

Strategic Performance Report

Quarter Four 2021/22

May 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 Q4 (01 January to 31 March 2022), 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 fourth 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

Dominating the news this quarter was the devastating invasion of Ukraine by the Russian government. The war in Ukraine has caused a humanitarian crisis and by 23 March, there were over six million internally displaced people and over two million people had sought refuge in Poland.¹ In response to the invasion, the Council expressed that it stood with the people of Ukraine and committed to showing “our solidarity with those affected through the channels open to us as a council”. HM Government condemned the Russian government’s war against Ukraine and put into action a range of economic, humanitarian and defensive military assistance to Ukraine. The Government launched a Homes for Ukraine scheme on 14 March for those who do not have family in the UK. This scheme offers the opportunity for individuals in the UK to sponsor named guests to come and live with them in their home. In practice the scheme offers an avenue for fostering community spirit and desire to help those in need that we see so much of in our district. In conducting accommodation and safeguarding checks, as well as providing advice and referrals to support services, the Council is part of a system-wide response to this scheme. Building on the recognised and successful partnership working arrangements developed through the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This scheme and the associated response happened at pace over this quarter and the Council’s support to those affected by the war will continue as needed, into the next reporting year 2022/23.

In tandem, this quarter has additionally been marked with national headlines of economic hardship, with the Office for National Statistics reporting that inflation was at a 30 year high after rising at an annual rate of 7% in March, up from 5.5% in January. This surge has been driven by soaring global prices for energy, petrol, food and durable goods. These issues demonstrate the need for an adaptive and responsive council approach to support the most vulnerable in our districts. The Council’s Community Hub continued to offer practical support and advice to residents this quarter and distributed grants to residents in need of help with purchase of essentials, such as food, clothing, and utilities, following HM Government’s announcement of the Household Support Fund.

This quarter the Council adopted its Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2022-24, with a commitment to playing our part to ensure our planet is liveable for future generations. The Council’s plan brings to the forefront the importance of sourcing alternative, renewable energy sources and supporting a transition to increased electric vehicle usage across the district. The CAP also recognises that climate action brings co-benefits to health and wellbeing and opportunities for economic growth.

Additionally, March of this quarter saw the release of the Chancellor’s Spring Statement, which outlined measures designed to combat the soaring costs of fuel, energy and food. Among the announcements were a raising of the threshold for paying National Insurance, a 5p cut to fuel duty and an extension of the Household Support Fund for councils to provide targeted welfare support to low-income households. In a letter to the Chancellor before the Statement, LGA Chairman Cllr James Jamieson warned that rising inflation and energy prices made the financial settlement for councils in 2022/23 “more challenging”.

This quarter, the Office for National Statistics realised data which revealed that UK house price rises surpassed wage growth in over 90 per cent of England and Wales last year. Figures showed that a home in England now typically costs an average of 9.1 times earnings, an increase on


¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

7.9 times earnings in 2020 and up from just 3.5 times in 1997. Figures for South Oxfordshire show that a home here costs an average of 13.07 times earnings. Delivering homes and infrastructure that meet local needs is key priority for the Council. The Council is partly responding to these challenges through monitoring delivery and build of affordable properties in the district. The delivery of affordable homes in South Oxfordshire 2021/22 at 288 surpassed the annual target of 280. At the end of this quarter on 25 March, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced a Community Housing Fund programme designed to help community groups build homes in their local area by covering a range of costs incurred in the process. The new houses will be part of locally based organisations such as land trusts or housing co-operatives meaning they stay under the control of the community and will support delivery of homes that are affordable for local people. Thame Community Land Trust delivering 'Thame Homes for Thame Families' were awarded £137,299 of this funding.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continued into this quarter, following the significant rise the Covid-19 variant Omicron, at the end of quarter three. In March this year, infections reached the highest level recorded since the beginning of the pandemic, as documented by the Office for National Statistics. However, the accelerated winter booster vaccination programme which started at the end of quarter three, alongside the opening of the spring booster programme for those most at risk at the end of this quarter, saw a reduction of risk of serious, life threatening, illness for those who contracted Covid-19. In February, the Prime Minister set out HM Government's plans to live with and manage the virus and reiterated that vaccines will remain the first line of defence. All domestic legal restrictions ended on 24 February and the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test also ended this quarter. Self-isolation support payments and national funding for practical support ceased and by the end of the quarter, the general public were no longer able to access free symptomatic and asymptomatic testing. This was a milestone HM Government address and plan for many and is set to change the way in which residents' lives are impacted by Covid-19 and the Council's response, from the next reporting year, 2022/23.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Protect and restore our natural world

