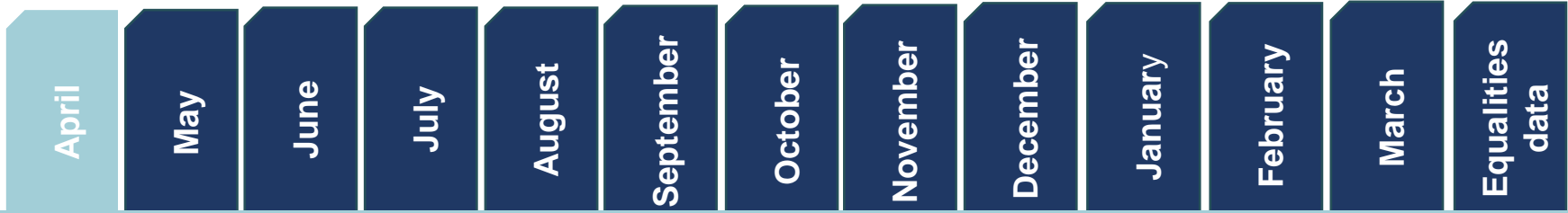
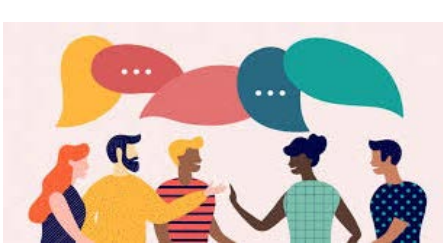
We asked: Crashing was a theatrical production, a live performance commissioned by the Community Safety team and delivered to Year 9 and 10 students at St Birinus school in Didcot, an all boys school. The show shed light on the issue of child sexual exploitation and the devastating impact it can have on a young person’s life. A post-show talk focused on decision making, online safety, spotting the signs, and reporting concerns. The questionnaire asked viewers a few questions to understand how much they had learnt during the show.



Your views: The feedback shows that the production was successful at educating young people about child sexual exploitation (CSE), and how they can make decisions to keep themselves safe. **81%** of respondents said they think they would be able to recognise the signs of CSE. Most respondents said they feel safe during the day and night most of the time. **75%** of students selected the right answer to the multiple-choice questions which tested their knowledge of CSE covered in Crashing, showing a sound understanding of the subject.



Actions: The Community Safety team has been in communication with other secondary schools in the districts, the majority of which have indicated they would like to show CRASHING in the late summer term 2023. When delivering future performances the team will invite youth services to attend.



In April 2022 we also launched the **Local Placemaking Plan Application Form for South and Vale**

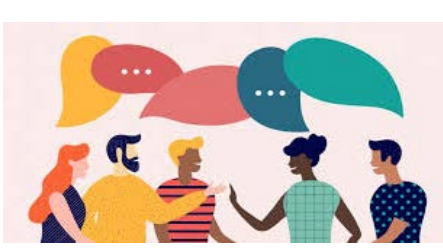
Following a successful joint bid for government grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), our councils were invited to take part in a [national pilot for a new, simpler approach to neighbourhood planning](#).

This pilot project involved working in conjunction with DLUHC and was aimed at trialling new ideas to simplify the approach to neighbourhood planning.



While many communities have already benefitted from developing their own Neighbourhood Plans, some smaller community groups can be hesitant about the amount of time, effort, and resources the process can take, so we invited community groups across the districts to apply to take part in the pilot.

Thanks to our successful application process, the councils are working with Great Haseley, Moulsoford and Stoke Row Parish Councils from South Oxfordshire, and West Challow, Kennington, Fyfield and Tubney Parish Councils from Vale of White Horse as part of the pilot.



April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

Equalities data

❖ Joint Local Plan: Issues Consultation – South and Vale



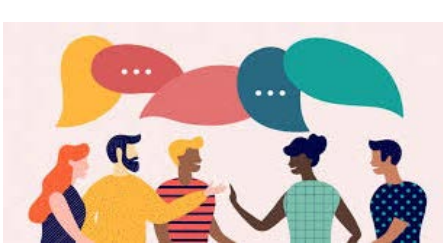
We asked: In this first stage of the South and Vale Local Plan we asked stakeholders what are the main issues facing our districts and how we might be able to use our planning powers to address them.



Your views:

- The areas that respondents mentioned the most when asked *what they value* about where they live were: **countryside** (96 times), **access** (79 times), **community** (50 times), **green spaces** (44 times) and **transport links** (15 times). Conversely, when asked *what things they would change*, the striking message that emerged was the need for improved infrastructure, services and amenities. In addition, respondents raised concerns about traffic and speed limits, said more focus should be put on protecting the natural environment and wildlife, and housing development should be reduced or halted, although more affordable housing is needed.
- **Issues:** almost **85%** of respondents agreed that the issues identified in the consultation are the main issues the districts are facing. These are: climate; protecting our countryside; our towns and villages; quality of life and affordability; traffic and transport; employment; development and infrastructure. Among them, the issue that respondents considered the most important was protecting our countryside (selected by **31%** of respondents), followed by climate (**25%**), and development and infrastructure (**16%**).
- **Vision:** around **85%** of respondents agreed with the vision for the Joint Local Plan. When asked whether there was something specific about the vision which they disagreed with, most comments indicated that the vision was too vague and generic, and progress was hard to measure.
- **Reducing Carbon Emissions:** respondents said that the most important thing the districts could do on this subject was implementing “highest standards of energy efficiency in new buildings”, whilst “limit parking at new developments” received the highest level of disagreement.
- **Nature Recovery and Landscape:** the most popular action for this theme was “respect landscape character, dark skies and the natural beauty of the countryside in development decisions”. The highest level of disagreement was recorded for “minimise the use of greenfield land by increasing the density of developments”.





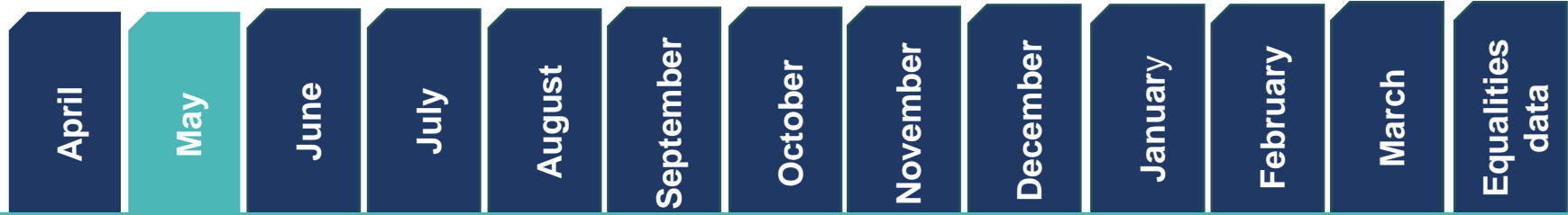
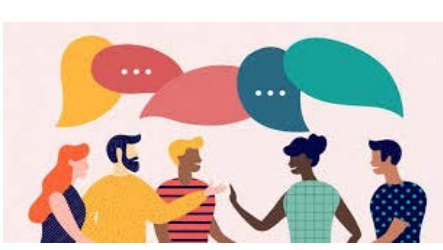
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Joint Local Plan: Issues Consultation – South and Vale

★ Your views continued...

- **Protecting and Enhancing Local Heritage:** respondents selected two opportunities as the most important in this area, “protect heritage assets from harm or loss” and “plan development at a scale appropriate to towns and villages”. There wasn’t much disagreement with any of the other opportunities on this theme.
- **Thriving and Inclusive Communities:** the most important action selected by respondents with regards to this theme was “plan for housing that is genuinely affordable for our communities”. Conversely, disagreement was registered with respect to “support affordable housing on sites we would normally protect from development”.
- **Transport and Facilities:** respondents would like to see the councils “plan for sustainable travel that is reliable, integrated and accessible”, whilst the least popular option was “plan for new technological innovation in transport and communications technology”. No high level of disagreement was recorded in this section. When asked about what would encourage them to drive less, respondents mentioned “better infrastructure for cycling”.
- **Healthy Lifestyles and Safe Communities:** the most important opportunities in this areas were “avoid inappropriate developments in flood risk areas” and “plan places for people to grow their own food”. Very low levels of disagreement were registered for all the other options.
- **Jobs and Opportunities for Innovation:** the top three opportunities that respondents considered the most important here were “plan jobs near homes and homes near jobs”, “support working from home and community-based work hubs/facilities”, and finally “support rural land-based businesses, the local food economy and rural tourism”.

✓ **Page 35** **Actions:** We have reviewed all the feedback received and summarised it in a [consultation statement](#). The results of the Issues consultation will inform the content of the next stage in the engagement process, which will be the Joint Local Plan - Options consultation.



Below are two other engagement projects we launched in May 2022:

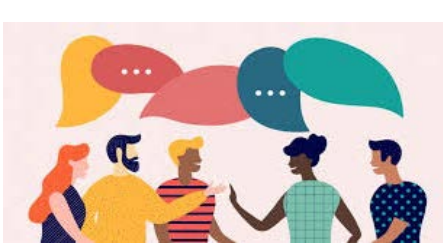
❖ **The Joint Local Plan 2041: Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change Form**

The 'Call for Land and Buildings Available for Change' is an invitation to landowners, agents, developers, community groups and others who are interested in having land considered for a range of different uses - housing and jobs, community and environmental uses, such as public open spaces or renewable energy - to submit information to the councils on the sites they would like to be assessed as part of the Joint Local Plan.

