

# Agenda



Listening Learning Leading

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Date: 30 March 2022  
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## A MEETING OF THE Cabinet

**WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 7 APRIL 2022 AT 6.00 PM  
FIRST FLOOR MEETING SPACE, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK,  
OX14 4SB**

To watch this virtual meeting, follow this link to the council's [YouTube channel](#).

### Members of the Cabinet

Member	Portfolio
David Rouane (Chair)	Leader of the Council
Robin Bennett (Vice-Chair)	Cabinet member for economic development and regeneration, and deputy leader (statutory deputy leader during the following months: May, July, September, November, January and March)
Maggie Filipova-Rivers (Vice-Chair)	Cabinet member for community wellbeing, and deputy leader (statutory deputy leader during the following months: April, June, August, October, December and February)
Pieter-Paul Barker	Cabinet member for partnership and legal and democratic
Sue Cooper	Cabinet member for environment, climate change and nature recovery
Andrea Powell	Cabinet member for corporate services, policy and programmes
Leigh Rawlins	Cabinet member for finance and property assets
Anne-Marie Simpson	Cabinet member for planning

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## ***ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC PRESENT***

Reports considered with the public present are available on the council's website.

### **1 Apologies for absence**

To record apologies for absence.

### **2 Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 March 2022.

### **3 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and any conflicts of interest in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

### **4 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.

### **5 Public participation**

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

## **CABINET DECISIONS**

### **6 Recommendations and updates from other committees**

To consider any recommendations to Cabinet from other committees.

### **7 Joint communications and engagement strategy** (Pages 7 - 22)

To consider the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations.

### **8 Corporate plan performance monitoring report Q3 2021/22** (Pages 23 - 61)

To consider the head of policy and programmes' report.

Patrick Arran  
Head of Legal and Democratic

# Minutes

## OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

# Cabinet

**Held on Thursday 10 March 2022 at 6.00 pm**  
**135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB**

### **Present in the meeting room:**

Cabinet members: Councillors David Rouane (Chair), Sue Cooper, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins and Anne-Marie Simpson

Officers: Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader)

### **Remote attendance:**

Cabinet members: Councillors Robin Bennett (Vice-Chair), Pieter-Paul Barker, and Maggie Filipova-Rivers

Officers: Emma Baker (Principal Planning Policy Officer), Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes), Pat Connell (Legal Services Manager), Simon Hewings (Head of Finance), Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer), Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive - Transformation and Operations), Richard Spraggett (Chief Accountant) and Mark Stone (Chief Executive)

## **87 Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 February 2022 and agree that the chair sign them as such.

## **88 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest**

None

## **89 Urgent business and chair's announcements**

The chair made an announcement regarding the invasion of Ukraine. He thanked South Oxfordshire residents for showing support for the people of Ukraine. The council had received several offers of help to accommodate Ukrainian refugees. This was welcomed but the immediate need was for cash donations to the charities supporting the relief effort. The chair directed donors to the recognised charities or relief agencies, such as the Disasters Emergencies Committee.

The council had shown solidarity with other Oxfordshire councils against the invasion. The Ukrainian flag was flying outside the council's offices. An early release of the 2021 Census data showed that 70 residents in South Oxfordshire had identified themselves as Ukrainian nationals. The council's thoughts were with them and their families and friends in Ukraine. The council would do all it could to help refugees with housing, resettlement

and community hub support, if asked to do so by the government. Any residents wishing to help with accommodation were asked to contact the council's housing team. Also, a community sponsorship scheme would be announced by the government shortly.

## **90 Public participation**

None

## **91 Recommendations and updates from other committees**

Cabinet noted the recommendations and updates from other committees since the last Cabinet meeting. An update from the Scrutiny Committee was included with the agenda, including references to today's Cabinet agenda items on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the quarter 2 performance monitoring report.

## **92 Covid response and next steps**

Cabinet considered the report of the deputy chief executive – transformation and operations. This set out how the council had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by providing community and business support. The report also set out the agreed staff structure to continue the councils' response and to progress the recovery programmes. In addition, the report sought Cabinet's support for the principles outlined within the document 'Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal Framework'.

The Cabinet member highlighted the areas of support provided to the community and businesses during the pandemic. Cabinet thanked staff for the effort made. Staff had adapted to new ways of working, often committing long hours to support the Covid effort and to meet their other responsibilities.

Although the pandemic was not over, the council would continue to support its community through the recovery phase, to living with Covid-19 in the long-term. The council needed to move forward with caution and consideration, continuing to provide a resilient response approach should it be required.

Appended to the report was an Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal Framework. Cabinet was asked to support its principles. Cabinet supported the three key aims of consolidating recovery and building resilience, addressing the unequal impact of Covid-19, and supporting renewal, together with the cross-cutting priorities of tackling climate change and tackling inequality. However, Cabinet did not support the framework document. Cabinet considered that the work undertaken to date was effective and met the aims set out in the council's corporate plan. The framework, as written, proposed unnecessary duplication to the work already being undertaken. However, Cabinet was keen to support ongoing partnership work and co-operation in response to Covid-19.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) applaud the council's Covid-19 community support response activity to date and note the agreed staff structure to continue the response and progress the recovery programmes; and
- (b) support the three aims (as set out in paragraph 8 of the Oxfordshire Covid-19 Recovery and Renewal Framework covering report) of:

- consolidating recovery and building resilience,
- addressing the unequal impact of Covid-19, and
- supporting renewal,

and the two cross-cutting priorities of:

- tackling climate change and
- tackling inequality

and support continued work and co-operation with partners, but Cabinet does not support the renewal framework.

### **93 Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

Cabinet considered a report from the programme lead on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This sought Cabinet's approval to an update on the Oxfordshire Plan's Statement of Community Involvement. The statement set out how the public and local organisations could shape the future of Oxfordshire. The statement had been amended in response to the recent lifting of coronavirus restrictions and now included consultation options through social media and other digital engagement methods. The cabinet at each of Oxfordshire's five local planning authorities was being asked to approve the same amended statement.

The Scrutiny Committee had considered the report in a different form to that now before Cabinet. Feedback from each councils' scrutiny committee had resulted in the report being updated before the Cabinet meeting. However, the committee had supported the revised Statement of Community Involvement and recommended its adoption to Cabinet.

The Cabinet member also supported the approval of the statement, as it would allow the Oxfordshire Plan to progress. The Cabinet member reported that the statement would be reviewed again once the final timelines were known.

Cabinet supported the updated statement of community involvement but asked that it be kept under review. Cabinet asked that district councillors were consulted on future draft Oxfordshire Plan documents before they were published. It was suggested that figure 2 in the statement, showing the relationship of the plan to other plans and strategies, could be clearer to show that the Oxfordshire vision sat above the Oxfordshire Plan and therefore informed it, rather than being a two-way process.

The Scrutiny Committee had also recommended that the Cabinet member for planning obtained greater clarity about the nature of the consultation responses to uncover any potential conflicts of interest and to respond to the committee's concerns in writing. Cabinet supported this suggestion.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) approve the adoption of the revised Oxfordshire Plan Statement of Community Involvement, and to note that the statement will be kept under regular review as the project continues; and
- (b) note the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation to the Cabinet member for planning "to obtain greater clarity about the nature of the consultation responses to uncover any potential conflicts of interest and to respond to the committee's concerns in writing" and ask the Cabinet member to pursue this.

## 94 Corporate plan performance monitoring report Q2 2021/22

Cabinet considered the corporate plan performance monitoring report for quarter 2 of 2021/22, being the period 1 July to 30 September 2021.

The Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and had welcomed the performance gains and the improvements to the report since quarter 1.

The Cabinet member reported that the document set out progress against the corporate plan priorities. The format and presentation of the report had been improved also. This demonstrated that the council was striving for continuous improvement, openness and accountability.

Cabinet welcomed the report and the improvements made. Cabinet noted that the quarter 3 would be brought to Cabinet shortly.

**RESOLVED:** to note the corporate plan performance monitoring report for quarter 2, 2021/22.

## 95 Budget monitoring 2021/22

Cabinet considered the head of finance's budget monitoring report for the period 1 April to 30 November 2021.

The Cabinet member for finance reported that there had been a revenue and capital underspend, most of which would be carried forward to the 2022/23 budget.

Cabinet welcomed and noted the report.

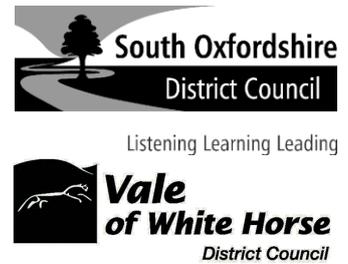
**RESOLVED:** to note the budget monitoring report up to 30 November 2021.

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm

Chair

Date

# Cabinet Report



Report of the Deputy Chief Executive for Transformations and Operations

Author: Shona Ware, Communications and Engagement Manager

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Wards affected: All

South Cabinet member responsible: Cllr Andrea Powell

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Vale Cabinet member responsible: Cllr Bethia Thomas

Tel: 07906 821680

E-mail: [Bethia.thomas@whitehorse.gov.uk](mailto:Bethia.thomas@whitehorse.gov.uk)

To: CABINET

Dates: South 7 April 2022, Vale 8 April 2022

## Joint Communications and Engagement Strategy

### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- (a) Approves the councils' Joint Communications and Engagement Strategy, attached in Appendix 1.
- (b) Delegates the approval of the annual action plans that will underpin the strategy to the Head of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement (Vale) and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services (South).

### Purpose of report

1. To approve the councils' Joint Communications and Engagement Strategy.

## Corporate objectives

2. The strategy will underpin and contribute to all corporate priorities but particularly *Working in an open and inclusive way (Vale) and Openness and accountability (South)*.

## Background

3. The councils need a communications strategy to govern their communications and ensure consistent and tailored messaging reach its diverse audiences.
4. The strategy also covers engagement as the councils' Public Engagement Charter needed reviewing and given the natural synergy between communications and engagement it was an opportunity to bring the work streams together and reflect the service's structure.
5. A comprehensive Communications and Engagement Strategy that is embedded successfully across the councils will improve customer satisfaction, community engagement and the councils' reputations locally and nationally.
6. The strategy will:
  - set out the councils' approach for communicating and engaging with its audiences
  - describe how we will improve our communications with all sectors and groups in our communities using appropriate channels and methods
  - help deliver the councils' corporate priorities
  - establish that good communication is everyone's responsibility
  - raise awareness of the councils' leadership role in addressing district wide issues and delivering better outcomes for its communities
  - demonstrate the councils' commitment to fully inform and listen to its audiences
  - set the standards for good communications and engagement.
7. The strategy identifies several areas we need to strengthen over its lifespan, based on feedback received, learning from best practice and spotting opportunities for continuous improvement. We will produce annual action plans to achieve these.
8. Evaluation will play an important part in ensuring the communications and engagement strategy is both delivered and effective, we will do this through:
  - Establishing an annual action plan
  - Reviewing progress and outcomes on a quarterly basis
  - Evaluating media coverage and direct engagement through our social media channels
  - Evaluating website analytics
9. We will regularly evaluate the impact of our messaging to learn and adapt on an ongoing basis.
10. The strategy and associated action plans will be live documents and will be updated as necessary to ensure they remain relevant and up to date.