 **4** The number of partners helping us to promote in-depth mapping and surveying of ecosystems

28 The number of organisations attending a 'netwalking' event to showcase the Earth Trust facilities to our local business community

 **£480,000**
The amount issued in grants to support tourism businesses

Improved economic and community wellbeing

 Unemployment rates are down from **4.3%** in February 2021 to **2.5%** in February 2022

 **2,449** The number of Economic Development newsletters sent with a **60%** open rate

 The number of Neighbourhood Plans adopted during 2021/22, protecting **25** Local Green Spaces and **13** public open green spaces

Openness and accountability

We published our gender pay gap and launched a Diversity Calendar

We ran **48** campaigns, issued **35** press releases and produced **8** newsletters to share important stories and information

100% of our public meetings were livestreamed and uploaded on YouTube

We saw a **20%** increase in our Facebook reach during Q4 2021/22

Homes and infrastructure that meets local need

 **268** TOTAL NEW affordable properties were delivered during this year

5 The number of car parks where we installed Electric Vehicle charging points

10km



Total distance of cycling and walking paths improved to provide easier and greater connectivity between main employment centres and key urban centres


Action on the climate emergency



We adopted the South **Climate Action Plan**

14 The number of active travel schemes that we have prioritised for funding



 We ran campaigns on Christmas tree recycling, how to reduce food waste and encouraging people to report fly-tipping

Investment that rebuilds our financial viability

We successfully recruited an **External Funding Lead** - this post will significantly enhance our ability to identify third party income



A Customer Relationship Management project was mobilised with the award of a contract and expected to launch in Q1 2022/23

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 Q4:

To progress the Council's aim to celebrate, protect and enhance our natural assets, officers are coordinating the Wallingford Moorings Project, in partnership with Wallingford Accessible Boat Club. It is envisaged that this project will make mooring readily accessible for all and is line with the Council's commitment to inclusivity.

To further the Council's commitment to promoting our rural district for tourism, leisure and wellbeing, officers this quarter have provided economic impact advice to the developers of a farm within the district, which borders an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Thames. This advice was focused around diversifying their offering to include eco-friendly holiday accommodation. Tourism businesses across the district were also supported this quarter through HM Government's latest Omicron Mandatory Grants Programme and the Council's latest round of Additional Restriction Grant funding.

We have also progressed the work completed in previous quarters, on ensuring strong foundations are in place to take forward the work of the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) for Oxfordshire. This quarter, progress has been made on appointing a Chair and recruiting a Lead Officer, to take forward its aims of an ambitious nature recovery programme.

In line with the Council's aims to protect and restore our natural world, two tree planting licences were completed this quarter, enabling community groups within South Oxfordshire to plant trees on land owned by the Council. Tree planting brings many benefits to South Oxfordshire, including supporting wildlife, increasing community wellbeing and helping tackle the climate emergency.

Moreover, work has continued on improving access to green spaces in and around our towns, for example commissioning the Earth Trust to manage a number of nature sites across the district, in accordance with countryside stewardship schemes, as part of the Council's aim to reinforce access to nature as a priority for community wellbeing and preserve local green spaces.

Throughout 2021/22 the Council has worked with a number of partner organisations who are involved in in-depth mapping and surveying of ecosystems across the district. The data reported to the Council, including on species and habitat changes year on year, supports the Council to assess and understand local nature recovery. This year the Council has continued to contribute to partnership projects to support the restoration of the natural world. This includes the Oxfordshire Treescape project, which has created the Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity Map, a powerful tool that shows the right places to establish treescapes, to maximise opportunities to harness their power to address biodiversity loss, capture carbon, reduce flooding and contribute to wellbeing.