❖ **South and Vale Building Control – your feedback**

This is a feedback form to gather users' views around the service provided by our Building Control service, currently branded as Southvale. The evidence obtained will help us meet our high standards and help us understand what can be improved. The feedback will also be used as part of the work we do every year on maintaining our ISO Accreditation, which is a formal award that shows we are meeting international standards for the service we provide.





April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Proposed Taxi Tariff for Vale of White Horse: Have your say



We asked: In March 2021 we had asked drivers and proprietors for their views on some proposed changes to our Joint Taxi Licensing Policy. This process was driven by the need to ease the effects of the cost of living crisis on drivers. As part of that process, we received some requests to review the tariff to ensure it was set at an appropriate level. In June 2022 we then asked drivers, proprietors and residents what they thought of the latest proposal for taxi tariff.



Your views: 63% of drivers and proprietors disagreed with the proposed changes to the tariff. Looking at each individual proposed changes, the highest level of disagreement was expressed with regards to the proposal of a minimum charge for each tariff (68% strongly disagreed), and a charge per additional passenger when carrying 5+ passengers (68% strongly disagreed). However, high levels of disagreement were registered towards all proposed changes: proposed tariff times, days and dates; subsequent distance charge and waiting time charge.



Actions: The results of this survey were presented and reviewed by Cabinet members on 30 September 2022. After carefully assessing the responses received against their financial impact on taxi drivers in the context of a cost of living crisis, members agreed to set a new tariff that balanced drivers' needs with the cost to the public. The [new tariff](#) took effect from 1 October 2022.



❖ Proposed Taxi Tariff for South Oxfordshire: Have your say



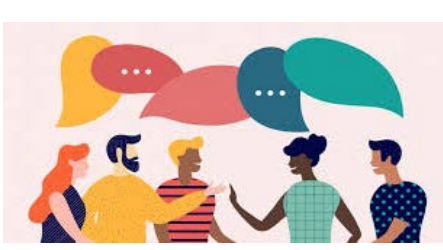
We asked: In March 2021 we had asked drivers and proprietors for their views on some proposed changes to our Joint Taxi Licensing Policy. As for the Vale, this process was driven by the necessity to ease the effects of the cost of living crisis on drivers. Following the feedback received, we adopted the proposed policy, which included setting a maximum taxi tariff for the district. In June 2022 we then asked drivers and proprietors what they thought of the proposed tariff.



Your views: The vast majority of respondents (drivers and proprietors) disagreed with the proposed changes to the tariff (89%). With respect to individual proposals, the highest level of disagreement was expressed towards a minimum charge for each tariff (78% strongly disagreed), and a charge per additional passenger when carrying 5+ passengers (75% strongly disagreed). However, as for the Vale, high levels of disagreement were registered towards all other proposed changes: proposed tariff times, days and dates; subsequent distance charge and waiting time charge.





Actions: The results were presented and reviewed by Cabinet members on 29 September 2022. After carefully assessing the responses received against their financial impact on taxi drivers in the context of a cost of living crisis, members agreed to set a new tariff that balanced drivers' needs with the cost to the public. The new tariff took effect from 1 October 2022. You can find out more information on the [taxi fares webpage](#).




April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------


❖ Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) – Vale of White Horse


 **We asked:** We collaborated with Carter Jonas to engage with community groups, local businesses and the wider public to help identify challenges and areas for improvement in Abingdon. The engagement activity was part of the regeneration project for central Abingdon, which aimed at identifying options for improving buildings, spaces and movement around the town. We ran a four week online consultation between 17 June and 15 July 2022. We also held an in-person event on 17-18 June which was attended by **355** people, and a student workshop on 11 July which was attended by **20** people.


 **Your views:** **383** people responded to this consultation. Overall, respondents agreed with and supported the CARF project. More specifically, **61%** of respondents supported or strongly supported its vision and objectives. They suggested that central Abingdon could be improved by a number of interventions, including: providing a better retail, food and beverage offer; addressing traffic volume and control; improving parking and accessibility.

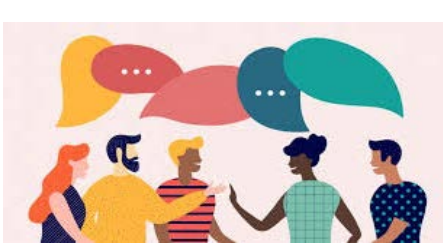
 **Actions:** We are now reviewing the findings and using them to inform our updated proposals for the CARF. For more information on the results and how we are responding to the key points raised, please read the [engagement report](#).

❖ Grove and East Challow Community Governance Review – Vale of White Horse




 **We asked:** residents of the two parishes to comment on the proposal to remove the warding arrangements for the parish of Grove, so that the two Grove wards could be combined into one with 16 seats; and to make no change to the boundary between Grove Parish and East Challow Parish. Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on one proposal only, or both of them.

 **Your views:** **8** completed responses were received for this consultation. All respondents supported the proposal to remove the warding arrangements for the parish of Grove, so that the two Grove wards could be combined into one with 16 seats. The majority of respondents (5 out of 8) also supported the second proposal to make no change to the boundary between Grove Parish and East Challow Parish.




 **Actions:** On 6 December 2022, the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee agreed to make no change to the parish boundary between Grove and East Challow. The arrangements in place provided for a well-defined boundary. The proposed change did not impact on any properties and therefore did not impact on community identity.



❖ **North Hinksey Community Governance Review – Vale of White Horse**

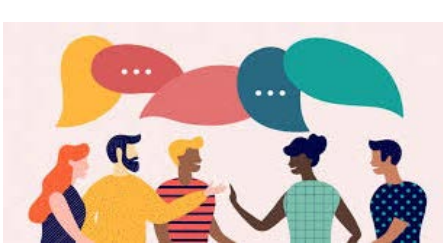
-  **We asked:** stakeholders to comment on the proposal to include “Botley” within the name of the parish (i.e. “Botley and North Hinksey Parish Council”), and change the name from “Parish Council” to “Community Council”.
-  **Your views:** We received 20 completed responses to this consultation. The vast majority of them strongly supported the proposal to include “Botley” within the name of the parish (**80%**), and a further **15%** said that they tend to support it. The outcome of the proposal to change the name of the council from “Parish Council” to “Community Council” is not as clear. More specifically, while **50%** of respondents supported this change, **45%** strongly opposed it and **5%** neither supported it nor opposed it.
-  **Actions:** On 19 October 2022, the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee agreed to adopt council officers’ recommendation to change the name of the parish to include Botley in order to better reflect the geography and community it covers. The parish has therefore been renamed “Botley and North Hinksey parish”.

❖ **Kingston Bagpuize Community Governance Review – Vale of White Horse**




-  **We asked:** residents to comment on the proposal to make no change to the boundary between Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Fyfield and Tubney Parish.
-  **Your views:** We received 35 completed responses. **60%** of respondents supported the proposal to make no change to the boundary between Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish and Fyfield and Tubney Parish. Most of them expressed concern that a change of boundary might lead to housing development in the area, which respondents said would put further pressure on the already inadequate local infrastructure and services (**65%**). Conversely, 8 respondents (**23%**) strongly opposed the proposal, which they said could determine a lack of oversight from Kingston Bagpuize Parish Council on housing development projects which would put further pressure on the local infrastructure but fail to generate any council tax revenues.
-  **Actions:** On 19 October 2022, the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee agreed to make no change to the current boundary between Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Fyfield and Tubney parishes.

Page 39




Agenda Item 8



❖ **Sunningwell, Wootton and Cumnor Community Governance Review – Vale of White Horse**

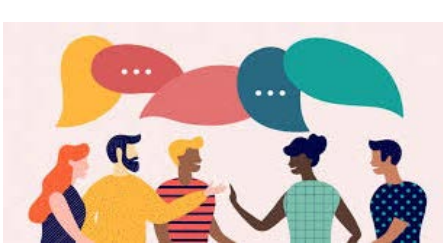
-  **We asked:** stakeholders for their views on the proposal to make no change to the boundary between Sunningwell Parish and Wootton and Cumnor Parishes, and on the proposal to amend the name of Wootton Parish to include Boars Hill.
-  **Your views:** We received **243** completed responses. With respect to the proposal to make no change to the boundary between Sunningwell, Wootton and Cumnor Parishes, respondents were equally split between those in support (**50%**) and those who opposed it (**50%**). Conversely, the majority of respondents strongly opposed the proposal to amend the name of Wootton Parish to include the name Boars Hill (**62%**).
-  **Actions:** On 19 October 2022, the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee agreed to make no change to the current boundaries between Cumnor, Sunningwell and Wootton Parishes.

❖ **South Hinksey Community Governance Review – Vale of White Horse**

-  **We asked:** consultees to comment on the proposal to make no change to the parish boundary between South Hinksey and Kennington. This followed from the request received from South Hinksey Parish Council that the area shown in blue on the [map](#) is moved from Kennington Parish to South Hinksey Parish in order to incorporate the Westwood Hotel site into the parish.
-  **Your views:** We received 5 completed responses for this engagement. All respondents agreed with the proposal to make no change to the boundary between South Hinksey and Kennington Parishes (**100%**). Among the additional comments received from respondents, almost all of them expressed support for this proposal while 1 disagreed with it and argued that a change of boundary is needed.
-  **Actions:** On 19 October 2022, the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee decided to make no change to the parish boundary between South Hinksey and Kennington.