## Climate and ecological impact implications

11. There are no direct climate and ecologic implications arising from the strategy. It will raise awareness of the councils' work to tackle the climate emergency and demonstrate they are leading by example in these areas.

## Financial implications

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this strategy. Any budget required for projects included in the annual action plans will be identified and considered through the councils' usual project management and budget processes.
13. Any council decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the councils' overarching financial position. For South, the position reflected in the councils' medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to Full Council in February 2022 showed that it is due to receive £2.1 million less in revenue funding than it plans to spend in 2022/23. For Vale, a balanced budget was set in 2022/23 but there is expected to be a budget gap in future years.
14. The funding gap at both councils is predicted to increase to over £3 million by 2026/27. As there remains no certainty on future local government funding, following the announcement of a one-year spending review by government, and as the long-term financial consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic remain unknown, this gap could increase further. Every financial decision made needs to be cognisant of the need to address the funding gap in future years.

## Legal implications

15. There are no direct legal implications arising from this strategy. It has been developed in line with the Government's Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Any legal implications arising from any projects included in the annual action plan will be considered during the project management process.

## Risks

16. There are risks to the councils' reputations and customer satisfaction if the strategy is not implemented effectively.

## Other implications

17. None

## Conclusion

18. A comprehensive Communications and Engagement Strategy that is embedded successfully across the councils will improve customer satisfaction, community engagement and the council's reputations locally and nationally. Officers therefore recommend the strategy is adopted.

## Background papers

- None

## Appendix 1

# Communications and engagement strategy

## Our vision

**To create districts where our diverse audiences have a voice, are aware of the services and support the councils provide, and what they are doing to make South and Vale thriving places.**

By building a better understanding and acceptance of what we do and why and through listening to our communities, we can manage and improve the impression our audiences have of us and encourage and motivate more of them to voice their views on our work and services.

The strategy will:

- set out the councils' approach for communicating and engaging with their audiences
- describe how we will improve our communications with all sectors and groups in our communities using appropriate channels and methods
- help deliver the priorities in the councils' corporate plans
- establish that good communication is everyone's responsibility
- raise awareness of each council's leadership roles in addressing district wide issues and delivering better outcomes for their communities
- demonstrate the councils' commitments to fully inform and listen to their audiences
- set the standards for good communications and engagement.

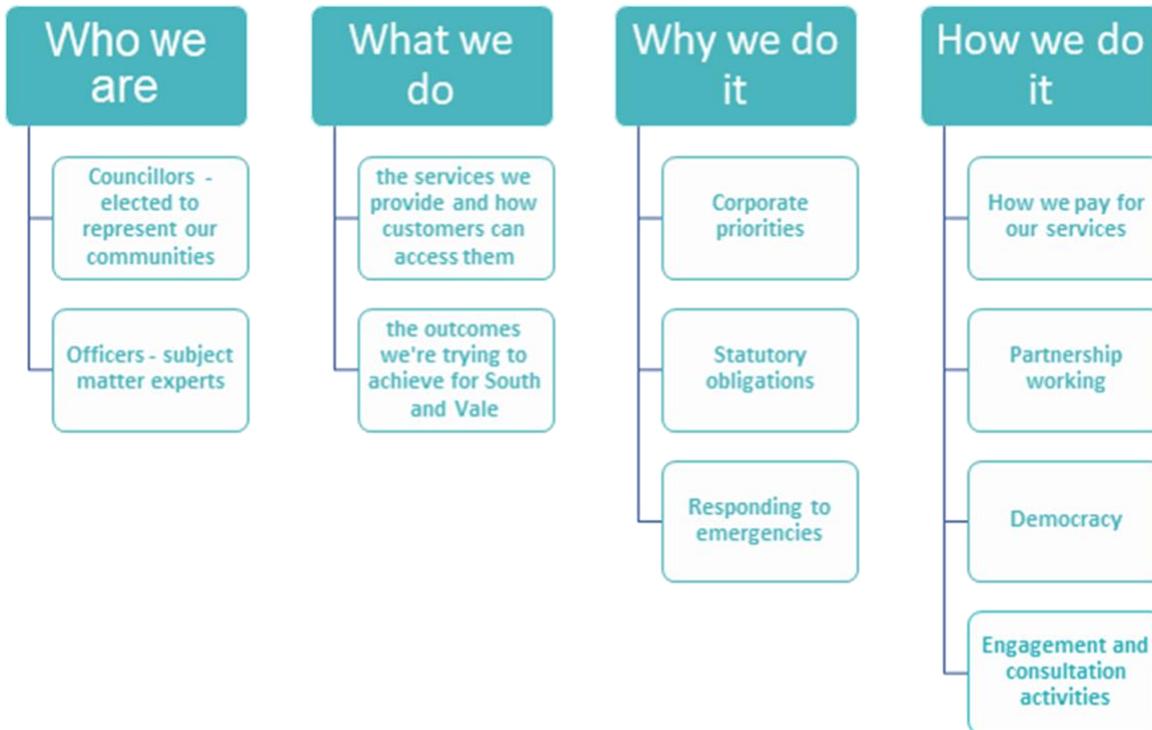
This strategy has been produced to align with the councils' Corporate Plans and underpins all their corporate priorities but particularly *Working in an open and inclusive way (Vale) and Openness and accountability (South)*.

There are also several supporting/cross cutting strategies already in place or in development that contribute to these objectives– see Appendix 2.

This strategy is primarily for internal use but in the interests of transparency it will be available on our websites.

## Our aims?

- 1) To ensure all our varied audiences have a clear and positive understanding of:



- 2) To ensure all our diverse audiences can tell us what they think of us and the work we're doing and can give us their views on service and policy proposals when there are meaningful opportunities to influence these.

## Our approach

We will achieve our aims through:

- Ensuring the right structure is in place to provide a modern and strategic communications and engagement service
- Putting in place fresh communications and engagement policies and procedures
- Delivering well planned and expertly executed communications that reach all our audiences
- Ensuring timely and proportionate engagement activities
- Proactively promoting and publicising our services and activities, how they relate to our corporate priorities and our progress
- Being on the front foot with potential issues that could affect the councils' reputations

- Promoting existing and new digital technologies that allow our customers to contact us and provide feedback quickly and easily
- Strengthening the use of our brand to raise awareness of our services and work
- Developing our social media platforms both to keep audiences informed of our news and events and to encourage interaction.

## Our standards

Through all our communications and engagement activities we will speak positively and proactively about the work the councils are doing to identify and achieve the best possible outcomes for their communities. We will also explain our decisions and the thinking behind them, especially when facing criticism, so our audiences understand why we've approached things in a certain way.

Our communications and engagement will:

- Have a **CLEAR** and defined purpose and audience.
- Be **ACCESSIBLE** and **INCLUSIVE**. We'll use conversational tone, plain English and imagery to ensure our communications and engagement are as inclusive as possible.
- Be **TIMELY**. We'll tell our audiences about matters that could affect them and opportunities to provide feedback in plenty of time and in the most appropriate way – our communications will be regular, consistent and appropriate for the audience.
- Be **CONCISE** We will get to the point.
- Be **HONEST** We will be open and truthful speaking in facts, not speculation and spin. We will be realistic and set our audiences' expectations appropriately and not over-promise.

## Our key messages

Many of our key messages over the life of this strategy will be informed by our:

### Priorities

Most of the councils' work is driven by the priorities in their Corporate Plans, therefore these will feature heavily in all our public messaging. When we're responding to emergencies and additional demands placed on us by government, we'll focus on our role, the support we can offer and the benefits to the target audience.

### Financial standing

The councils' financial forecasts remain uncertain, and they may in the future have to take unpopular decisions to deliver on their priorities *to build stable finances (Vale) and rebuild financial viability (South)* while protecting vital services. Our communications will therefore need to manage future expectations.

### Future service delivery models

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced many organisations like ours to provide more digital services and self-service options. This trend is likely to continue as more audiences embrace the convenience they offer, and if further efficiency savings are required. Effective communications will be crucial for ensuring this approach lands positively with all audiences, particularly those that may struggle with digital services or have difficulties accessing them.

## Our areas for development

We have identified several areas we need to strengthen over the life of this strategy, based on feedback received, learning from best practice and spotting opportunities for continuous improvement. We will produce annual action plans to achieve this. The key areas for developing are:

### Campaigns

Over the years, our campaign work has tended to focus on recycling and waste collection matters, as it's one of the few services that easily lend themselves to this activity. However, there is much more we can do. People often associate campaigns with promoting services and new activities, but they are a successful and effective way of addressing council issues, influencing behaviours and contributing to the delivery of corporate priorities. Therefore, delivering well planned and executed campaigns will be a focus of this strategy as well as measuring their impact using a range of metrics.

### Social and digital media channels/platforms

Since our social media policies and processes were first introduced these platforms have become established as significant communications and customer engagement tools. We

therefore need to review our overarching approach and framework to ensure they both embrace the opportunities these channels bring but also to manage the downsides positively and proactively. Given the pace of developments in this area it's important that we review our approaches on a regular basis to stay ahead of the curve.

With devolved responsibility for maintaining web content to service representatives the website can very soon become unwieldy without strategic and central oversight. We will therefore need to ensure the team is properly resourced to do this, along with driving forward new digital platforms and tools to meet the changing needs of our audiences.

### **Reaching more people and communities**

It's been a while since we have reviewed the way we communicate and engage with key stakeholders –groups we've historically failed to reach, our business communities, towns and parishes and voluntary and community organisations. This is an important exercise to ensure we're meeting their needs.

In the meantime, we will continue to make all reasonable efforts to ensure our information is available to all audiences, including those with disabilities, who struggle with reading or don't have English as their first language. We will also continue to do everything we reasonably can to make sure we're reaching residents who don't have access to the internet or aren't comfortable using it regularly.

### **Media relations**

We need to build closer working relations with our press and broadcast media as, particularly since the start of the covid pandemic, media relations activity has become a little more reactive and remote.

### **Creative communications – graphics, video**

Effective digital and social media communications often requires high-quality visual materials, including photographs, video, graphics and infographics. We need to ensure the communications and engagement team has the skills to create these through training and when recruiting and has the budget to commission external expertise when needed.

### **Consultation and engagement**

A national trend since the start of the pandemic is that more people than ever are taking part in consultation and engagement activities. Whilst this is also true for the councils, our systems and approaches have been in place for some time and would benefit from a review.

The review will explore quicker and more flexible models for capturing views but also how we can engage with our audiences more informally, particularly as part of our day-to-day communications activities.

## **Our audiences**

Accurately identifying our audiences is essential for effective communications and engagement activities. Our audiences are many and varied and each will have different

levels of awareness and understanding of our work and services so our key messages will need to be tailored accordingly.

Likewise, when planning campaigns and engagement activities, we will need to consider the preferences and needs of our target audience. For example, some audiences may be more familiar and comfortable with traditional media than online/ social media platforms.