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	<p>During 2021/22, South Oxfordshire has worked with a number of different partner organisations who are involved in the surveying, collecting and mapping of ecosystems.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) undertake a programme of rolling surveys of Local Wildlife Sites across the district each year. They use this information to provide the Council with updates of protected and notable species data, and updated habitats datasets, three times per year. In addition, we receive annual data on UK Priority Habitats and Local Wildlife Sites.</p> <p>The TVERC also produce an Annual Monitoring Report of biodiversity information covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the area of biodiversity importance (LWS/LGS). • Changes in the area of UK S41 priority habitats. • Changes in the number of water voles. • Changes in the number of UK S41 priority species. • Distribution and status of farmland birds. <p>This document tracks changes in the area and numbers of habitats and species respectively between years – therefore, providing a picture of how they are faring over time.</p> <p>Between 2020 and 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area of Local Wildlife Sites increased by 1.36 ha. • The area of priority habitats recorded increased by 4.82 ha – this was largely as a result of increased mapping activity. • The number of UK priority species decreased by two (from 154 to 152).

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	<p>Between 2020 and 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area of Local Wildlife Sites increased by 1.36 ha. • The area of priority habitats recorded increased by 4.82 ha – this was largely as a result of increased mapping activity. • The number of UK priority species decreased by two (from 154 to 152). <p>Between 2019 and 2020 – the most recent years for which data is available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of positive recordings of water voles reduced by 7% - this may have been influenced by a reduction in survey effort due to the pandemic. • The density of farmland birds recorded did not change significantly. <p>The Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) provide advice to farmers and landowners of Local Wildlife Sites. They also assist those looking to access funding to allow habitat restoration on their property. This work is a partnership project funded by all of Oxfordshire's local authorities.</p> <p>In 2021, the Oxfordshire Treescape Project – partly funded by contributions from all of the county's councils – completed its mapping work. Their Oxfordshire Treescape Opportunity map is now available for use.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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	<p>Tourism businesses – including B&Bs, visitor attractions, tour operators and transport providers – were supported during Q4 2021/22 through HM Government's latest Omicron Mandatory Grants Programme and South Oxfordshire's latest round of Additional Restriction Grant funding. Between January and March, in excess of £480,000 has been issued to support companies operating across this sector.</p> <p>In addition, officers from the Economic Development team attended meetings with Experience Oxfordshire and Tourism South-East. The key issues highlighted at these events were the difficulties of recruiting within the sector and the negative impact of the invasion of Ukraine on overseas bookings. The Council will, during Q1 and Q2 2022/23, work with OxLEP, Experience Oxfordshire and Tourism South-East to develop support programmes for the visitor economy.</p> <p>Moreover, economic impact advice has also been offered to the developers of a farm – bordering an AONB and the River Thames - within the district who wish to diversify their offering to include eco-friendly holiday accommodation.</p> <p>The Strategic Property team (in liaison with the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club) has, during Q4 2021/22, coordinated the Wallingford Moorings Project. This is intended to make moorings readily accessible for all.</p>
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>Two tree planting licences were completed in Q4 2021/22. These enabled community groups within Wallingford to plant trees on land owned by the Council.</p> <p>Further promotion of the scheme to encourage communities to come forward with tree planting proposals on council owned land was undertaken.</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	No activity to report Q4 2021/22.
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 Q4 2021/22, the process of appointing a Chair for the Local Nature Partnership started. In addition, efforts also began for the recruitment of a lead officer.
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	<p>During Q4 2021/22, the Economic Development team held a “netwalking” event at the Earth Trust. This was designed to showcase the facilities that are both in and around the site to the local business community. The event – delivered with the aid of experienced walk leaders from the Council’s Active Communities team – was attended by the representatives of 28 local organisations and was well received. Another “netwalking” event is scheduled to take place in early Autumn.</p> <p>In addition, the Council’s Strategic Property team commissioned the Earth Trust – in accordance with countryside stewardship schemes – to manage several sites within the district.</p>

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 Q4:

In order to maintain and improve the services that the Council provides, South Oxfordshire completed a statement of requirements for the procurement of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system this quarter. The CRM system will help to build relationships with the Council's customers, streamline processes and improve the services provided to residents. Several potential suppliers of such a system have already been identified and work will continue on its implementation during 2022/23. The Council is also currently preparing the specification for new integrated communications software and working up the model for a customer service centre. These will form the foundation and building blocks of our customer service transition.