Page 40

Agenda Item 8






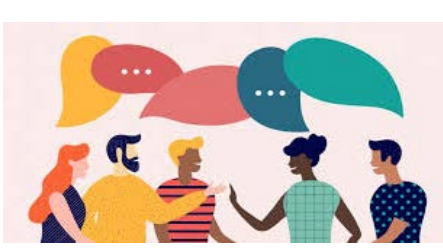
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Didcot Community Governance Review – South Oxfordshire

-  **We asked:** stakeholders to comment on the proposal to amend the number of ward councillors selected on Didcot Town Council to better reflect the number of electors they represent, while maintaining the same overall number of councillors.
-  **Your views:** Half of respondents opposed this proposal, including **46%** who strongly opposed it. Respondents provided the following reasons for this: **28%** said the reduction in the number of councillors was in contrast with the increase in the town’s population; **22%** said that the proposed change could cause an unfair electoral representation; another **22%** said that the size of wards should be smaller and every ward should elect the same number of councillors. Conversely, **46** per cent of respondents supported the above proposal, including 12 per cent who strongly supported it.
-  **Actions:** With only two members of the Electoral Governance Committee entitled to vote on this item, and with no agreement on a proposal, on 10 October 2022 the committee agreed to defer this item to a future meeting.

❖ Thame Community Governance Review – South Oxfordshire

-  **We asked:** consultees to comment on two proposals. The first proposal was to make no change to the boundary between Thame Parish and Great Haseley Parish. The second proposal was to amend the ward boundary between Thame North and Thame South wards to address an imbalance in the electorate resulting from higher levels of residential development in the South ward.
-  **Your views:** The majority of respondents opposed the proposal to make no change to the boundary between Thame Parish and Great Haseley Parish (**67%**), and supported the proposal to amend the ward boundary between Thame North and Thame South to ensure a more equal representation (**63%**).
-  **Actions:** On 10 October 2022 the Electoral Governance Committee agreed to make no change to the parish boundary between Thame Parish and Great Haseley Parish because such a change would not address issues of the identity and interests of the local community or the effective and convenient representation of local residents. The Committee agreed to amend the town council ward boundaries to provide for a better electoral balance between Thame North and Thame South, in the interest of achieving effective and convenient local government representation and to provide for a more logical division of the Parish.



April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

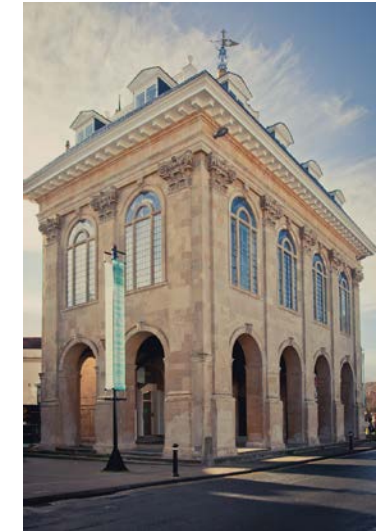
In June 2022 we also launched the two projects below:

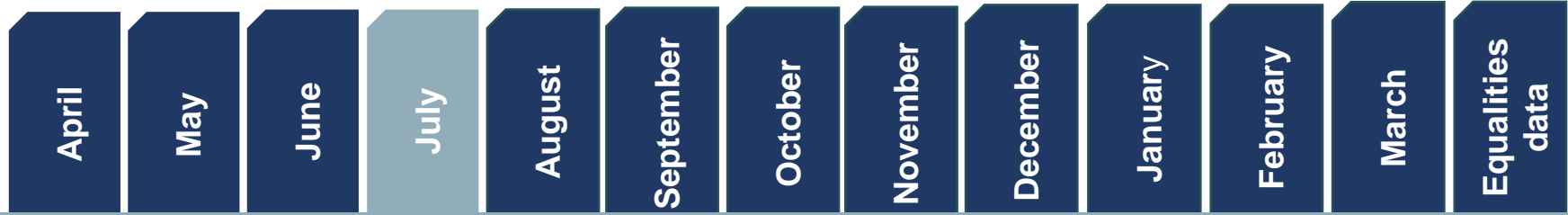
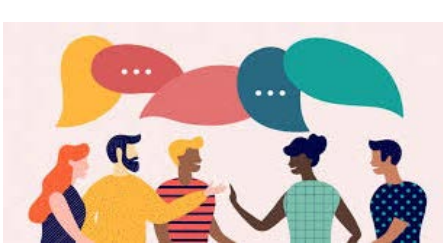
❖ **The Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) sign-up form**

This sign-up form was launched shortly before the wider consultation to introduce and raise awareness and interest in the Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework Project. The form offered residents, businesses and community organisations the opportunity to keep in touch and up to date with the CARF project.

❖ **Litter Picking Project Form – South and Vale**

This form helped us understand where volunteers were litter picking, what type and how many litter items they found (i.e. plastic bottles, food waste, cigarette butts), and how many litter bins they saw whilst picking.



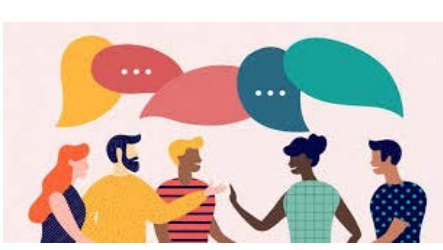


In July 2022 we launched the **Settlement Assessment Questionnaire for Town and Parish Councils** for both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

This consultation was aimed at getting a good understanding of settlements in our districts, and more specifically how well residents' everyday needs are met living in a particular area. We asked Town and Parish Councils detailed questions about the profile of their settlements and the level of services available. This gave us an indication of what might help facilitate thriving and healthy communities.




We'll analyse and summarise the information collected through this survey to produce a settlement hierarchy based on their sustainability. This will be part of the evidence for the Joint Local Plan 2041 and will help inform our planning policy.





April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Harwell East Community Governance Review – Vale of White Horse

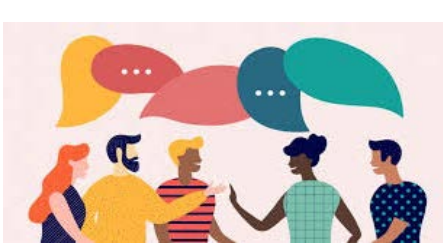
-  **We asked:** Having previously decided to establish a new parish, we asked residents for their views on five main points. Specifically, we asked what the name of the new parish should be, whether the parish should have a parish council or an alternative style of council (community, neighbourhood or village council); the ordinary year of elections; the council size (number of councillors) and whether the parish should be divided into wards.
-  **Your views:** We received 97 completed responses. The majority of respondents did not support the proposal that the new parish be called “Harwell East Parish” (59%). The majority of respondents supported all other proposals, more specifically: 58% supported the proposal that the style of the new council should be a parish council; 54% agreed that the effective date of the new parish should be 1 April 2023 and that the parish should return eight councillors; finally 58% supported the proposal that the new parish should not be divided into wards.
-  **Actions:** In early December 2022 the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee agreed that the new parish, on land previously within Harwell Parish east of the A34, would come into existence in 2023 with elections in May. The new parish will be known as ‘Western Valley’, have an unwarded parish council and eight councillors.

❖ Your views on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – South and Vale

-  **We asked:** residents, businesses/organisations, district, town and parish councillors, and council officers to help shape our new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy explains how we will do more than just our legal requirements to help people access our services, support and information in the best possible way.
-  **Your views:** We received 234 responses. The majority of respondents agreed with our proposed approach towards these aspects: ‘knowing our communities’ (64% agreed); ‘involving our communities’ (64%); ‘leadership, partnership and organisational commitment’ (54%); ‘responsive services and customer care’ (66%), and a ‘skilled and committed workforce’ (68%). Overall, 44% of respondents considered the Draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to be sensible, thorough and inclusive, whilst 29% expressed disappointment and considered it to be unnecessary, a waste of public resources.
-  **Actions:** The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy has been approved by Cabinet and adopted by South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse in Autumn 2022. One of the first actions from the strategy was to appoint some Equality and Diversity Champions, who will work as ambassadors within the councils, to promote and champion equality actions across teams and service areas and help run events.

Page 4

Agenda Item 8



In August 2022 we also launched the following projects:

❖ **Summer of skate competition – feedback survey**

This comment form helped obtain feedback from those who participated in one of the ten skate competition events held in Sutton Courtenay, Faringdon, Berinsfield, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Grove between 3 August and 9 September 2022. In addition, for under 18s with an interest in skateboarding or a willingness to try it, we also obtained feedback from parents and guardians. The events were organised as part of the Police Crime Commissioner’s plan to reduce antisocial behaviour, improve the perception of the police and promote youth services. Respondents to the survey had the chance to win great prizes, including a brand-new skateboard and starter kit.



❖ **Litter Bug Detectives Trail: your feedback**

This feedback form asked those who participated to our Litter Bug Detectives Trails around South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse to let us know what worked well and maybe not so well, in order to improve the experience for everyone going forward.

❖ **Didcot Garden Party: your feedback**


Following the Didcot Garden Party in August 2022, we asked participants for their views on the event to help identify what we could do to improve everyone’s experience at future events. The comment form asked those who attended what they enjoyed the most about the party, what activities or workshops they would be interested in participating in the future, and how likely they were to attend the next Didcot Garden Town Party.







April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------


❖ The Beacon: What would you like to see? – Vale of White Horse


 **We asked:** residents what events, live shows or activities they would like to see at The Beacon in Wantage. The consultation also asked hirers and potential hirers of the venue to provide feedback on the facilities and to indicate what type of activities or events they would be interested in using the venue for.