- Employees and potential employees
- Council members and potential councillors
- The public – residents, customers, and groups we normally fail to reach
- Community groups and organisations
- The wider public in Oxfordshire and beyond – potential visitors
- Partners and stakeholders including other local authorities
- The media – local and national see Appendix 1
- Local MPs
- Government
- Business community
- The councils' recognised union

## Our responsibilities

Every decision the councils take will have an impact of at least one of their audiences – this could be one or two members of staff, a contractor or every resident. It's therefore important to identify the communications implications of proposals before decisions are taken and made public, to be on the front foot with messaging.

As the councils' strategic lead for communications our Communications and Engagement team are best placed to do this but must be engaged early in the process, particularly to manage any messages that might be perceived negatively with large or several audiences. However, all staff and members have a role to play in being ambassadors for getting key messages across to our audiences.

Every interaction our audiences have with staff and members has an impact on our reputation, negatively or positively. Therefore, a key message of this strategy is that everyone has a responsibility for ensuring our communications and engagement activities meet the standards set out on page 3.

Our councils are made up of many services but in the eyes of our audiences they are single organisations. So, a success or achievement in one area will reflect positively on the rest of the council just as any negative experiences would reflect poorly on us. We therefore need to act and communicate consistently as single organisations.

## Heads of service responsibilities

- Reinforce the message that ownership of the communications strategy spans the whole organisation at every level and will ensure it's implemented across their services.

- Define and prioritise the communication and engagement needs for their services and discuss them with the communications and engagement team for forward planning purposes.
- Establish channels of communication to keep their staff regularly informed of service and council wide news and give them opportunities to express their views and opinions on internal matters.
- Identify issues, reports and publications that could affect the councils' reputations and notify a senior member of corporate communications in good time before they are made public via agendas published on the website, meetings, or the press/social media.
- Proactively identify possible positive stories, case studies, achievements and public/consultation events and flag them with the communications and engagement team.
- Ensure all staff understand their role in reporting potential reputation issues.
- Keep their cabinet members and key stakeholders, including relevant contractors, informed of service news.
- Ensure their cabinet members take responsibility for briefing other cabinet colleagues on relevant service matters and understand what information they can share.
- Seek professional advice from the communications and engagement team before agreeing to any communications and engagement activities including specific messages, how to deliver those messages, campaigns, and literature etc.

**Member responsibilities**

- Support the strategy and follow the principles and standards within it.
- Follow the relevant press and media policy to help strengthen the councils' reputations.
- Inform the relevant head of service immediately of any issue that has the potential to impact the councils' reputations so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Ensure any public corporate messaging they are involved in aligns with any wider relevant agendas.
- Flag corporate communications issues with the communications and engagement team for the officers to agree the strategy/approach for addressing them.
- Keep relevant members briefed on any crosscutting matters and those of particular interest/concern
- Seek professional advice from the communications and engagement team before agreeing to any corporate communications and engagement approaches/activities including specific messages, how to deliver those messages, campaigns, literature etc.
- Actively fulfill their role as critical links in the chain of communication with stakeholders through sharing the views of the public to the council and keeping their wards briefed on service information and issues.

**Communications and engagement team responsibilities**

- Ensure the communications and engagement strategy is implemented, enforced, and reviewed on a regular basis
- Provide professional advice to staff and members across the full spectrum of communications and engagement activities
- Manage/oversee all council run engagement activities, including statutory consultations
- Oversee the councils' internal communications framework to provide regular and meaningful updates to staff through the most effective channels
- Manage corporate media relations and take ownership of public messaging
- Manage and develop the councils' digital and social media channels and consultation platforms
- Develop and execute communication campaigns and plans

- Play a key role in responding to incidents or reputation management issues
- Oversee all council publications aimed at our key audiences to ensure consistent message and brand.

**All staff responsibilities**

- Familiarise themselves with this strategy and follow the principles and standards within it
- Keep individual customers and key stakeholders informed about their services
- Seek professional advice from the communications and engagement team before beginning any communications or engagement activity
- Ensure information on newsworthy subjects like successful projects, service improvements and good news, and events and consultations reach the communications and engagement team
- Keep the communications and engagement team up to speed with forthcoming projects and ongoing service issues to allow them to recommend any communications and engagement requirements, opportunities, or solutions.
- Ensure all printed and online material as well as signage follow the relevant council branding and our required accessibility standards by approaching the communications and engagement team before starting work on them.
- Inform senior managers immediately of any issue which has the potential to impact on the council's reputation so that appropriate action can be taken
- Raise any concerns with services, policies, and procedures with their line manager – if staff don't speak up how can the councils listen?

## Our tools

### Engagement tools

- Surveys
- Sounding boards/panels/focus groups
- Exhibition events
- Straw polls
- Feedback forms

### Communication tools

- Campaigns including marketing materials E.g., posters, leaflets
- Virtual/face to face briefings and meetings
- Letters/emails/phone calls
- Corporate publications E.g., corporate plan, quarterly reports on , climate action plan

### External

- Websites (Corporate, SVBS, Cornerstone and Beacon)
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Digital platforms, like smartphone apps
- Vale News/South News – Town and parish e-newsletter
- Media relations E.g., press releases and statements, photoshoots/interviews

### Internal

- Email updates
- Intranet (Jarvis)
- Infocus – member newsletter
- Monthly heads of service updates

## Our progress

Evaluation will play an important part in ensuring the communications and engagement strategy is both delivered and effective, we'll do this through

- Establishing an annual action plan
- Reviewing progress and outcomes on a quarterly basis
- Evaluating media coverage and direct engagement through our social media channels
- Evaluating website analytics

We will regularly evaluate the impact of our messaging to learn and adapt on an ongoing basis.

This strategy and associated action plans will be live documents to ensure they remain relevant and up to date.

## APPENDIX 1 – MEDIA OUTLETS

At the time of publication of this strategy, our main press and media outlets are:

### TV News

- BBC South Today
- ITV Meridian

### Radio

- BBC Radio Oxford
- Jack FM
- Heart FM (Thames Valley)

### Newspapers

- The Herald Series/The Oxford Mail (Newsquest)
- Henley Standard

### Online

- BBC Online
- Oxfordshire Live
- That's Oxfordshire TV

### Hyperlocal

- Village/community newsletters

## APPENDIX 2 – SUPPORTING AND CROSS CUTTING STRATEGIES

Our supporting strategies at the time of publishing this strategy, include:

- Customer and IT transformation strategy
- Press and media policy – in development
- Diversity and inclusion strategy - in development
- Social media strategy – in development

# Strategic Performance Report

Quarter Three 2021/22

February 2022



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## BACKGROUND



1. The Council monitors performance and progress towards achieving the aims and priorities set out in the [Corporate Plan](#).
2. This report provides a strategic overview of the performance for Q3 (01 October to 31 December 2021), focusing on the activity to deliver the corporate priorities in the South Oxfordshire District Council Corporate Plan 2020-24.
3. In addition to providing a performance update and assurance against the delivery of the Council's six strategic themes in the Corporate Plan, this report will also provide any strategic context relevant to the Council's operations and, given the significant impact of Covid-19 on communities, services and staff, the report will include a section on Covid-19 response and recovery.
4. This report is the third iteration, and it is expected that it will evolve in line with the new approach to Performance Management being embedded by the Council, as well as from feedback from senior officers and Members.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This quarter, there was anticipation around the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), held 31 October to 12 November in Glasgow. Significant global pressure was felt prior to and during the Conference, by the leaders and negotiators to reach agreements and set common timeframes for achieving carbon reduction targets. The resulting Glasgow Climate Pact, adopted by almost 200 countries, ramped up the call for greater action and financing for adaptation. Following COP26, South Oxfordshire District Council approved a motion, to provide clear leadership and regular guidance and information on the changes required to reach net zero carbon emissions. A reaffirmed commitment was also made to publish a Climate Action Plan, of which a final draft was created at the end of quarter three, to be heard at the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee (CEEAC) and Cabinet, at the beginning of quarter four.

The later part of this quarter can arguably be defined by a swift and significant rise of a new Covid-19 variant of concern, named Omicron. The identification of the Omicron variant caused a shift in the Covid-19 landscape across the Country. As a new highly contagious variant, Omicron was set to impair the steps the Country had taken since the ending of the majority of restrictions in quarter two. This period was characterised by an ever-changing picture of both new releases of scientific information regarding the variant and natural emotion in response to this, as residents looked to festive celebrations ahead and fears that long-awaited festivities with family and friends may once again not be possible, in order to protect the population's health. On 08 December, the Prime Minister confirmed England was to move to 'Plan B' in response to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, which included measures such as the compulsory wearing of face masks, working from home mandates and the requirement of NHS Covid Passes in specific settings.

Locally, this had a particular impact on businesses who saw many cancelled social gatherings at restaurants for example, and residents increasingly staying at home to avoid contracting Covid-19. This is a stark contrast to the beginning of the quarter, where nationally the UK economy surpassed pre-Covid levels for the first time in November after recording stronger-than-expected growth, with gross domestic product (GDP) expanding 0.9% between October and November. The Office for National Statistics reported that in particular, architects, retailers, couriers and accountants had a "bumper month".

Moreover, this quarter saw a revived acceleration of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in December, as a booster vaccine was deemed one of the main defences against this latest variant. The national 'Get Boosted Now' campaign aimed to offer all eligible adults a booster by the 31 December. The campaign led to a huge increase in vaccination rates, with over 8 million top-up jobs administered in just over 2 weeks in England (between 12 December and 30 December); the highest number of vaccinations ever recorded in a single day, was reached 18 December. This quarter, the Local Government Association highlighted the integral role councils have played in the Covid-19 vaccine programmes, working in partnership and supporting the health and wellbeing of residents.

Additionally, December of this quarter saw the release of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23. This was released as a one-year settlement and included proposals of increased funding for councils compared to 2021/22, a 2022/23 services grant, a council tax 2% core referendum threshold and a 'roll over' of elements of the 2021/22 settlement, such as the current approach to the New Homes Bonus. A consultation launched 16 December to seek views on the proposals and will close early next quarter, 13 January 2022. In anticipation of this, this

quarter the Council completed extensive work to review spending across the council and carried out an extensive revenue base budget challenge exercise. The results of this will support the Council with their medium-term financial planning and preparation of a 2022/23 budget, to be heard at Cabinet and Council next quarter.

Furthermore, nationally, this quarter saw the removal of the uplift in Universal and Working Tax Credit. A £20 per week uplift/increase was implemented in March 2020 with the purpose of supporting families whose income would be affected, as the country faced the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. From 6 October 2021, the government ended this payment, which had the potential to affect 7,205 households in South Oxfordshire<sup>1</sup>. Following this, the Council pledged to write to the government to call on it to reverse the cut to the £20 Universal Credit uplift. This pledge forms part of the Council's aspiration to improve economic and community wellbeing, as detailed within the Corporate Plan.

A growing focus nationally continues to be the subject of women's safety in the community. Last quarter saw the sad emergence of particularly high-profile cases in the UK, of violence against women at night, in the community. This quarter, the Council has launched a 'Safer Streets' survey in partnership with Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxford City Council, to hear from anyone who has felt unsafe in Didcot or Abingdon town on a night out, or when returning after an evening out elsewhere. The survey aims to use resident's experiences to help shape and introduce measures to help prevent violence against women and girls, travelling at night in the district. This work will continue into quarter four and beyond. The Council's involvement in the Community Safety Partnership remains key to making progress in this area and making streets safer for women and girls.