As part of the Council's efforts to champion openness and transparency, it continued to livestream all public meetings this quarter. This not only helped to ensure a greater degree of accessibility for residents, but also allowed them an insight into Council decision-making processes.

Officers have also started working on plans to ensure that all public meetings can continue to broadcast after the council has vacated the offices at Milton Park to help ensure continuity for residents.

With the ambition of increasing the Council's level of engagement with residents, especially those from marginalised and under-represented groups, South Oxfordshire agreed an overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy during the quarter. This Strategy incorporates initiatives to increase and improve our interactions with all of our communities/peoples. Additionally, work has continued this quarter on the Council's social media review. Officers continue to experiment with different styles, formats and content in order to improve our presence across a variety of platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to increase reach to residents.

In furtherance of our commitment to champion diversity and inclusion, the Council launched its Diversity Calendar this quarter – a document that reflects both South Oxfordshire's corporate priorities and the heterogeneous nature of the district. It has been publicised to both staff and members. The council also published its latest gender pay gap and employee data reports - the gender pay gap report was publicised via social media on International Women's Day 2022.

As part of the Council's goal of increasing accountability and improving decision-making, progress continued this quarter on updating the Council's Annual Governance Statement. This remains on track to report in the summer 2022 and will be based upon the most recent The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance. Various initiatives are also currently underway to review certain aspects of South Oxfordshire's governance arrangements e.g., our procurement process and contract procedure rules.

In addition, the Monitoring Officer has been providing training to officers on local government law and process – with a particular focus on governance, delegation of powers, report writing/content and decision making.

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	<p>Narrative update to include information on the performance management framework, communications update on Cabinet/Council decisions, IAG around the operations/activity of the Council</p> <p>% of Public Council meetings within 12 months available online</p>	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>All meetings continue to be livestreamed. Officers are currently working on plans to ensure that this continues when the Council vacates the offices at Milton Park.</p> <p>During Q4 2021/22, 100% of public meetings were broadcast.</p>
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	<p>Following the approval – in Q3 2021/22 – of the Customer Services Strategy, work has now been completed on a statement of requirements for the procurement of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Several suppliers of local government-based solutions have been identified and we are awaiting their responses on our specification. The first service to be migrated to the new CRM will be garden waste with 29,265 customer records to be transferred.</p> <p>The Council is also preparing the requirements specification for new integrated communications software, in addition to working up the model for a customer service centre – these will form the building blocks of our customer service transition.</p> <p>During the latter stages of Q4 2021/22, officers from across the Council have been working together on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This has involved establishing contact with existing and prospective sponsor households, arranging accommodation checks and working with partners on community integration.</p> <p>Various teams have also been collaborating throughout the quarter on preparing for South Oxfordshire's departure from the offices at Milton Park.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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	<p>An engagement plan to support the draft Diversity and Inclusion Strategy planned in March. The Strategy will now be subject to a six-month engagement period. Feedback during this period will inform any necessary changes to the document, with the revised Strategy scheduled to be returned for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in Q3 2022/23.</p> <p>During Q4 2021/22, South Oxfordshire launched its Diversity Calendar. This has been promoted to both staff and members.</p> <p>The Council also published its latest gender pay gap and employee data reports in Q4 – the gender pay gap report was publicised via social media on International Women’s Day.</p> <p>In addition, the Council agreed a new Communications and Engagement Strategy that will set the standards for all our activities in this area – it includes measures to ensure that we are open and inclusive to all of our residents.</p> <p>Towards the end of the quarter, South Oxfordshire began communicating with stakeholders in relation to the situation in Ukraine. This included information on our role and responsibilities.</p>
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 Pieter Paul Barker	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>Various initiatives are currently underway to review South’s governance arrangements – for example our procurement process/contract procedure rules.</p> <p>During Q4, the work on updating the Council’s Annual Governance Statement continued. This remains on track to report in the summer and will be based upon the most recent CIPFA guidance.</p> <p>In addition, the Monitoring Officer has been providing training to officers on local government law and process – with a particular focus on governance, delegation of powers, report writing/content and decision making.</p>