 **Your views:** 55% of respondents said they had visited The Beacon before to attend a class/workshop, whilst 47% did so to drop-off/wait for a child attending a class. The most common reasons for not visiting The Beacon were unawareness of the venue or lack of interest in the offer of shows and classes. The three types of events that most people said they were interested to see at The Beacon were: cinema (86%), theatre performances (84%) and musicals (69%). 77% of respondents said they would like The Beacon to be a local community centre. 65% said they would like to see more live music and performances. The activities that hirers were most interested in using the venue for were social gatherings for children and adults.

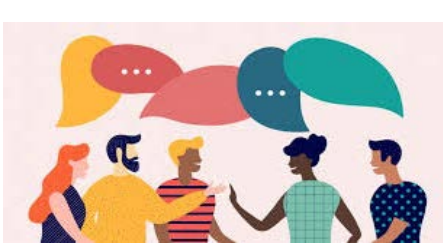
 **Actions:** The results of the consultation have been analysed and summarised in a report and will help us develop the activities and facilities we offer, so we can successfully meet the needs and wants of the community we serve.

❖ South and Vale Validation Checklists Consultation

 **We asked:** In September 2022 we asked agents, developers, landowners and business/organisations for their views on the planning applications' 'Validation Checklists' and 'Validation Guide'. The purpose of this consultation was to seek the views of those who have previously submitted planning applications to South Oxfordshire and/or Vale of White Horse District Councils. The consultation focused on the recently reviewed validation checklists for a number of statutory application types, as well as the newly produced guidance document.

 **Your views:** Most respondents had no strong feelings about the checklists or the guidance document. Some clarification was required regarding the documentation needed and to explain that more information is included in the guidance document. Amendments were required to a number of the checklists as they were asking for unnecessary plans/documents.

 **Actions:** In response to the consultation findings we have made amendments to both the guidance and the validation checklists. Details of the specific changes that have been made in response to the comments can be found in [the final report](#).



❖ Ask for Angela – South and Vale



We asked: Ask for Angela is a campaign that is designed to safeguard women in pubs and clubs who are feeling unsafe or at risk of sexual violence. The scheme encourages people to discreetly ask a member of staff for help by asking for Angela. The consultation helped the Community Safety team carry out a review of the scheme and find out if venues were using it and what councils could do to support them.



Your views: Respondents were almost equally split between those who were using the Ask for Angela scheme (47%), and those who weren't (53%). One of the most common reasons for not using the scheme was not knowing how to promote it. Among the things that councils could do to help promote the scheme, respondents mentioned: communications, providing posters and documentation. Most respondents said they would be happy to use A4 posters and stickers in their venues to promote Ask for Angela, and to require all staff to complete online training.



Actions: This consultation helped us gather the contact details of those who were interested in discussing the scheme further. The results collected were used to send resources and further information to those who requested it, and to estimate the number of venues that were already using the scheme.

❖ Council Tax Reduction Scheme: consultation on proposed changes for 2023/24 – Vale of White Horse



We asked: The Vale of White Horse Council invited residents to express their views on a number of proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which would ensure that everyone contributes to services on a fairer basis. More specifically consultees were asked their view on whether the maximum council tax reduction for eligible claimants be increased from 91.5 to 100 per cent; whether a single person living with another adult on low income should be entitled to up to 25 per cent reduction in council tax; and whether council tax reduction should no longer be capped to B and E.



Your views: We received a total of 76 responses. A majority of respondents agreed with the proposals to remove the provision that recipients of council tax reduction must pay at least 8.5 per cent of council tax (68% agreed), and to allow single adults living with another adult on low income to claim up to 25 per cent council tax reduction (65%). The third proposal to no longer cap council tax reduction to B and E was also supported by the largest group of respondents (43%).



Actions: On the basis of the results obtained, the Revenues and Benefits Team has recommended that the council's scrutiny committee adopt all the above three proposals. Details of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023 have been published on the [council's website](#).



In October 2022 we launched the following feedback forms to gather the opinion of teachers, students and service users. Two of these feedback forms – the waste and recycling session for students (teachers and students feedback) - have closed but are part of an ongoing project whose results are not yet available.

❖ **The waste and recycling session for students: teachers feedback on general recycling and waste.**

From September 2022 officers in the Waste team have been delivering a series of presentations and workshops to schools around our districts on the topics of: **1. general recycling and waste**; 2. anti littering; 3. reduce and reuse over Christmas; 4. food waste; 5. environmental engineering and bees. After each session we tried to capture feedback from both teachers and students. This comment form asked teachers for their opinions on the presentation, if they thought it was delivered clearly and in an engaging way, whether they had found the workshop activity informative, and if they felt students’ knowledge of recycling and waste had improved after the session.

❖ **The waste and recycling session: students feedback on general recycling and waste.**

This feedback form asked students for their opinions on the presentation and workshop delivered by the Waste team on topic **1: general recycling and waste**.

❖ **Cornerstone Peer Review: registration form.**

This form was launched to register residents’ interest in attending a focus group on the future of Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot. As Cornerstone continues to recover from the impact of the pandemic, the focus group gave us the opportunity to review the future direction of the centre to ensure it continues to meet the arts and cultural needs of the community.





April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Review of the Safe Place Scheme (Abingdon and Botley) – Vale of White Horse

We asked: The Safe Place Scheme supports our residents to remain safe and independent in the community. Anyone who feels vulnerable or distressed can easily identify a safe place by the recognisable logo, and seek safety and assistance within. This project provided an opportunity for the Community Safety team to review the Safe Place Scheme, including understanding the general level of awareness within businesses and organisations, how likely those who had offered a safe place were to remain in the scheme, how often it had been used and what support councils could provide.

Your views: We received **6** completed responses. All respondents said they were aware that their business/organisation was part of the Safe Place Scheme and they would like to remain in it. 4 respondents said their staff were aware of the scheme, however, 3 of them said that staff had not received training. 5 respondents said they would like more window stickers to help promote the scheme, 3 said they would like to receive more leaflets and free online training. Most respondents said the scheme had never been used in the previous 12 months (5).

Actions: The review of the Safe Place Scheme in Abingdon and Botley is part of a wider project that aims to assess the level of awareness and the effectiveness of the scheme around South and Vale. The feedback received will be implemented at the end of the project, when all reviews have been completed.

❖ Review of the Safe Place Scheme (Faringdon and Wantage) – Vale of White Horse

We asked: This project provided an opportunity for the Community Safety team to review the Safe Place Scheme, including understanding the general level of awareness within businesses and organisations, how likely those who had offered a safe place were to remain in the scheme, how often it had been used and what support councils could provide.

Your views: We received **14** completed responses. All respondents said they were aware that their business/organisation was part of the Safe Place Scheme and 13 said they would like to remain in it. 9 respondents said their staff were aware of the scheme, but only 2 said that they had received training. 10 respondents said they would like more window stickers to help promote the scheme, 7 said they would like to receive more leaflets and free online training. Most respondents said the scheme had never been used in the previous 12 months (9).

Actions: As for Abingdon and Botley, the review of the Safe Place Scheme in Faringdon and Wantage is part of a wider project that aims to assess the scheme around South and Vale. The feedback received will be implemented at the end of the project, when all reviews have been completed.



In November 2022 we also launched the following feedback forms:

❖ **The waste and recycling session for students: teachers feedback on anti-littering (topic 2)**

From September 2022 officers in the Waste team have been delivering a series of presentations and workshops to schools around our districts on the topics of: 1. general recycling and waste; 2. anti littering; 3. reduce and reuse over Christmas; 4. food waste; 5. environmental engineering and bees. After each session we tried to capture feedback from both teachers and students. This comment form asked teachers what they thought of the presentation delivered by officers with respect to topic 2, anti-littering, specifically if they thought it was delivered clearly and in an engaging way, whether they had found the workshop activity informative, and if they felt students' knowledge of recycling and waste was improved.

❖ **The waste and recycling session: students feedback on anti-littering (topic 2)**

This feedback form asked students for their opinions on the presentation and workshop delivered by the Waste team on topic 2: anti-littering.

The above feedback forms have closed but are part of an ongoing project whose results are not yet available.





In December 2022 we launched the following feedback forms to gather the opinion of teachers, students and service users. Two of these surveys are open on an ongoing basis, whilst two have closed but are part of an ongoing project whose results are not yet available.

❖ **The waste and recycling session on reduce and reuse over Christmas (topic 3): teachers feedback.**

From September 2022 officers in the Waste team have been delivering a series of presentations and workshops to schools around our districts on the topics of: 1. general recycling and waste; 2. anti littering; **3. reduce and reuse over Christmas**; 4. food waste; 5. environmental engineering and bees. After each session we tried to capture feedback from both teachers and students. This comment form asked teachers for their opinions on the presentation, if they thought it was delivered clearly and in an engaging way, whether they had found the workshop activity informative, and if they felt students' knowledge had improved after the session.



❖ **The waste and recycling session on reduce and reuse over Christmas (topic 3): students feedback.**

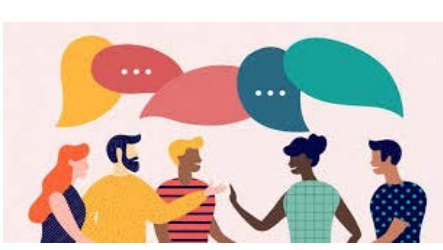
This feedback form asked students for their opinions on the presentation and workshop delivered by the Waste team.

❖ **The bin capacity form (internal use only) - ongoing.**

This form has been created to allow officers to manually log, manage and analyse bin capacity and usage in both districts.