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<sup>1</sup> Number of households on Universal Credit in South Oxfordshire as of July 2021

# PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS



**13** public meetings (100%) were livestreamed and uploaded to YouTube



We ran **11** consultations/engagement exercises in Q3, and received **1,953** responses



We have secured **18** leases of vacant commercial properties through the Meanwhile in Oxfordshire project

We reached **72,800** people through 178 Facebook posts, and received **110k** impressions from 179 tweets



The DEFRA approved recycling rate for the district in 2021/21 was **63.6%**, making South Oxfordshire the second-best council in the league table



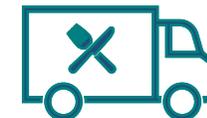
**209** applications received for our local Winter Support Grant scheme. Total funding for this scheme is **£1,239,551**



**6** Neighbourhood Plans passed the submission stage in Q3. They contain provisions for protecting **23** Local Green Spaces and **17** more through other forms of policy protection



**2,256** people subscribed to the Economic Development newsletter in Q3, and **80** responded to our “State of the Business” consultation survey



We have delivered **15** emergency food parcels to residents in financial hardship or self-isolating due to COVID-19



**51** new affordable homes were delivered in Q3, bringing the total for the year to date to 214



On 31 December, **zero** rough sleepers were recorded in the district for the first time since 2013. We recorded a successful homelessness prevention rate of **87%**, which is above the 80% target

Agenda Item 8

# THEME 1. PROTECT AND RESTORE THE NATURAL WORLD

## Strategic Lead – Suzanne Malcolm – Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Why?

South Oxfordshire is a largely rural district, including parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the Oxford Green Belt, as well as a long stretch of the River Thames. The natural world is proven to provide benefits to both mental and physical health, as well as having its own intrinsic value, and it needs our protection.

So:

We will respect and protect our natural environment, especially our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and other nature rich areas. We will champion the opportunity to restore our natural world in both biodiverse and bio-depleted areas through nature recovery networks and other means. We will connect urban communities to their local green spaces and restore nature to urban environments.



## Key Activity in Q3:

To progress the Council's aim to protect and restore our natural world, this quarter work commenced on exploring ways in which improvements can be made to enhance the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces, such as increasing the number of wildflower areas and increasing tree coverage where appropriate.

Additionally, this quarter, to further the Council's commitment to recognising and supporting the vital role of farming, officers have been working with representatives of Good Food Oxfordshire to develop the initial plans for a Food Strategy for Oxfordshire. Good Food Oxfordshire exists to support and strengthen networks in Oxfordshire to improve the area's food system and to respond to challenges within it. For example, excessive waste, carbon footprints, food poverty and wages in the farming sector.

Moreover, work has continued this quarter on improving access to green spaces in and around our towns. Officers have worked with a housing developer in Didcot to expedite the transfer of the first tranche of open spaces on Great Western Park to the council, as part of the Council's aim to reinforce access to nature as a priority for community wellbeing.

This quarter we have also progressed the work completed in quarter two, on ensuring strong foundations are in place to take forward the work of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Oxfordshire. This quarter, a decision regarding the hosting of the Board was made, in addition to an agreement being reached regarding its provisional budget. This will help to take forward its aims of an ambitious nature recovery programme.

Also, this quarter, the council invested just under £320,000 to upgrade a treatment plant which serves homes in the village of Moulsoford. The upgrade work has been designed with the aim to reduce the risk of flooding as well as provide a more reliable service for the connected properties.

## Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
PRN1	With partners, promote in-depth mapping and surveying of ecosystems across the district, planning for restoration of the natural world and working closely with landowners and specialist agencies	Narrative report to include information on work with partners, and Habitat and Species data + changes/trends on a 12month basis.	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Planning	No progress to report Q3 2021/22
PRN2	Celebrate, protect and enhance our natural assets, including the River Thames and the AONBs and their setting, promoting our rural district for tourism, leisure and wellbeing	Narrative report to include information on work to manage natural assets and ANOBs (both internally and with partners)	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	Economic Development finalised plans to hold a business “netwalking” event at the Earth Trust. This event is scheduled for Q4 2021/22 and will bring together partners from the business world to explore the site alongside colleagues from the council.
PRN3	Encourage the use of natural processes to combat risks arising from climate change, such as meadows and trees to reduce flooding	Narrative report to include direct and indirect information on use of natural processes to combat risks of climate change. This should include new policy development and direct activity undertaken by the Council.	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>The Parks team are currently reviewing all elements of their current practices and procedures to ensure that they meet the council's environmental and climate change objectives.</p> <p>In addition, officers are exploring ways in which improvements can be made to enhance the biodiversity of our parks and open spaces. This work includes looking at options for increasing the number of wildflower areas that South manages and optimising the tree planting budget to increase tree coverage where appropriate.</p> <p>Early-stage advice has also been offered to an eco-tourism development proposal in South Oxfordshire.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
PRN4	Recognise and support the vital role of farming in economic and ecosystem resilience, local food provision and the recovery of soils and natural processes	Narrative report on activity undertaken with partners to encourage and support the vital role of farming in economic and ecosystem resilience (where possible, although this may be implicitly included in the information above).	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	In Quarter 3 2021/22, the Economic Development team met with representatives of Good Food Oxfordshire to discuss/support the initial plans for a Food Strategy for Oxfordshire report. This report will focus on the importance of resilient food networks.
PRN5	Call for the establishment of a Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire to promote an ambitious nature recovery programme, including tree and meadow planting, rewilding and providing habitats for wildlife including wildlife corridors	Narrative report - accepting that much of the activity to support PRN3 will be relevant here.	Cllr David Rouane	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Quarter 3 2021/22, the Local Nature Partnership Board was formed. Discussions at the Future Oxfordshire Partnership - Executive Officers Group also informed the decision that the Partnership should be hosted by West Oxfordshire District Council. In addition, an agreement was reached regarding its provisional budget.
PRN6	Work in partnership with the Earth Trust, Chilterns Conservation Board, North Wessex Downs AONB, the Environment Agency and others to improve access to green spaces in and around our towns, reinforcing access to nature as a priority for community wellbeing	Narrative report on activity with partners (including those named, and others), with a particular focus on work supporting the link between green spaces and community wellbeing.	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	During Q3 2021/22, officers worked with Taylor Wimpey to expedite the transfer of the first tranche of open spaces on Great Western Park to the council. Once this work has been completed, discussion on the potential of using a partnership approach to manage them will resume with Didcot Town Council and the Earth Trust.

## THEME 2. OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Strategic Lead – Adrianna Partridge – Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations

Why?

The complexity of modern society and local government structures can be hard to navigate. Many services are delivered as part of external partnerships, so it can be hard for residents to see what we do and how we do it. There are some groups within our district with whom we have little engagement or interaction, so the diversity of our district is not always recognised and supported.

So:

We will maintain and improve high levels of satisfaction with the services we provide and will reach out to all sectors and age groups to foster a culture of openness, participation, and representation. We will use our influence to champion inclusion, diversity and transparency across all elected and unelected bodies in our region. We will empower and invest in our staff and conduct our operations with the highest level of integrity and accountability.



### Key Activity in Q3:

This quarter, as part of the council's commitment to maintaining and improving the services it provides, Cabinet approved a Customer Services Strategy. This strategy sets out an ambitious programme of work, for all of the council's departments to work together to create a single customer experience. It is envisaged that this will progress the Council's commitment to delivering the best outcomes for residents.

In the Council's efforts to champion transparency and participation, this quarter we continued to livestream 100 per cent of public council meetings. Not only did this ensure a greater degree of accessibility for residents, but also allowed them an insight into the Council's decision-making processes. This practice also continues to embed this activity of livestreaming and uploading as common practice across each quarter.

Additionally, this quarter, in order to promote the Council's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, a draft diversity calendar was produced. It reflects both South Oxfordshire's corporate priorities and the heterogeneous nature of the district. It is due to be publicised in quarter 4. In

addition, an initial working draft of the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy has also been developed. This will aim to ensure that the Council is doing everything it can to be inclusive to all in its staff recruitment, representation and service provision.

As part of the Council's aim to increase engagement and participation, the Council continued to develop its overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy this quarter. This document will not only help to guide South Oxfordshire's approach to interacting with residents but also allow us to reach out more effectively to a more varied range of individuals, groups and communities.

Additionally, with the intention of increasing accountability and improving our decision-making processes, this quarter, training was delivered to councillors on the constitution and good decision-making principles. The intention is for this to be rolled out to officers during the next quarter, to embed this practice across the council.

## Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
OA1	Enhance trust and accountability in democratic decision-making, including live-streaming and recording of meetings, ensuring full accessibility of facilities and monitoring progress in an open and transparent way	Narrative update to include information on the performance management framework, communications update on Cabinet/Council decisions, IAG around the operations/activity of the Council  % of Public Council meetings within 12 months available online	Cllr Andrea Powell	Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations	During Quarter 3 2021/22, monthly strategic communications meetings continued to be held with the Cabinet Member and the Leader of the Council to agree top line messaging for committee decisions and to share opportunities for positive publicity.  100 per cent of public meetings were broadcast during Q3.
OA2	Ensure that Council departments work collaboratively to deliver best outcomes for residents	Narrative report detailing significant, non-recurring examples of inter-departmental working which have secured concrete outcomes for residents	Cllr Andrea Powell	Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations	During Quarter 3 2021/22, South Cabinet approved a Customer Services Strategy. This sets out an ambitious programme of work for all of the council's departments to work together to create a single customer experience.  In addition, departments also participated in budget setting activity designed to ensure that financial resources are directed to deliver the best outcomes for residents and businesses within the district.
OA3	Embed an organisational culture that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and respect	Narrative report on work undertaken to celebrate diversity, inclusion, and respect. Should include standard recurring activity, one off supporting activity. This should be a joint report primarily from HR/Comms but include comments from others	Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations	During Q3 2021/22, work has been undertaken to draft the council's diversity calendar – it will be publicised during Q4. We have also promoted the council's efforts to support Afghan refugees. An initial working draft of the council's overarching Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is also being developed.
OA4	Apply good governance and transparency in all our working and decision-making, exploring optimal structures and mechanisms for best practice in local government	Narrative report on significant change initiatives which have resulted in restructures/new processes to deliver local govt services.	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Legal & Democratic	During Quarter 3 2021/22, the Monitoring Officer delivered training to councillors on the constitution and good decision-making principles – this is scheduled to be rolled-out to officers during Q4. Work has also commenced on updating the Annual Governance Statement to reflect the most recent CIPFA framework.  In addition, officers are considering potential options to enable meetings to be held remotely.