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 Q4 2021/22, South Oxfordshire agreed an overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy. This Strategy will incorporate initiatives to increase and improve the Council's interactions with all of its residents.</p> <p>Between January and March 2022, South Oxfordshire issued 35 press releases, produced three town and parish newsletters and disseminated five InFocus newsletters to share important stories and information with our communities.</p> <p>In Q4, the Council, in conjunction with several community groups, launched their Policy for Planting Trees on Council Land.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire saw a 20.0% increase in Facebook reach during Q4 2021/22. This was mainly due to a very strong presence in March driven by posts on car parking changes and help with the cost of living. It is the Council's hope that this increase will result in future posts being more visible in our followers' feeds – this would help to grow both our audience and our ability to spread messaging.</p> <p>Facebook reach 140,948</p> <p>Twitter impressions, however, were down on the previous quarter (just over 25.0%). The reasons behind this are unclear and, therefore, the Council is unsure whether this is merely a temporary blip or something more endemic. Consequently, officers are looking into the possible explanations and will rectify any that are within our control.</p> <p>Twitter impressions 78,500</p> <p>There was a large increase in South's Instagram reach in Q4. This was due to a successful promoted post.</p> <p>Instagram reach 3,868</p> <p>The Council, nevertheless, expects there to be some fluctuations in performance across platforms between quarters – especially as we continue to experiment with different styles of content as part of our ongoing social media review.</p>

Individual Cabinet Member Decisions - 01 January – 31 March 2022

Date	Description
05/01/2022	Car Parks Contractor Performance 2021/22
01/02/2022	Additional Restriction Grant Defrayal – Omicron Update
16/03/2022	Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area Appraisal
18/03/2022	Practical Support Payment Funding
29/03/2022	Community Infrastructure Levy Funding to Oxfordshire County Council
30/03/2022	Revenue Grants
30/03/2022	You Move Project Funding
31/03/2022	Mobile Home Park Pitch Fees
TOTAL: 8	

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 Q4:

This quarter the Council adopted its Climate Action Plan 2022-24 (CAP) which will play a pivotal role in steering the programme of work to achieve the Council's objective of becoming carbon neutral in our own operations by 2025 and in supporting local efforts to tackle the climate emergency. Progress against the measures within the CAP will be reported to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies Advisory Committee (CEEAC) each quarter, beginning in quarter one of 2022/23.

Reducing emissions from our leisure centres is vital in achieving targets around our own operations. A decarbonisation report was completed for Thame Leisure Centre during this quarter, the findings of which are currently being evaluated by officers. Further surveys have also been commissioned for other leisure facilities in the district, as well as for Cornerstone arts centre. In addition, the Council is upgrading lighting to LEDs at the Abbey Sports and Henley Leisure Centres to reduce carbon emissions.

Additionally, with a view to further cutting emissions from our own operations, the Council's waste contractor has been trialling an electric waste collection vehicle to assess how well it works within our district in both rural and urban settings. Performance feedback is anticipated in 2022/23.

The role of the Council as a planning authority is key in our work to tackling the climate emergency and is vital in our aspiration to be a carbon neutral district by 2030. Scoping of new policies for the Joint Local Plan with the Vale of White Horse District Council continued throughout this quarter. An all councillor round table session was held, to explore how the Plan could best address climate change. The event focused on how Council policy might help reduce carbon emissions resulting from the construction and operation of buildings. Attention was also given to how to generate more renewable energy. The first public consultation on the plan is scheduled to take place during quarter one 2022/23.

Alongside work on the Joint Local Plan, the Council also provided feedback on the climate change evidence needed to support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and on the information being prepared by the Local Energy Oxfordshire Project. The Council also provided additional guidance for the draft Joint Design Guide, on the siting and design of renewable energy schemes, demonstrating the Council's understanding of the power in collaborative, partnership working to advance common goals to address the climate emergency.