❖ **Cornerstone in Didcot: your feedback - ongoing.**

This feedback form aims to gather feedback from users of the Cornerstone arts centre to review its performance and improve all services. It gives users the opportunity to provide their opinions on the online booking system, website, box office, the facilities and the café/bar.






April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Safer Youth Didcot – South Oxfordshire

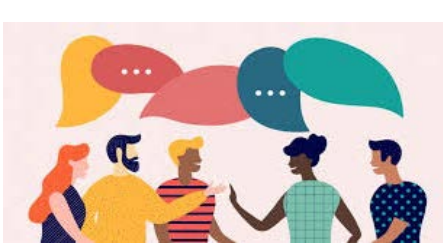
-  **We asked:** For this project we teamed up with [Didcot TRAIN](#), a charity based in Didcot that works with young people, to find out how safe they feel in the Didcot community and online. The aim was to find out if young people have ever felt unsafe walking around the town or experienced any unwanted behaviour. The evidence gathered through the survey will help local organisations look at ways of reducing harassment and violence against young people.
-  **Your views:** More than half of respondents said they always or usually feel safe at school (**57%**), walking to and from school (**64%**), and walking around Didcot during the day (**63%**); whilst only **24%** said they feel always or usually safe walking around Didcot at night. Darkness and strangers were the most common things that made respondents feel unsafe. **75%** said they are or sometimes are influenced by their friends, **36%** are influenced in a mostly positive way and 6% are influenced in a mostly negative way. **88%** said it's not ok to share personal information with a stranger online. **30%** of respondents said social media influenced them in a positive or very positive way, whilst **13%** feel influenced in a negative or very negative way.
-  **Actions:** We have shared a summary report of the results with Didcot TRAIN, which will create videos and a workshop programme around situations, relationships and social media, to help educate young people to reduce gender based harassment and violence.

❖ Review of the Drayton Conservation Area Appraisal Document – Vale of White Horse

-  **We asked** residents to comment on the proposed changes to the conservation area appraisal document, which included a review of the boundary in the following places: 1. inclusion to add the historic core of Sutton Wick and Millennium Green, to the north; 2. inclusion to add an area east of Church Lane; 3. inclusion to add a small area west of Abingdon road, across from High Street. In some areas, the revision was intended to update any issues caused by past mapping and changes to property boundaries, in others the boundary could be extended to add sites of historical and architectural interest.
-  **Your views:** We received **14** completed responses for this consultation, with the majority being from members of the public (**11**). Overall, respondents were supportive of the proposed boundary extensions. Drayton has seen incremental changes over the past decade which respondents are keen to manage with this new appraisal. Some responses include updates and detail which will help to ensure that the adopted appraisal will be as current as possible.
-  **Actions:** The Conservation team is considering all comments received and will make appropriate changes to the [draft document](#) and boundary revision before it's adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by cabinet. Once adopted, the appraisal can be used to inform planning decisions and we will publish the cabinet report, the new conservation area appraisal document and the adopted revised boundary on our [Conservation Areas webpages](#).




Page 32

Agenda Item 8






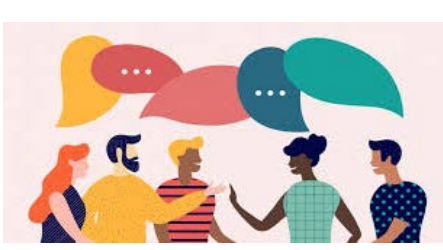
April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Review of the Dorchester-on-Thames and Overy Conservation Area Appraisal Document – South Oxfordshire

-  **We asked:** As part of the review process, we invited comments on the proposed change to the conservation area appraisal document with regards to the inclusion of an area of high archaeological interest, an area of open field which straddles the existing road and bridge into Dorchester, south of the conservation area.
-  **Your views:** We received **18** completed responses for this consultation, of which **11** were from Dorchester residents, and **4** from Overy residents. All responses received show support for the proposal to add the field south of Overy to the conservation area. Some responses include updates and detail which will help to ensure that the adopted appraisal will be as current as possible. Other comments discuss further evidence which may be used for ongoing study and review of the conservation areas. Some comments express difficulty in using the appraisal maps to find key information.
-  **Actions:** The Conservation team is considering all comments received and will make appropriate changes to [the draft document](#) and boundary revision before adopting it as a Supplementary Planning Document via the council's cabinet process. Once adopted, the appraisal can be used to inform planning decisions and we will publish the cabinet report, the new conservation area appraisal document and the revised boundary on our [Conservation Areas webpages](#).

❖ Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan Review – South Oxfordshire

-  **We asked:** We invited residents and stakeholders to give their views on the reviewed neighbourhood plan that Wheatley parish council has submitted to South Oxfordshire district council. If adopted, the reviewed plan will replace the Wheatley Neighbourhood Development Plan that was adopted on 20 May 2021. This project was run in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Planning team.
-  **Your views:** [The list of comments](#) received during the publicity period is now available to view online. You can also head to our website to review all the [supporting documents](#) submitted ahead of the consultation.
-  **Actions:** The draft plan documents and comments received have been submitted for independent examination. Andrew Ashcroft has been appointed by the district council to carry out the examination. The examiner has issued [the examination arrangements](#). The examiner's role is to make recommendations on the draft plan and decide if the plan should proceed to referendum. The examiner has now issued [a Clarification Note](#), which sets out initial comments on the submitted plan and areas where further clarification would be helpful.



April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

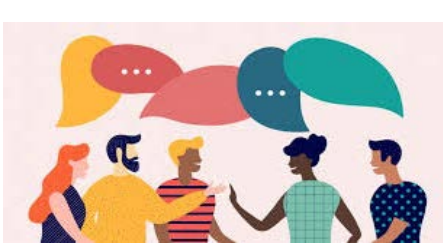
❖ Beckley and Stowood Neighbourhood Plan – South Oxfordshire

📣 We asked: residents and stakeholders to give their views on the new neighbourhood plan which has been submitted to South Oxfordshire district council. The plan will influence the way the area grows and develops in the future. The publicity period closed on 2 March 2023. This project was run in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Planning team.

★ Your views: [The list of comments](#) received during the publicity period is now available to view online. You can also head to our website to review all the [supporting documents](#) submitted ahead of the consultation.




✓ Actions: The [draft plan documents](#) and comments received have now been submitted for independent examination. Andrew Ashcroft has been appointed by the district council to carry out the examination. The examiner has issued [the examination arrangements](#). The examiner’s role is to make recommendations on the draft plan and decide if the plan should proceed to referendum. The examiner has now issued [a Clarification Note](#), which sets out initial comments on the submitted plan and areas where further clarification would be helpful.





April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Equalities data
-------	-----	------	------	--------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------	-------	-----------------

❖ Review of the Stanford in the Vale Conservation Area Appraisal Document – Vale of White Horse

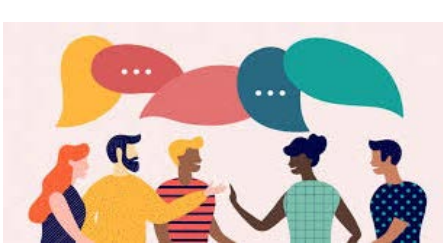
-  **We asked:** The Conservation team invited comments on the following proposed changes to the conservation area appraisal document: 1. the addition of green verges at the western end of the High Street and the former orchards adjacent to Orchard House and 17 Upper Green; 2. the additions of 9-10, 15-24, 27 Horsecroft and 35 High Street; 3. the removal of 25-27 High Street; 4. small boundary adjustments at Bear House, Cox’s Hall, Penstone’s Court and Hunter’s Piece.
-  **Your views:** We received **14** completed responses, of which **9** were from individuals/members of the public. Overall, there was support for the appraisal document and boundary revisions. The Parish council suggested to extend the boundary further east of Horsecroft. A recent PhD thesis about Stanford in the Vale was brought to our attention along with comments from a local history group which will be used to update areas of the appraisal with the latest findings. A number of small factual corrections were noted and will be implemented in the final draft.
-  **Actions:** The Conservation team is considering all comments received and will make appropriate changes to the [draft document](#) and boundary revision before we proceed to adopt it as a Supplementary Planning Document via the council’s cabinet process. Once adopted, the appraisal can be used to inform planning decisions and we will publish the cabinet report, new conservation area appraisal document and adopted revised boundary on our [Conservation Areas webpages](#).

❖ Review of the Cuxham Conservation Area Appraisal Document– South Oxfordshire

-  **We asked:** We invited comments on the Cuxham [Conservation Area Appraisal document](#) which, if adopted, will be used to support planning decisions in the area. No boundary changes were proposed as part of this consultation.
-  **Your views:** We received **11** completed responses for this consultation, of which **9** were from individuals/members of the public. Overall, there was a general support for the appraisal; comments of praise for the presentation and characterization of the village. Cuxham has seen incremental change over the past decade which some respondents are keen to manage with the aid of this new appraisal. Some responses include updates and additional detail which will help to ensure an adopted appraisal will be as current as possible.
-  **Actions:** The Conservation team is considering all comments received and will make appropriate changes to the [draft document](#) and boundary revision before we proceed to adopt it as a Supplementary Planning Document via the council’s cabinet process. Once adopted, the appraisal can be used to inform planning decisions and we will publish the cabinet report, new conservation area appraisal document and adopted revised boundary on our [Conservation Areas webpages](#).

Page 55

Agenda Item 8



In February 2023 we launched the following ongoing sign-up form:

- ❖ **Equalities database sign-up form:** We are committed to delivering excellent services and we want to ensure we are listening to all groups in our community through our consultations and engagement. This is why we are giving voluntary organisations and community groups that represents any of the protected characteristics the opportunity to sign up to be part of our equalities database(*). All groups that sign up will be invited to take part in our consultations and share their thoughts and ideas with the councils.