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
OA5	Engage effectively with residents, Parish and Town Councils and other community organisations, using plain English in our communications and using appropriate methods and technologies to ensure equal and fair access for all	Narrative report on activities communications/engagement specific activities	Cllr Andrea Powell	Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations	<p>During Quarter 3 2021/22, work continued on communications plans to support the council's corporate priorities on climate action and housing. They are currently in the process of being finalised.</p> <p>The council's overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy has also nearly been completed.</p> <p>42 press releases have been issued.            3 town and parish newsletters sent.            6 Infocus newsletters have been sent to help district councillors share important news with their communities            178 Facebook posts with a reach of 72,800.            179 Tweets resulting in 110,000 impressions.            11 consultation/engagement exercise resulting in 1953 responses.</p>

### Individual Cabinet Member Decisions - 01 October – 31 December 2021

Date	Description
01/10/2021	Councillor Covid-19 Grants Scheme
11/10/2021	OXLEP Appointment
13/10/2021	Draft Planning Design Guide
27/10/2021	Outside Body Appointments
01/11/2021	Additional Restrictions Grant
22/11/2021	Household Support Fund Grant Policy
14/12/2021	Waste Contractor Performance in 2020
20/12/2021	Allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Funds
22/12/2021	Purchase of Microsoft Enterprise Agreement
<b>TOTAL: 9</b>	

## THEME 3. ACTION ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

### Strategic Lead – Suzanne Malcolm – Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Why?

The greatest challenge we face as a society is the Climate Emergency and our ability to adapt our lives and our behaviours to ensure a safe and resilient future. While statements and targets are welcome, the challenge for our district is to take action, transform our operations and inspire our residents and businesses to do the same. Aspects of our lives will need to change, but we have a duty to make this transition fair for all parts of society.

So:

We will show leadership by developing and implementing a climate change programme to make the Council net carbon neutral by 2025. We will help our communities to plan a fair transition to a future that will be defined by climate change.

### Key Activity in Q3:

This quarter, to progress the Council's aim to develop and implement a climate change programme to make the council net carbon neutral by 2025, extensive engagement took place with members in relation to the Climate Action Plan (CAP). A final draft of the plan was created at the end of this quarter, to be heard at the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee (CEEAC) and Cabinet, at the beginning of quarter four.

Additionally, to further our aim of being carbon neutral in our own operations, council officers have continued throughout quarter three to research and identify government grant schemes which could support work to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's leisure centres – these being responsible for almost half of the council's total Carbon emissions, a significant proportion.

Moreover, to progress towards our aspiration for South Oxfordshire to be a carbon neutral district by 2030, engagement with the business community is key. During November and December, the Council ran a 'Digital Carbon Footprint Reduction Campaign' which included a launch

webinar and the publication of a step-by-step guide for businesses. To increase its effectiveness, a case study is being prepared showcasing the impact of the campaign, highlighting the actions of local businesses and learning for future campaigns.

December of this quarter also saw the publication of South Oxfordshire's official recycling rate for 2020/21, which was 63.6 per cent. Positively, this percentage makes South Oxfordshire the second-best performing district in England for recycling, and thus contributes towards the Council's aim of promoting waste minimisation.

Following preparatory work in quarter two, quarter three saw the Council run several campaigns aimed at positively changing behaviour with regards to promoting recycling and improving the environment. These included using seasonal events such as Halloween and Christmas as opportunities to promote 'reduce, reuse and then recycle' campaigns, as well as launching an air quality superhero campaign aimed primarily at children. These sat alongside wider campaigns to reduce fly tipping and littering and a continued commitment to promote the use of the district's Repair Cafés, on our website and through social media. Communication campaigns are central to meeting our commitment to support our communities in making the changes necessary, as we move forward into a future defined by climate change.

## Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ACE1	Achieve our own zero carbon target by 2025 and support others to achieve the district target of zero carbon by 2030	Narrative report on strategic projects which will help to deliver net zero carbon for 2025/2030. This should be split between Council specific and District specific activities.	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>During Quarter 3 2021/22, the Leisure team continued to work with Policy and Programmes to identify any HM Government grant schemes which would support work to reduce carbon emissions from the district's leisure centres.</p> <p>Progress also continued to be made on finding ways to reduce the CO2 footprint of South's property assets.</p>
ACE2	Develop an annually approved climate emergency programme and adequately finance it	Quantitative measure - delivery of an annual CEP Y/N	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Policy and Programmes	In Quarter 3 2021/22, extensive engagement took place with members in relation to the Climate Action Plan (CAP). An initial draft was distributed in November, with a follow-up drop-in session on 11 December. The CAP will form a key part in delivering the council's Climate Emergency programme.
ACE3	Deliver Council-owned net-zero homes and use grants, planning policy and advocacy to ensure the same standards throughout the district	Narrative Update on the current activities which will result in the delivery of Council owned homes (and details of those homes where possible)	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	No progress to report Q3 2021/22
ACE4	Promote and encourage behavioural change with informational campaigns and leading by example	Narrative update to include the number of communications campaigns undertaken which promote/encourage behavioural change (with examples).	Cllr Andrea Powell	Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations	<p>The majority of the behavioural change work in Q3 2021/22 was focussed on preventing the spread of Covid-19. This aimed to encourage people to have their vaccines/booster jabs and to follow Plan B restrictions.</p> <p>The council also ran 48 campaigns - 11 promoted diversity and inclusion, 28 promoted behavioural change, and 9 promoted events and new information. The behaviour change campaigns directly supporting this action included Halloween and Christmas reduce, reuse and recycling campaigns, an air quality superhero campaign aimed primarily at children and ones to reduce fly tipping and littering.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ACE5	Take positive action on single-use plastics, air quality improvement measures and sustainable transport	Suggested combined narrative update on Comms relating to single use plastics/comms relating to AQ initiatives and metrics relating to AQ (with an appreciation that this data will be skewed in 2020 due to lockdown(s))	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing & Environment	December's Cabinet briefing considered a report on future waste services. This paper summarised the proposals set out within the Environment Act and assessed how waste and recycling services will operate in the future. It is scheduled to go before Joint Scrutiny during Q4 2021/22
ACE6	Mitigate climate change through planning and land use, enhancing biodiversity on our own land and strengthening the planning system to enforce environmental standards	Narrative update to focus on planning initiatives which support the potential deliverables where possible (primarily the development of the joint 2041 Local Plan, the joint Design Guide and carbon reduction in planning (DES8/10))	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	Annual Target - No response submitted Q3 2021/22
ACE7	Promote the circular economy (reduce, re-use and recycle), including in our waste management contracts	Narrative measure on comms activity relating to waste/recycling  Quantitative information on recycling rate, contamination rates, % of residual waste to landfill	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing & Environment	South Oxfordshire's official recycling rate for 2020/21 was 63.6 per cent (figures verified by Defra and published in December). This placed South Oxfordshire second in the league table – the top performing council scored 64.2 per cent. (South Oxfordshire has been in the top three since 2010/11).  During Quarter 3 2021/22, the Waste Team continued to promote messages encouraging households to “reduce, re-use and then recycle” through social media and a specific Christmas leaflet.
ACE8	Support and encourage local businesses to respond to climate change and nature recovery	Narrative update on the influencing work undertaken to support and encourage local businesses relating to climate change and nature recovery	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	The Economic Development team ran a “Digital Carbon Footprint Reduction Campaign” during November and December 2021. It included a launch webinar, a step-by-step guide, six weeks of social media posts and case studies showcasing the progress made by some businesses as a result of the campaign. Over 50 companies were engaged with the process.

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ACE9	Promote waste minimisation initiatives such as Repair Cafés	Unless specific activity relating to Repair Café's and Freecycle can be reported on, suggest that this is covered in previous narratives	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing & Environment	The council continued to promote the use of Repair Café's on our website and through social media platforms.
ACE10	Work with Oxfordshire County Council to build on our commitment to active travel including walking, public transport and cycling infrastructure	Narrative update on work with Oxfordshire County Council  Optional Quantitative metrics on the amount of new footpaths/cycle paths	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	Annual Target - No response submitted Q3 2021/22

## THEME 4. IMPROVED ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

**Strategic Leads – Suzanne Malcolm - Deputy Chief Executive – Place**  
**Adrianna Partridge – Deputy Chief Executive Transformation and Operations**

Why?

South Oxfordshire has a large number of small and micro businesses and is well placed to adapt to changes in the economy, but support will be needed for it to remain a healthy and vibrant place to live and work. The Coronavirus pandemic has shown the strength of the community but there are areas of isolation and deprivation in our district, and the benefits of access to culture, leisure, and community for all has been made clear.

So:

We will reimagine our high streets, helping independent small businesses to thrive and to encourage cultural well-being for all. We will encourage clean local economic development and support our business hubs, centres of scientific excellence and our educational establishments to become leaders in sustainable technology, innovation, and enterprise. We will help our community groups to strengthen cohesion, reduce social isolation and tackle areas of deprivation.



### Key Activity in Q3:

This quarter, to progress the Council's aim to improve economic and community wellbeing, we continued to promote the rollout of the employment support scheme 'Kickstart', which aims to create new job opportunities for 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. We also made progress on community employment plans for new developments. Both projects are part of our plan to ensure that South Oxfordshire remains a healthy and vibrant place for residents and workers.

Moreover, this quarter, the Council continued to provide professional advice to local businesses, especially with regards to business space, employment schemes and the availability of support grants. To support small, independent businesses that were hit hard by the COVID-19 restrictions and encourage economic recovery, the Council helped to deliver the Winter Support Grant scheme. This is a local scheme funded through the Additional Restrictions Grant fund. A total of 209 applications were received, with payments to be completed next quarter. Total funding for this support scheme is £1,239,551, which will directly help local businesses to rebuild resilience.

Furthermore, collaboration with the independent company 'Airband' around the 'Broadband for Rural Businesses in Oxfordshire' (BiRO) project continued this quarter and a detailed update was provided to members. The BiRO project aims to bring reliable broadband to businesses in rural areas, thus reducing digital exclusion and enabling home working. The Council also launched two virtual 'Networking in South and Vale' events in November that were attended by 86 people. These events were designed to support businesses to build agility and resilience at a difficult time for trade and giving them direct access to economic development officers.