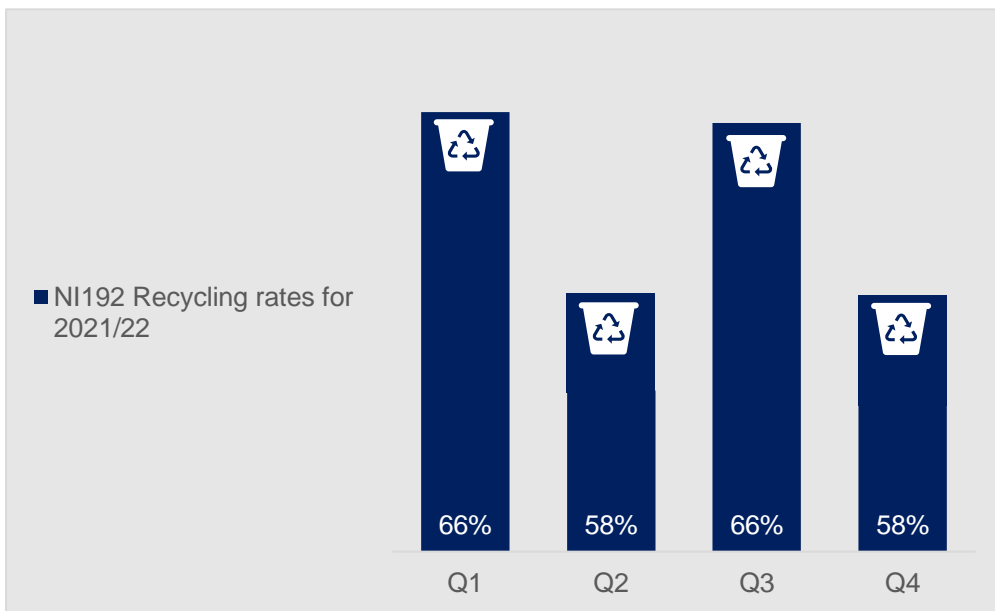
Working with Oxfordshire County Council to build on our commitment to active travel is a key measure within the Corporate Plan, recognising that our ability to adapt our lives and our behaviours to address the climate emergency is the greatest challenge we face. In line with this, the Council have worked with consultants to evaluate all the proposed infrastructure schemes in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to assess them against our priorities. The results of this appraisal, published this quarter, sees 14 active travel schemes prioritised for funding.

Businesses in the district also have an important part to play in the response to the climate emergency and as a Council we offer support and guidance to businesses on taking climate action. During this quarter, work commenced on renewing the terms of our membership of Oxfordshire Greentech (a low carbon business network).

Communications has continued to be an active and important strand in our work to encourage everyone to play their part in tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies. For example, this winter, we promoted our Christmas tree-cycling service and ideas for reducing waste in the New Year and this spring, we promoted Food Waste Action Week and the Keep Britain Tidy: Great British Spring Clean, to promote and encourage climate action behavioural change.

Chart A ACE7: NI192 Recycling rates for 2021/22

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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>A decarbonisation report has been completed for Thame Leisure Centre. It is currently being evaluated by officers. Further surveys have also been commissioned for other leisure facilities in South Oxfordshire. The Council is also using capital to upgrade lighting to LEDs at the Abbey and Henley Leisure Centres.</p> <p>The Council is awaiting further updates regarding HM Government grant schemes that would help to support our work to reduce emissions from the district's leisure centres.</p> <p>In addition, South Oxfordshire have commissioned a decarbonisation report for Cornerstone – the findings of which are currently being assessed.</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	South Oxfordshire's Climate Action Plan (CAP) was adopted during Q4 2021/22. It will be a key document in helping the Council to achieve its Climate Emergency targets. Progress against the measures within the CAP will be reported to the CEEAC each quarter – starting in Q1 2022/23 – as part of our corporate performance management framework.
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	<p>An Invitation to Tender for a project manager, cost consultant and clerk of works was published on 22 March for the redevelopment of 116 -120 Broadway. The aim of the project is to deliver a development that is sustainable and resilient to climate change – and will comply/exceed Local Plan Policy DES10.</p> <p>A consultant has been appointed to develop a new joint Housing Strategy that will support the delivery of more affordable and net zero homes for the district.</p>
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	During Q4 2021/22, South Oxfordshire ran 48 campaigns. 26 of these encouraged behavioural change, fourteen highlighted council services and eight promoted diversity/inclusion. The behavioural change campaigns included publicising Christmas tree recycling, informing individuals about how they could reduce their waste (including Food Waste Action Week) and encouraging people to report fly-tipping.