* The protected characteristics are defined by the 2011 Equality Act and refer to: age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation





In March 2023 we have launched the following expression of interest and feedback forms:

❖ **UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) – expression of interest form:**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils have been awarded £1m each through the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#). Most of the funding will not be available until 2024/25, however, we've already started work on our early-stage projects. This expression of interest form will capture information on local projects to help us consider funding options. We are asking businesses and organisations to pitch any project ideas that could meet the requirements outlined in our plan.

❖ **Waste and recycling session on food waste (topic 4): teachers feedback:**

From September 2022 officers in the Waste team have been delivering a series of presentations and workshops to schools around our districts on the topics of: 1. general recycling and waste; 2. anti littering; 3. reduce and reuse over Christmas; 4. **food waste**; 5. environmental engineering and bees. After each session we tried to capture feedback from both teachers and students. This comment form asked teachers for their opinions on the presentation, if they thought it was delivered clearly and in an engaging way, whether they had found the workshop activity informative, and if they felt students' knowledge of food waste had improved after the session



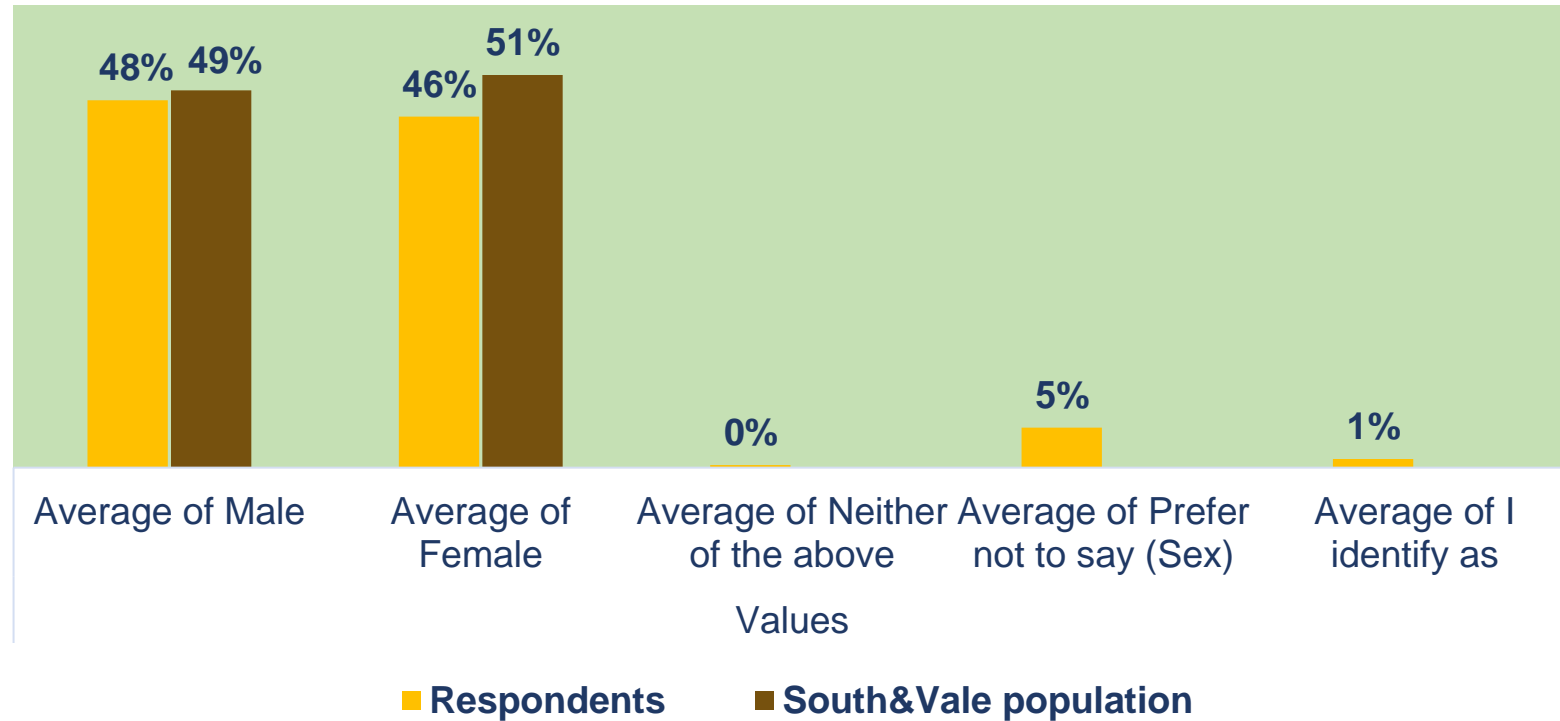
❖ **Waste and recycling session on food waste (topic 4): students feedback:**

This feedback form asked students for their opinions on the presentation and workshop delivered by the Waste team.

The above two feedback forms have closed but are part of an ongoing project whose results are not yet available.



❖ Gender



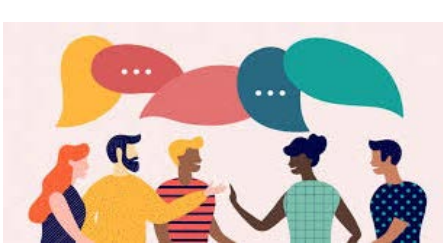
In 2022/23 we started collecting data on gender, age, ethnicity and disability of respondents. This helps us understand if we are reaching all groups in our communities, and see where we need to increase participation and representation.

As we only routinely began collecting this data in 2022/23, we'll be monitoring it to identify future trends.

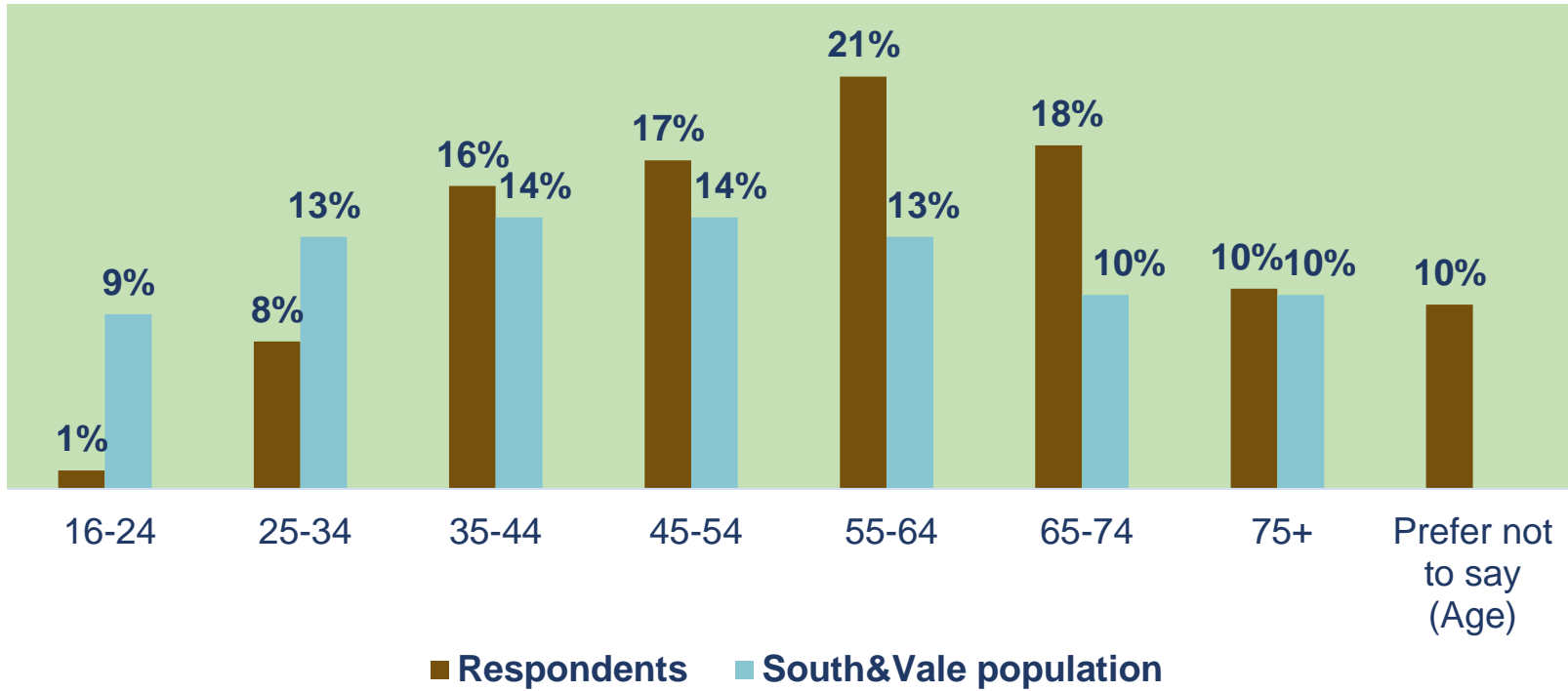
This chart shows the proportion of respondents by gender category as an average of all consultations run in 2022/23 for which data is available. This proportion is then compared with actual population data(*).

On average, 48% of respondents identified as male and 46% as female. Female respondents appear to be slightly underrepresented when compared to population data. However, since 5% of respondents preferred not to answer this question, the actual split between genders could be different. On average, 1% of respondents selected the option "I identify as" and then left further comments to clarify.