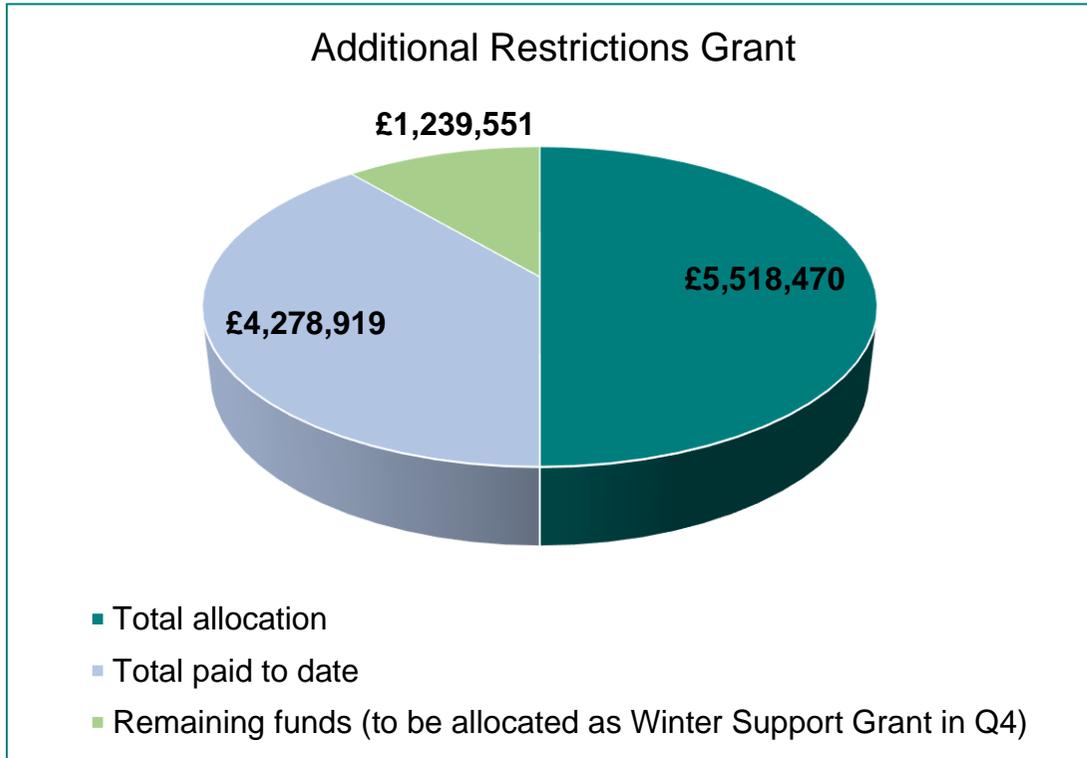
As part of the Council's aspiration to use planning powers to preserve green spaces in South Oxfordshire for the benefit of local communities, so far in 2021/22 the Council have encouraged and overseen the adoption of eight neighbourhood plans. Six of these designate a combined total of fifteen Local Green Spaces, which are granted the highest level of protection possible by planning policy. Access to green spaces will continue to support resident's health and mental wellbeing.

To make sure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds are maximised and achieve the best possible outcomes for the community, this quarter the Council established a member/officer working group, agreed terms of reference and held its first two meetings. This group will ensure there are strong foundations in place for making recommendations on the allocation of CIL funds in the 2022/23 provisional capital programme.

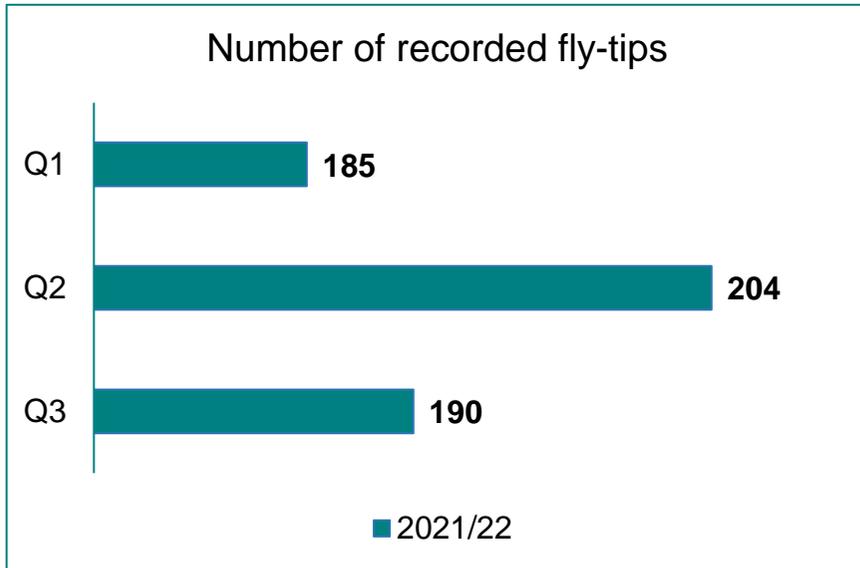
Additionally this quarter, to progress the Council's commitment to community wellbeing, work to define the principles of the new Community Wellbeing Strategy began. It is envisaged that this Strategy will incorporate provisions for strengthening community cohesion and tackling areas of isolation and deprivation.

## Performance Measures

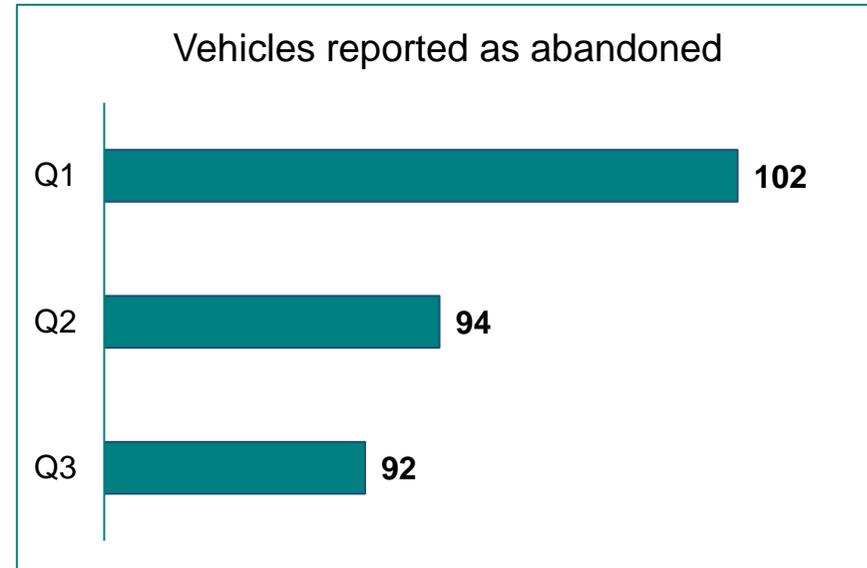
Chart A ECW2: Financial support to businesses



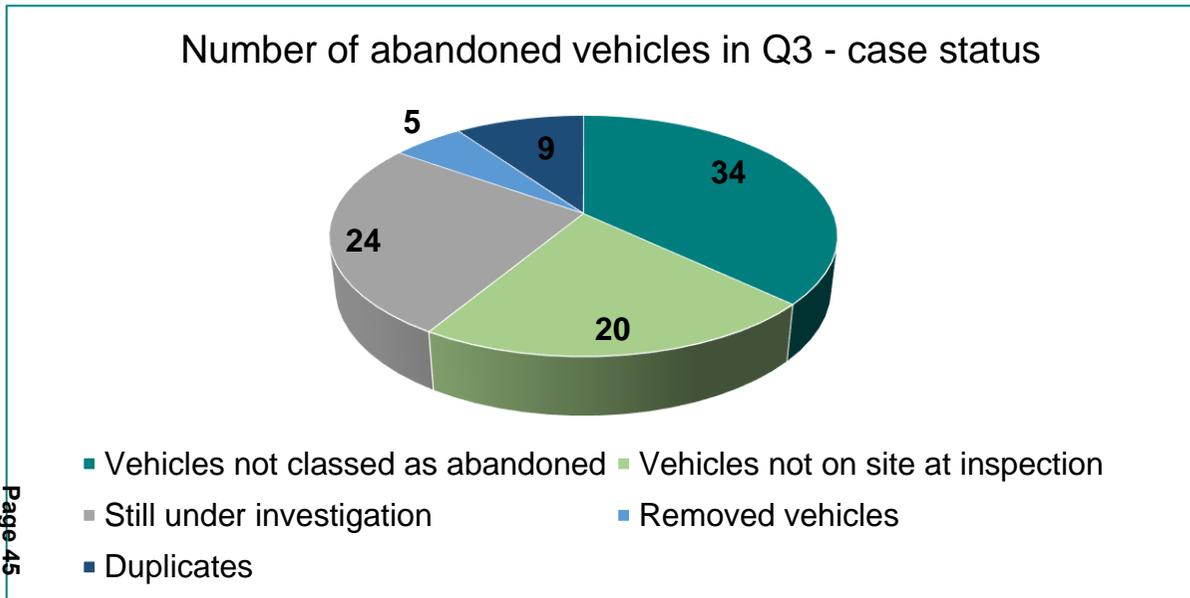
**Chart B.1 ECW7: Fly-tipping activity**



**Chart B.2 ECW7: Number of abandoned vehicles**



**Chart B.3 ECW7: Number of abandoned vehicles in Q3 and actions taken**



## Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ECW1	Partner with regional agencies to ensure economic recovery, quality employment, thriving businesses and vibrant communities, avoiding the blight of “dormitory towns”	<p>Narrative report on work with partners in this area</p> <p>Quantitative metrics relating to employment rates (trends, actuals) - unemployment rate, trajectory/trend, earnings information</p>	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>During Quarter 3 2021/22, the Economic Development Team continued to support the rollout of employment support schemes such as Kickstart. They also progressed to completion a number of Community Employment Plans for new developments.</p> <p>Job retention rates in South Oxfordshire looked to be responding well following the closure of HM Government’s furlough scheme, with the total number of unemployment claimants returning to near pre-pandemic levels. Nevertheless, figures from organisations registered in Economic Development team’s FAME database suggests that there was some reduction in job numbers (594) during December – this was, however, offset by gains in October (1,505) and November (31).</p> <p>The average wage in Oxfordshire as a whole was also registered as having moved beyond £35,000 for the first time during Q3 2021/22.</p>
ECW2	Provide advice on access to grants, training and diversification programmes, helping local businesses to build agility and resilience	Quantitative measures - number of businesses we engage with, social media hits, newsletter subscribers, clickthrough rate, numbers of business grants awarded	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>During Quarter 3 2021/22, there were a total of 2,256 subscribers to South and Vale’s economic development newsletter. A grand total of 29,335 newsletters were sent, resulting in 15,250 opens and 3,301 clickthrough – the open and clickthrough percentages remain healthy compared to industry averages.</p> <p>The Economic Development team launched virtual “Networking in South and Vale” events during November. 86 attendees came along to the two session that were held.</p> <p>A significant number of enquiries were received by the Economic Development team during Q3 2021/22. Until the emergence of the Omicron variant (and a subsequent increase in enquiries regarding the availability of grant support), these requests were dominated by the themes of business spaces needs and employment scheme advice.</p> <p>Quantitative stats for month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 365 enquiries were received direct to the business support inbox (it is not possible to accurately quantify between those for Vale and those for South).</li> <li>• Eleven enquiries were logged with Tractivity as requiring complex economic development attention – eight of these were for South-based businesses.</li> <li>• Of 80 respondents to South and Vale’s Autumn “State of Business” Consultation Survey, 52 per cent were from South-based businesses.</li> </ul> <p>The council also helped to deliver the Winter Support Grant Scheme during Q3 2021/22. This ran from 25 November to 16 December and attracted 209 applications from South-based businesses – administration and payments will be completed in Q4 2021/22. The total funding is £1,239,551 and it is anticipated that it will all be allocated during this round (see chart A ECW2 on page 21).</p> <p>HM Government announced a further top-up of £350,175 Additional Restrictions Grant funds in late December. South Oxfordshire are, however, still awaiting an offer letter from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ECW3	Plan for communities connected by walking & cycling networks, with sustainable, accessible and affordable public transport and reliable Broadband, learning the lessons from the Covid-19 experience and enabling more home-working.	<p>Narrative update on work to support reliable broadband (where possible)</p> <p>Narrative update on transport initiatives</p> <p>Quantitative - new footpath/cycle paths delivered</p>	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>South Oxfordshire continues to collaborate with Airband, the independent broadband company, to support their work on the Broadband for Rural Businesses in Oxfordshire (BiRO) project.</p> <p>A detailed update providing information (via In Focus) on the wider rollout of broadband across the district was circulated to members in October 2021. A member briefing on further progress is scheduled to be held during Q4 2021/22.</p>
ECW4	Launch a new community wellbeing strategy to encourage and support culture, leisure and the arts	Approval/Launch of 'Community Wellbeing Strategy' Y/N (document should encompass large parts of information above)	Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers	Head of Policy and Programmes	In Quarter 3 2021/22, work began on defining the scope and principles of the new Community Wellbeing Strategy. To help further this activity (and to provide additional clarity), discussions have taken place between members and officers.
ECW5	Use our planning powers to preserve our valuable green spaces, particularly in urban areas	Number of Neighbourhood Plans implemented/green spaces secured	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	<p>Eight Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted in South Oxfordshire during 2021/22. Six of these designated a combined total of 25 Local Green Spaces (these offer the highest level of protection possible in planning policy). In addition, three of these Neighbourhood Plans included policies to protect 13 public open green spaces (these are sites which, while not meeting the tests to be designated as Local Green Spaces, are still considered to be worthy of protection from harmful development).</p> <p>The council has six more emerging Neighbourhood Plans which have passed submission stage. These contain proposals to protect 23 green spaces through local green space designations, and 17 green spaces through other forms of policy protection.</p>
ECW6	Work with our communities to maximise Community Infrastructure Levy funds and to allocate these to achieve best outcomes for residents in the District	<p>Narrative update about work in this area to include detail of new CIL spending strategy, communication with parishes</p> <p>Quantitative elements - CIL Spend broken down by type, by parish</p>	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Finance	<p>During Q3 2021/22, a member/officer CIL working group was established. At meetings in November and December, terms of reference were agreed to and recommendations were put forward for the allocation of CIL funds in the 2022/23 provisional capital programme. The next meeting(s) of the Group is scheduled for Q4 2021/22.</p> <p>The council has also successfully secured Planning Advisory Service support on developer contribution governance in relation to working with communities to deliver required infrastructure.</p> <p>The Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2020/21 was published in December.</p> <p>£1,087,091.02 in CIL funds was released to parish councils in October.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ECW7	Take enforcement action on fly-tipping and dog fouling	<p>Small narrative on Fly Tipping/dog fouling activity (with Comms input on any campaigns)</p> <p>Qualitative data on fly tipping - what we collect, where from, how much, nature of enforcement action undertaken, hotspot map.</p>	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing & Environment	<p>There were 74 fly-tips recorded in September</p> <p>In Q3 there were 190 fly-tips compared to 212 for the same period in 2020. This was a 10.3% reduction on the same period last year.</p> <p>8 littering FPNs which were issued during three litter patrols.</p> <p>A total of 92 abandoned vehicles were reported and inspected in Q3. Of these 92, 20 were not on site, 34 were not classed as abandoned, 5 vehicles were lifted (removed) and a further 9 were duplicates.</p> <p>8 waste crime FPNs were served during Q3</p> <p>The enforcement team completed a joint operation with TVP targeting illegal waste carriage.</p> <p>The team completed two waste crime prosecutions and have a further nine prosecutions pending.</p>
ECW8	Work with local partners to introduce civil parking enforcement as a district responsibility	Narrative update on progress	Cllr David Rouane	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	Annual Target - No response submitted Q3 2021/22