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	<p>South Oxfordshire continues to use communications channels to highlight the need to reduce plastic waste and encourage behavioural change in this area. We are also looking at the opportunities for reducing plastic pollution as part of the Council's programme of work regarding our future waste services – a confidential paper on this broader theme went to Joint Scrutiny in January. It was considered by South Cabinet on 3 February, where its recommendations were agreed too.</p> <p>During Q4, Biffa have been trialling and electric waste collection vehicle with the aim of assessing how well it works within the district. Once they have evaluated its performance, they will provide feedback to the Council.</p>
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	<p>During Q4 2021/22, an all councillor round table session was held to explore how the Joint Local Plan could address climate change. A specific focus of this event was on how South Oxfordshire can help reduce the carbon emissions resulting from the construction and operation of buildings – attention was also given to how to generate more renewable energy. The Planning Policy team also continued to work on the actual development of the Joint Local Plan. Preparations are currently underway for launching – during Q1 2022/23 – the first major consultation on this document. This engagement exercise will include text and questions relating to addressing the issue of climate change.</p> <p>In Q4, the Council published on its website the Sustainable Construction Checklist. This was produced to help applicants demonstrate that they are meeting the sustainable design requirements of South Oxfordshire's Local Plan. Updates were also made to the Plan's carbon reduction policy's advice note in order to help officers implement it more effectively.</p> <p>In addition, officers began working on a carbon offsetting paper. This is a stated measure within South Oxfordshire's Climate Action Plan.</p> <p>During Q4, South Oxfordshire provided feedback on the climate change evidence needed to support the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and on the information being prepared by the Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO) Project. Additional guidance was also provided for the draft Joint Design Guid on the siting and design of renewable energy schemes.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
ACE7	Promote the circular economy (reduce, re-use and recycle), including in our waste management contracts	<p>Narrative measure on comms activity relating to waste/recycling</p> <p>Quantitative information on recycling rate, contamination rates, % of residual waste to landfill</p>	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing & Environment	<p>The January 2022 recycling rate was 63.33% compared to the previous January rate of 64.63%. The contamination rate was 8.0%.</p> <p>The February 2022 recycling rate was 63.00% compared to the previous February rate of 64.47%. The contamination rate was 10.0%.</p> <p>The figures for March have yet to be finalised.</p> <p>The percentage of waste to landfill in January was 0.53%. In February, it was 0.55%. (The figures for March have yet to be finalised).</p> <p>During Q4 2021/22, South Oxfordshire's Waste Team ran several comms campaigns. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising the Council's tree-cycling service. • highlighting Food Waste Action Week. • a new year's promotion on ideas for reducing waste. • publishing the waste collections calendar. • publicising Global Recycling Day. • highlighting the electric waste vehicle trial. • promoting the Keep Britain Tidy Great British Spring Clean. • encouraging people to report fly tipping. • promoting the Council's litter patrols.
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	During Q4 2021/22, the Economic Development team began working with Legal to renew the terms of our membership of Oxfordshire Greentech (the low carbon business network). The Council also have several events in the pipeline intended to support and encourage local businesses in their response to the climate emergency – this includes our 'Make a Difference' interactive networking workshop.