* Actual population data for gender, age group and ethnicity is drawn from the Census 2021 and downloaded from Local Insight.



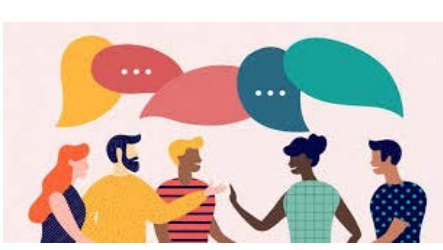
❖ Age



This chart shows the proportion of respondents by age-group as an average of all consultations. Each proportion is then compared with actual population data, which is represented by the light blue columns.

There are two age groups which are well or fairly well represented in our consultations: 35-44-year-olds and 75+. Younger cohorts (16-24 and 25-34-year-olds) are under-represented, whilst all other age groups (45-54, 55-64 and 65-74-year-olds) appear to be over-represented.

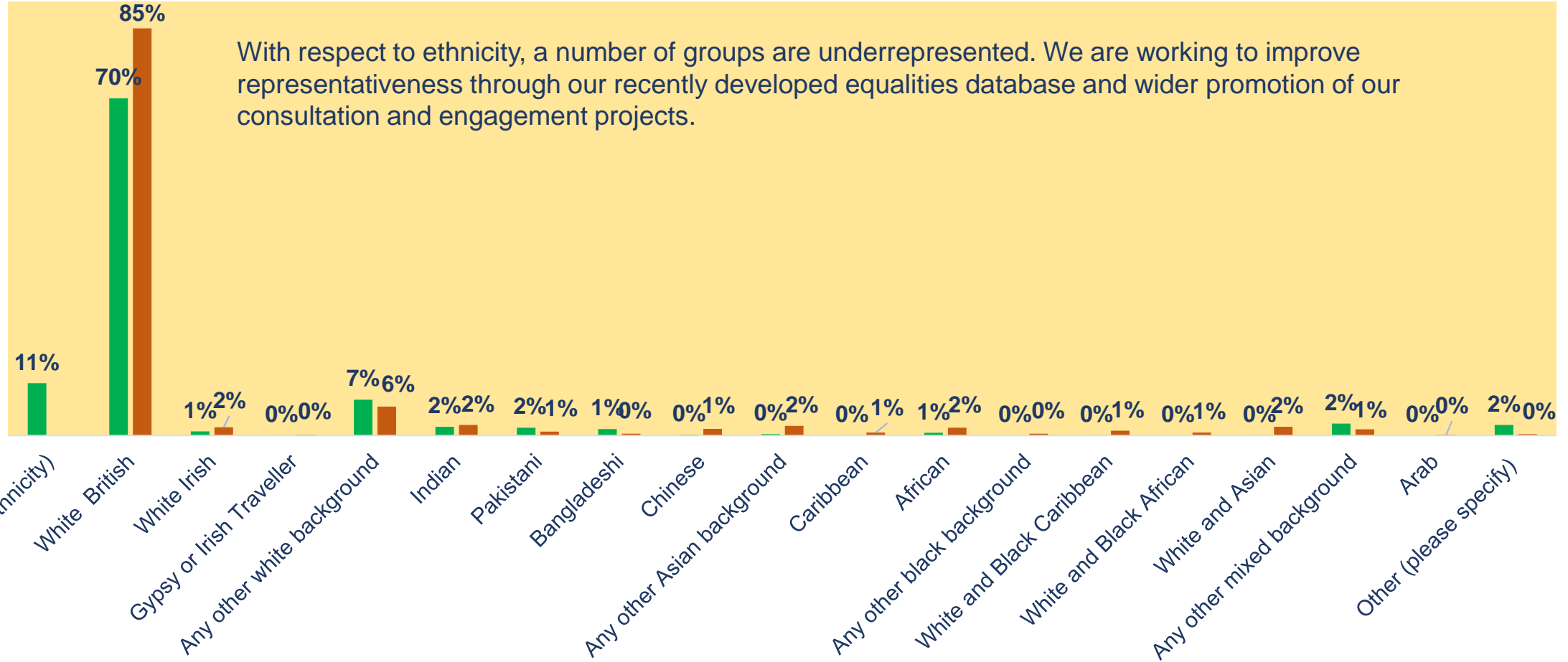
The biggest gap between respondents and actual population is recorded for 16-24-year-olds, who are under-represented by 8%, and for 55-64 and 65-74-year-olds, who are over-represented by the same margin.



❖ Ethnicity

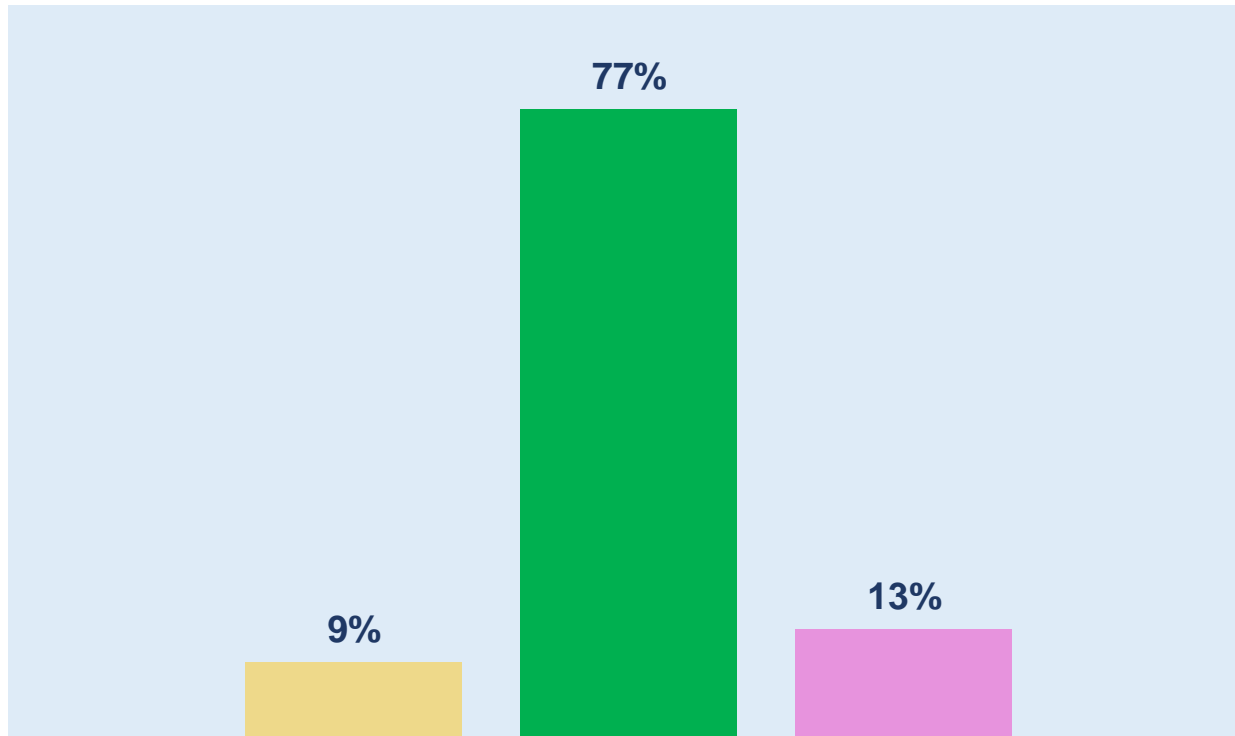
■ Respondents
■ South&Vale residents

With respect to ethnicity, a number of groups are underrepresented. We are working to improve representativeness through our recently developed equalities database and wider promotion of our consultation and engagement projects.





❖ Disability



On average over all our consultations, 77% of respondents said that their daily activities are not affected by disability or long-term illness, whilst 13% are affected by this and a further 9% prefer not to say.

This compares with 14% of people within the actual South and Vale population who said they have a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which affects their daily activities(*). This means that our consultations are representative of the actual population when it comes to disability. Population data for this group is taken from the [Census 2021](#).

(*) This figure is the average for both districts. The individual proportions of people with disability are 13.7% for South Oxfordshire and 14.3% for the Vale of White Horse.

■ Long disability/illness ■ No long disability/illness
■ Prefer not to say (disability)

Scrutiny Report

Report of Head of Planning

Author: Emma Turner

Telephone number: 07717 779171

Email: emma.turner@southandvale.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

Cabinet member responsible: Anne-Marie Simpson

Email: Anne-Marie.Simpson@southoxon.gov.uk

To: SCRUTINY

Date: 7 November 2023

Review: Planning Enforcement Statement

Recommendation

- (a) That Scrutiny Committee considers the latest progress report of the new approach to planning enforcement (as set out in the Planning Enforcement Statement 2021) and provide any comments to the Cabinet Member for Planning.

Purpose of report

1. To seek Scrutiny Committee's comments on the progress made in the last 9 months in reducing the on-hand enforcement case work to enable improvement in the performance of timely responses to investigations.

Corporate Objectives

2. The investigation and actions to mitigate planning harm supports the Corporate Plan, 2020 - 2024, themes of 'Homes and Infrastructure that meet local needs' and "Improving economic and community well-being".