## THEME 5. HOMES AND INFRASTRUCTURES THAT MEET LOCAL NEEDS

### Strategic Lead – Suzanne Malcolm – Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Why?

The average price of a home is many times higher than the average salary, particularly for the young, and renting is also expensive. The pressure to build new homes in our district sometimes outweighs local wishes. Infrastructure like roads, schools and GP surgeries have not kept up with housing development. Too many houses being built today are not fit for a low carbon future.

So:

We will strive to ensure that new homes and infrastructure in South Oxfordshire meet local needs, are sustainable, zero carbon in their build and operation, and high quality in design. We will provide homes that people can afford to live in. New developments will be accessible with walking, cycling and public transport a priority. Neighbourhood plans and local participation will sit at the heart of our planning process. We will work with partners to ensure that development is appropriate for our communities.



### Key Activity in Q3:

This quarter, the Council has continued to deliver a range of work to eliminate homelessness and rough sleeping across South Oxfordshire. For example, the number of rough sleepers recorded in South Oxfordshire on 31 December 2021 was **zero**. This is the first time since 2013 that no rough sleepers were recorded. Also, at 87% this quarter, the homeless prevention rate continues to be above our 80% target. Targeted prevention and early intervention measures used by council officers help residents at risk, avoid homelessness.

A key challenge for South Oxfordshire in terms of housing, is providing new homes that people can afford to live in. Year to date, 242 affordable homes have been delivered, leaving the Council just 38 properties short of our target for the year 2021/22. Major sites currently under construction include Great Western Park (Didcot), Benson, Henley, Rotherfield Greys and land west of Wallingford.

Furthermore, the Council's involvement in Oxfordshire's Meanwhile Project is helping to bring empty properties back into use. We are currently supporting the project to deliver commercial units and are looking to secure the lease for a demo unit within South Oxfordshire. If successful, this

could attract six figure refurbishment funding for a vacant building within the district. Despite major barriers, such as rising building costs, the demand for vacant commercial units remains strong. The Strategic Property Review also highlighted possible sites in council ownership which may be suitable for residential development. Further work is now being undertaken to investigate and assess these options, which will continue into the next quarter.

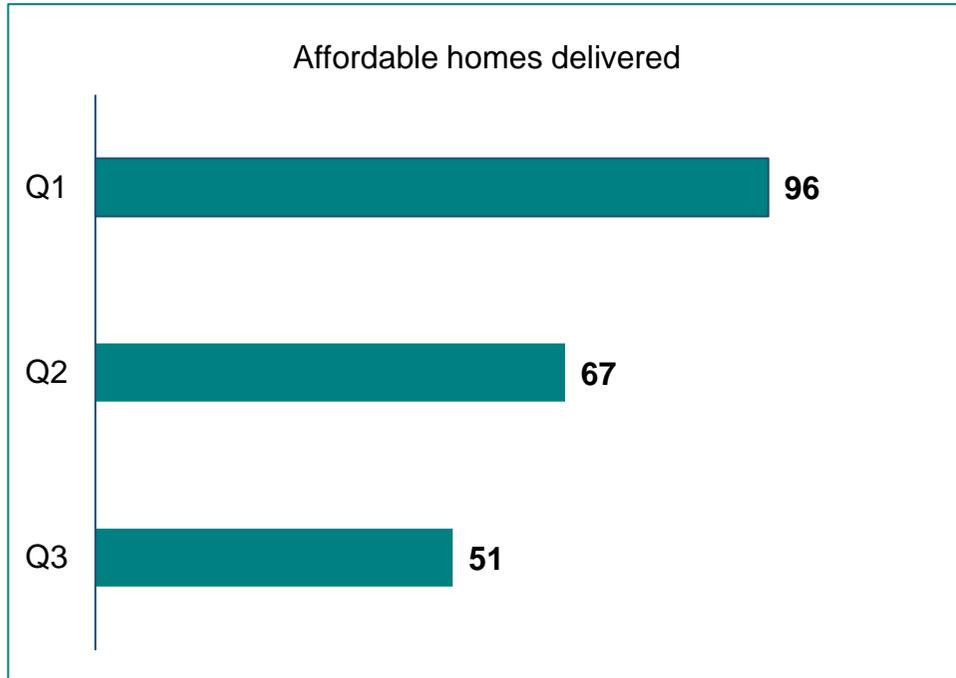
Work has also continued this quarter on the development of the new Joint Design Guide (JDG) Supplementary Planning Document, which incorporates new guidance on zero and low carbon construction. The JDG is due to commence its public consultation at the beginning of next quarter. This document will help to support our aim that new homes and infrastructure in South Oxfordshire meets local needs, is sustainable, zero carbon in their build and operation and high quality in design. It will also build on and complement the progress made with the publication of a DES10 (Carbon Reduction) Guidance Note in quarter two.

In addition, this quarter the Council commenced scoping work on the potential for purchasing temporary accommodation. Plans have also been initiated evaluating the potential for a Council delivery vehicle for affordable homes, these projects will also help progress the Council's aim to ensure that new homes and infrastructure in South Oxfordshire meet local needs.

Moreover, as part of a project to increase sustainable transport solutions, the Council are enhancing Electric Vehicle capacity in order to help reduce car dependency and air pollution. This quarter, we entered a contract with 'EZ-Charge' to provide electric vehicle charging points in five car parks across the District, which are expected to be in use by the end of next quarter.

The Council continues to work with partners to ensure that development is appropriate for our communities and to influence the development of such opportunities. For more effectively embedding public health, wellbeing and sustainability in spatial planning, we responded to the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 (2) consultation this quarter. The consultation document set out a range of policy options on health, wellbeing and sustainability.

**Chart C HILN10: Number of affordable homes delivered**



## Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
HILN1	Didcot Garden Town priority projects as identified by the Advisory Board, specifically a sustainable plan to redevelop the Didcot Gateway site, a public transport and active walking and cycling network, community facilities and accessible green spaces for Didcot residents	Narrative update against the stated aim, to include as many of the potential deliverables as possible, but not limited in scope to this.	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>At its meeting on 25 October 2021, the Didcot Garden Town Steering Board were appraised of progress on several key projects (Didcot Gateway, the Housing Infrastructure Programme, the Local Walking &amp; Cycling Infrastructure Plan and the Summer programme). They also received updates from the three sounding boards.</p> <p>The team responsible for Garden Communities has moved to the Policy and Programmes service in Q3, and a detailed review of the current position of Didcot Garden Town (and Garden Communities in general) is being undertaken. This will ensure that appropriate resources are in place, and delivery of the priority projects identified can continue at pace.</p> <p>In respect to the Gateway project, design work continued on the detailed design of the new office accommodation. Assessments of the scheme's viability and financing arrangements were also progressed. Furthermore, the masterplanning is substantially complete, but has not yet been signed off.</p>
HILN2	The transformation of Berinsfield into a thriving Garden Village with improved facilities that are developed in line with the community's needs and aspirations	Narrative update against the stated aim, to include as many of the potential deliverables as possible, but not limited in scope to this.	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Quarter 3 2021/22, the Garden Communities team was placed within the Policy &amp; Programmes service area. A detailed review of their work is currently being undertaken to ensure that appropriate resources are in place and that the prioritisation of tasks will support the efficient delivery of key projects.</p>
HILN3	New Council-owned homes with a focus on quality of design, affordability and local requirements	Narrative Update on the current activities which WILL result in the delivery of Council owned homes (and details of those homes where possible). Also reporting on progress of Design Guide.	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>During Quarter 3 2021/22, scoping work commenced on the potential for South Oxfordshire to purchase temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Plans to evaluate the potential for a council delivery vehicle for affordable homes have also been initiated.</p> <p>In addition, the Strategic Property Review highlighted possible sites in council ownership which may be suitable for residential development. Further work is now being undertaken to investigate and assess these options.</p> <p>The Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document is due to commence its public consultation in January 2022 with adoption expected in Q1 of 2022/23.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
HILN4	Support and encouragement for the retrofit of our existing housing stock for low-carbon performance and to eliminate fuel poverty	Narrative update on current/completed activities and influencing activity.	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Quarter 3 2021/22, South Oxfordshire, through its membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Group, was able to influence neighbouring authorities in relation to the issue of retrofit. At the Group's meeting in November 2021, members received an update on the actions being taken by the county's councils in respects to domestic retrofitting and discussed potential ideas for a future programme of work.
HILN5	Elimination of homelessness in our District	Narrative update on progress in this area  Quantitative information on homelessness rates, homeless cases and TA numbers, length of stay in TA and effectiveness of interventions (avoided homelessness)	Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers	Head of Housing & Environment	For the first time in recent years, South Oxfordshire recorded zero rough sleepers as of 31 December 2021.  The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) in December was five. The average length of stay in emergency TA was 40 nights, which is below the ceiling target of 42 nights.  Five of the six Housing First phase 2 rough sleepers have now been accommodated and are successfully maintaining their tenancies. The sixth is due to move in early February.  In the year-to-date, the rate of successful homelessness prevention is 87.0 per cent. This is above the target of 80.0 per cent.  South Oxfordshire continues to actively participate in delivering the countywide homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. It was also a member of the commissioning group that procured new adult homelessness services in Oxfordshire from April 2022.
HILN6	Bringing empty properties back into use	Narrative update on any relevant initiatives to reduce the number of empty properties and any data on empty property levels in South Oxfordshire	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	The Meanwhile in Oxfordshire project has secured 18 leases across the county. While the project was initially due to end on 31 March 2022, the project partners are now seeking an extension until June 2022. The Economic Development team are currently supporting the project contractors in looking to secure the lease for a demo unit within South Oxfordshire ahead of this deadline. If successful, the project could attract six figure refurbishment funding for a vacant building within the district.  Although demand for vacant commercial units remains strong, there are major barriers to bringing forward available premises for Meanwhile in Oxfordshire. These include: rising building costs, the availability of both materials and contractors, and continuing lack of revenue funding.