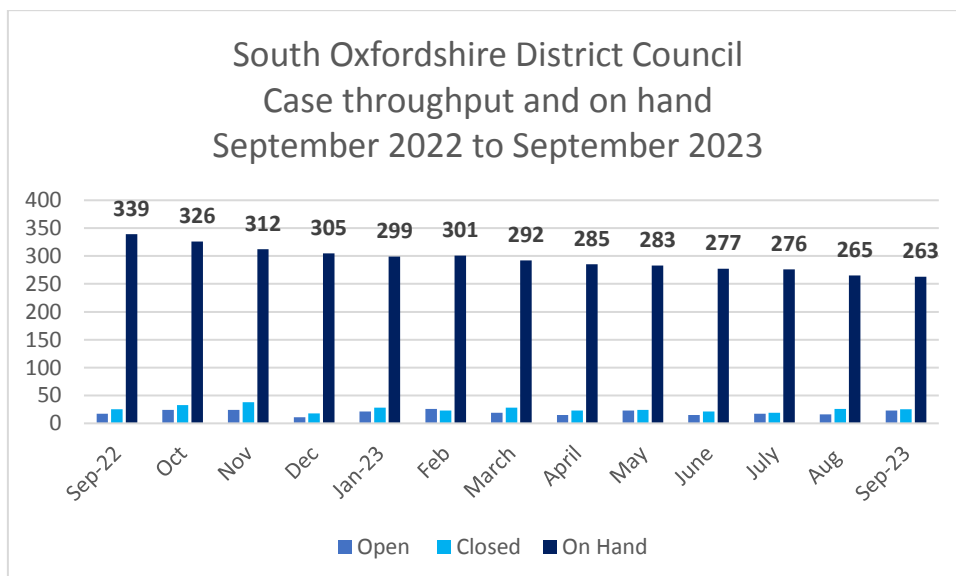
Background

3. The joint Planning Enforcement Statement was agreed and adopted by both South Oxfordshire District Council’s Cabinet and Vale of White Horse District Council’s Cabinet in December 2021. Presentations and interactive sessions were conducted by officers in December 2021 and January 2022 for district, town and parish councillors and were all well attended. A further joint training session for district councillors was held in September 2023 and as part of planning training for town and parish councils in October 2023. Again, it was well attended, and officers received positive feedback.
4. Scrutiny Committee first considered the new approach to planning enforcement in November 2021. A six-monthly progress report, supported by Cabinet was presented to Scrutiny Committee in July 2022 and further update was presented in March 2023. A further request was then made by Scrutiny Committee to review again at a suitable time after the council elections being held in May 2023.
5. This report presents an assessment of the team’s performance, including managing live cases, up to the end of September 2023.

Managing caseload

6. The team continues to improve the management of existing case throughput, by regular case reviews. The triaging system is working well and there have been no complaints since our previous report. Planning enforcement case throughput and on-hand monitoring for the last twelve months from September 2022 to the end of September 2023 is set out below in Graph 1.

Graph 1

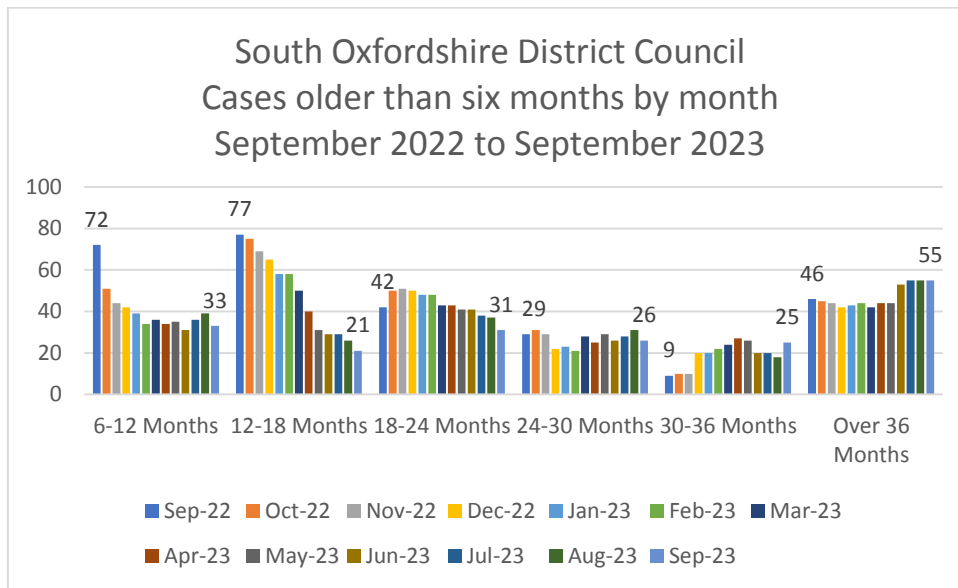


7. Overall case numbers have continued to fall. Since our last report the team has reduced its reliance on the use of consultants. At the end of September following a

service restructure the six month seconded resource from other parts of the department were made permanent. This has added two posts which along with wider working across the service, has increased the teams capacity and resilience to complete the outstanding items within the action plan and refine its processes and procedures. This will help set up the new software next year and enable more proactive way of working, such as pre-start meetings and monitoring on strategic housing sites or themed enforcement projects (adverts) to resolve issues within an area (Conservation area or town centre).

8. A breakdown of the on-hand casework older than 6 months up to and over 36 months is set out in graph 2 below.

Graph 2



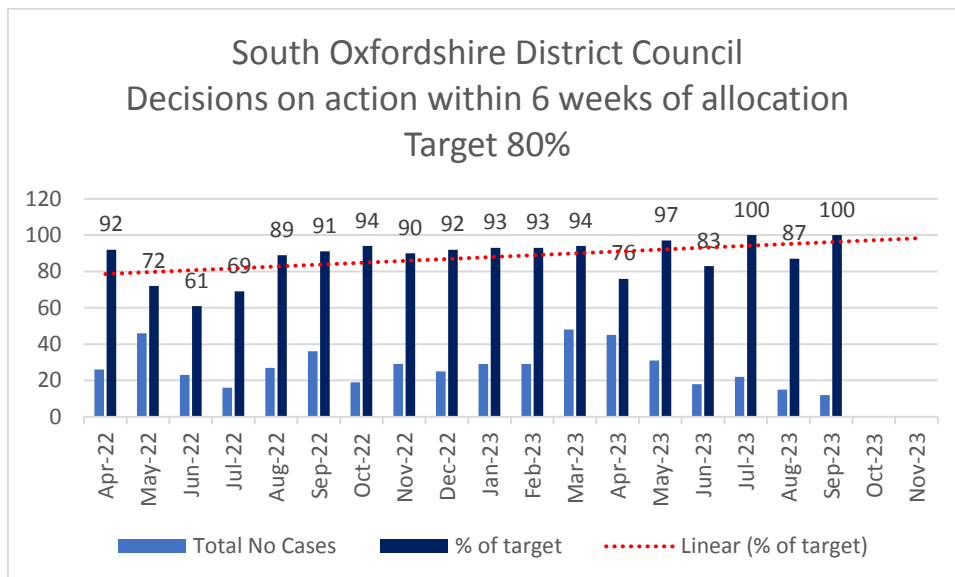
9. The teams success in tackling the on-hand work can be seen in the continuous fall in overall workload but in particular in the fall in numbers up to 24 months. However there continues to be a mixed picture with cases older than this.
10. The team is now focussing on reducing the number of the older cases. The data illustrates the nature of casework which includes ‘baked-in’ time in the investigation and enforcement process. Currently for example 46 of the 55 oldest cases over 36 months old are required to remain open to ensure compliance with notices served, or waiting for the outcome of enforcement appeals and prosecutions or the outcome of planning applications.
11. The team monitors all cases over six months old which is reviewed on a fortnightly basis at one to ones and monthly by senior management in order to ensure the timely closure of on-hand cases.
12. It is important to recognise that the service is bucking the national trend in terms of workload, resourcing and meeting customer demand. Research by the RTPi

(requested by DLUHC) in November 2022, based on 103 English councils, showed that almost 90% of councils were experiencing an enforcement backlog and 80% advised of a lack of resources and difficulty in recruitment. The report indicates over 70% of councils reported delays from the Planning Inspectorate which impacts on the service and that Government is considering new requirements such as the policy on Biodiversity Net Gain, which although implementation has been delayed until next year, it is unlikely that councils will be able to monitor biodiversity sites.

Performance

13. Since April 2022 we have monitored our efficiency target of deciding a course of action for 80 per cent of cases within six weeks of case allocation. The combination of resource challenges and complex cases (e.g., gypsy and traveller investigations), meant that we were not achieving the target consistently. The additional resource and wider team involvement will enable the team to sustain its performance, see graph 3 below.

Graph 3



Climate and ecological implications

14. In maintaining public confidence in the planning system (NPPF), the revised Planning Enforcement Statement helps ensure new development and relevant planning conditions support climate and biodiversity mitigation.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Legal implications

16. There are no legal implications resulting from this report.

Conclusion

17. Planning enforcement sits at the heart of the planning system and we manage it in a way to maintain public confidence in the planning system. The improved Planning Enforcement Statement is working well and achieving its objective, to capture cases with the potential for most planning harm and to improve transparency of decision making and efficiency in working.
18. The team's performance has shown sustained improvement since the introduction of the Statement, both in reducing the on-hand case work and managing case throughput. The team is now focussed on reducing the number of cases older than 6 months and completing the outstanding items from the action plan, in particular those that are required to ensure a smooth transition to the new IT system coming online next year.
19. There is nothing officers suggest to further improve or change the adopted Statement and our approach to dealing with planning enforcement matters.

Recommendation

20. That Scrutiny Committee considers the continued progress of the team's performance and provide any comments to the Cabinet Member for Planning.

Appendix 1

Planning Enforcement Statement December 2021

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/03/Enforcement-Statement.pdf>