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
HILN7	Ensuring that our teams are ready to access or signpost to any Government schemes or funding that is made available	Narrative update on signposting activity and if possible, update on take-up.	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>While Insight and Policy continue to provide support in highlighting external funding opportunities, the council is looking to further enhance capacity in this area. Therefore, during Q3 2021/22, a job description for an External Funding Lead was produced. This role is currently being advertised and will be subject to recruitment in Q4.</p> <p>The External Funding Lead will not only support service delivery but also help the council identify new funding opportunities and grant schemes that will progress corporate priorities.</p>
HILN8	New homes are future-proofed, meeting the highest environmental standards and enhancing nature through sensitive, high quality design	Narrative update around refresh of the design guide, local plan, and information around DES10	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	The Joint Design Guide (JDG) Supplementary Planning Document, which incorporates new guidance on zero and low carbon construction, is scheduled to commence its public consultation in January 2022. It is anticipated that the JDG will be adopted during Q1 2022/23.
HILN9	Spatial planning embeds public health, wellbeing and sustainability	Narrative update on work around planning reinforcing wellbeing and sustainability. This should include 'health-based planning data' where possible - information on public gym equipment - footpaths, cycle paths etc.	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Policy and Programmes	In October 2021, South Oxfordshire responded to the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 (2) consultation. The consultation document set out a range of policy options on health, wellbeing and sustainability.
HILN10	Changes over time in our stock of homes meet local needs	<p>Narrative update based on information available from 3rd parties and the impact this has on the local area</p> <p>Bedroom mix in new developments breakdown every 6 months</p>	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	<p>During October and November of 2021, 51 affordable properties have been reported as delivered, bringing the yearly total (Apr-Nov) for 2021/22 to 214 affordable homes (see chart C HILN10 on page 28).</p> <p>The size and type of units delivered in Q3 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 x 1 bed flats</li> <li>- 7 x 2 bed flats</li> <li>- 27x 2 bed houses</li> <li>- 9 x 3 bed houses</li> <li>- 2 x 4 bed houses</li> </ul> <p>It should be noted that over the life of a development, different dwelling and tenure types will be delivered at varying rates, depending on the developer's build programme.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
HILN11	Sustainable transport solutions prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to reduce car dependency and air pollution	Narrative update on overall progress relating to sustainable transport solutions - particularly EV elements.	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	The council entered a contract with EZ-Charge to provide electric vehicle charging points in five car parks during Q3. The intention is for this work to be completed by the end of March 2022.

## THEME 6. INVESTMENTS THAT REBUILD OUR FINANCIAL VIABILITY

### Strategic Lead – Simon Hewings – Head of Finance

Why?

Coronavirus has cost, and lost, the Council money. Many years of austerity before that, as well as a failure to increase Council tax in line with growing costs, makes it hard to balance the books. The future funding picture for Councils from Government remains unclear. In order to deliver a progressive and ambitious agenda, we need to reduce the gap between income and expenditure in our Medium-Term Financial Plan.

So:

We will invest to save and act responsibly and ethically with our financial resources. We will work with other Councils for fair funding and will investigate new viable sources of revenue in order to maintain and improve vital services. We will ensure all financial operations and reporting support effective decision making and strong, ethical governance.



### Key Activity in Q3:

To invest, save and act responsibly and ethically with our financial resources, the Council undertook a revenue base budget challenge exercise this quarter. This helped to identify transformation delivery programmes and priorities for the next 12 to 18 months which have now been incorporated into South Oxfordshire's budget papers.

Moreover, the Council approved the Strategic Property Review this quarter, in October. Subsequently, work can now commence on the next stage of this project: a review of the Council's future property requirements. In addition, the first meeting of South's Asset Management Group

was held in December 2021. The Group intends to assess the council's land ownerships in a holistic manner and consider opportunities for their development, usage or disposal.

Masterplanning for the Didcot Gateway project, work on the detailed design of the Council's new office accommodation and assessments of the scheme's viability and financing arrangements, progressed this quarter. The proposed new building will help the Council make significant strides to becoming carbon neutral, and the long-term rental income from the commercial offices will also help put the council on a stronger financial footing in a time where ongoing finances for councils are filled with uncertainty. Located opposite Didcot train station, the site will be more accessible than the current offices at Milton Park and will, therefore also help to encourage sustainable commuting.

In addition, this quarter, South Cabinet considered the Council's IT Strategy, noting the progress that had been made in this area and approving an updated implementation programme and a Customer Services Strategy, which sets an ambitious programme of work for all of the council's departments to work together to create a single customer experience. Both strategies outline the Council's commitment to improving the use of technology, access to services and overall effectiveness.

In order to maximise external funding opportunities to support the Council's services and to enrich the district's leisure, sporting and community activities, a job description for an External Funding Lead was produced this quarter. This role is currently being advertised and will be subject to recruitment next quarter. This post will look to support teams across the organisation in the preparation of new bids whilst also horizon scanning for new funding opportunities and grant schemes as they appear.

## Performance Measures

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
IRFV1	Develop and implement an innovative Transformation Strategy to diversify our revenue streams, improve our effectiveness and secure our on-going viability	<p>Narrative measure relating to the development of an overarching Transformation Strategy and any overall narrative linking to potential deliverables</p> <p>Quantitative data - Income relative to Net expenditure (in context), this could be broken down by service.</p>	Cllr Leigh Rawlins	Head of Finance	<p>As part of the budget challenge sessions completed during Quarter Q3 2021/22, transformation delivery programmes and priorities were identified for the next 12 to 18 months. These have been incorporated and referenced within South Oxfordshire's budget papers.</p> <p>In addition, during Q3, South Cabinet considered the council's IT Strategy. They noted the progress that had been made in this area and approved an updated implementation programme. They also agreed a Customer Services Strategy which sets an ambitious programme of work for all of the council's departments to work together to create a single customer experience. Both strategies outline the South Oxfordshire's commitment to improving the use of technology, access to services and overall effectiveness.</p>
IRFV2	"Invest to save" for the District, including the delivery of sustainable new Council offices – on time and within budget – to realise future operational efficiencies	Narrative on progress of the Corporate Office project, including data on current spend on office accommodation which will no longer be spent once project completed. Further narrative to discuss impact of new building finances.	Cllr Leigh Rawlins	Head of Finance	Design work on the detailed design of the delivery of the new council offices continued during Q3 2021/22. This followed the Full Council's confirmation, at its meeting on 7 October 2021, of the budget envelope. Assessments of the scheme's viability and financing arrangements have also been progressed. Furthermore, the masterplanning is substantially complete, but has not yet been signed off.
IRFV3	Exercise strong Stewardship of all Council assets including property and financial investments, optimising their performance for the benefit of our residents	Narrative update on the progress of the SPR, in the initial period detailing the scope and scope, then once SPR has been delivered, the outcomes and future measures (quant element)	Cllr Leigh Rawlins	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>South Oxfordshire approved the Strategic Property Review in October 2021. The next step is for a study to be undertaken of the council's future property requirements.</p> <p>During Q3 2021/22, the terms of reference for the Asset Management Group (AMG) were agreed to and its first meeting was held – in December. The AMG intends to assess the council's land ownerships in a holistic manner and consider opportunities for their development, usage or disposal.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
IRFV4	Maximise external funding opportunities to support our services and to enrich our leisure, sporting and community activities	<p>Narrative update relating to external funding utilisation, both funding received direct to the Council, and projects which have received part external funding or are in progress if not already delivered.</p> <p>Specific elements which should be included - Proportion of spend on leisure/community facilities vs amount funded by Council.</p> <p>CIL/106 spend broken down by type/parish</p> <p>Externally funded Capital schemes</p> <p>Total external funding received figure - narrative should be clear that this is not the total figure.</p>	Cllr Maggie-Fillipova Rivers	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q3 2021/22, a job description for an External Funding Lead was produced. This role is currently being advertised and will be subject to recruitment in Q4. This post will look to support teams across the organisation in the preparation of new bids whilst also horizon scanning for new funding opportunities and grant schemes as they appear.
IRFV5	Invest responsibly and ethically with the Climate Emergency at the heart of what we do	Narrative update detailing changes which have included climate elements into regularised decision making.	Cllr Leigh Rawlins	Head of Finance	Annual Target - Environmental, social and governance criteria are continuing to be discussed with the Council's treasury management advisors. It remains a work in progress.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Covid-19 has been an unprecedented challenge which required the Council to react quickly to changing circumstances in order to support local businesses, the economy, the voluntary and community sector and local residents. We have worked hard to maintain essential services whilst redeploying staff to new areas of work to help deal with the crisis. The Council developed a Community Hub team during the pandemic to work effectively with voluntary sector partners and volunteers, the work of the Hub is ongoing.

The team also continue to collaborate with our partners at a County-wide level. More specifically, facilitating coordination and good communication between the County, City and District Councils, with the NHS and OxLEP, to support vulnerable people and encourage vaccination uptake in the district. During Q3, 178 test and trace payments were made to residents in South Oxfordshire. This is a slight reduction on the number made in Q2 but remains significantly higher than the number of payments made in Q1. See chart D, page 38.

## COVID-19 Community Hub Support distributed between 01 October to 31 December 2021:



## Chart D: Test and Trace Payments