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	<p>Comms campaigns to promote waste minimisation during Q4 2021/22 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highlighting Food Waste Action Week. • a new year's promotion on ideas for reducing waste. • publicising Global Recycling Day. <p>South Oxfordshire also continued to promote the use of Repair Café's through our website and on social media platforms.</p>
ACE10	Work with Oxfordshire County Council to build on our commitment to active travel including walking, public transport and cycling infrastructure	<p>Narrative update on work with Oxfordshire County Council</p> <p>Optional Quantitative metrics on the amount of new footpaths/cycle paths</p>	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Development & Corporate Landlord	<p>South Oxfordshire has collaborated with the County Council on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy review. As part of this work, we engaged with consultants from City Science to carry out an evaluation of all the proposed infrastructure schemes to assess them against our priorities. The full results of this appraisal were published during Q4 2021/22 – the active travel schemes within the district that have been prioritised for funding are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and cycle bridge over the A40 Oxford northern bypass. • Culham railway station enhancements • Didcot Parkway interchange cycling improvements • Premium cycle route between Didcot, Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford • Future phases of the Science Vale cycle network linking Culham to Abingdon and Didcot • Thame greenway cycling and walking connection to Thame-Haddenham rail station • Gateway scheme including cycle and bus priority for Grenoble Road development • Cycle connection Berinsfield – Oxford via the Roman Road with Culham spur • Didcot Garden Town cycling network • Improvement to cycle routes to stations in South Oxon • Benson to Wallingford cycle route improvements • Didcot Garden Line leisure cycle route • Third rail line north of Didcot North junction • Cowley branch line new passenger stations at Business Park and Science Park

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 Q4:

This quarter, to progress the Council's aim to improve economic and community wellbeing, civil parking enforcement has now been introduced across the district as a Council responsibility. All towns and villages where there are traffic regulation orders in place are now patrolled. Enforcement, undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council contractors, focuses upon those areas where illegal parking is having the greatest impact on road safety and congestion. Civil parking enforcement can take a more targeted approach to dealing with the parking issues and addresses areas concerning residents.

To make sure that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds are maximised and achieve the best possible outcomes for the community, £2,419,500 has been allocated to projects in the 2022/23 capital programme as part of the Council's budget setting process this quarter. Additionally, approvals have been made for CIL spending in communities, for example the Oak Tree Health Centre in Didcot applied to the CIL health care allowance for just under £40,000, to reconfigure the facility to create more consulting space.

Work to provide advice to local businesses and support their agility and resilience continued this quarter, through communication mediums such as a regular newsletter. By the end of this quarter, there were 2,449 subscribers to South and Vale's economic development newsletter. 16,708 newsletters were sent to recipients between January and March, with the current open rate sitting at 60.20%, which compares favourably to the average for a business services newsletter of 8.01%. Additionally, during this quarter a series of eight Digital Skills workshop events covering a range of key skills designed to both help businesses develop a digital presence and attract new customers across social media were launched, with 197 businesses from South Oxfordshire registering.

As part of the Council's commitment to taking enforcement action on fly tipping, several communication campaigns were run during this quarter. These included messages to encourage fly tipping reporting, promote our litter patrols and highlight police crackdowns on unauthorised waste carriers; all recognising the negative impact of fly-tipping on the environment and to resident health and wellbeing. There was a slight decrease in recorded fly tips this quarter, at 226, compared to the same period last year 2020/21, at 282.

To further the Council's aspiration to use planning powers to preserve green spaces in South Oxfordshire for the benefit of local communities, in 2021/22 the Council have encouraged and overseen the adoption of 8 neighbourhood plans. Six of these designate a combined total of 25 Local Green Spaces, which are granted the highest level of protection possible by planning policy. The Council are also supporting the preparation of 12 new Neighbourhood Plans and five Neighbourhood Plan reviews. All are considering the preservation of important green spaces. Access to green spaces will continue to support resident's health and mental wellbeing.

Moreover, work on Phase 1 of the Science Vale Active Travel Network was finished this quarter. The five completed routes contribute 10km of improved provision for both cyclists and pedestrians, contributing to the Council's vision to connect communities and places with fit for purpose walking and cycling networks. Plans are now being made for the creation and development of wayfinding opportunities for this part of the Active Travel Network.

Performance Measures

Chart B ECW2: Financial support to businesses 2021/22

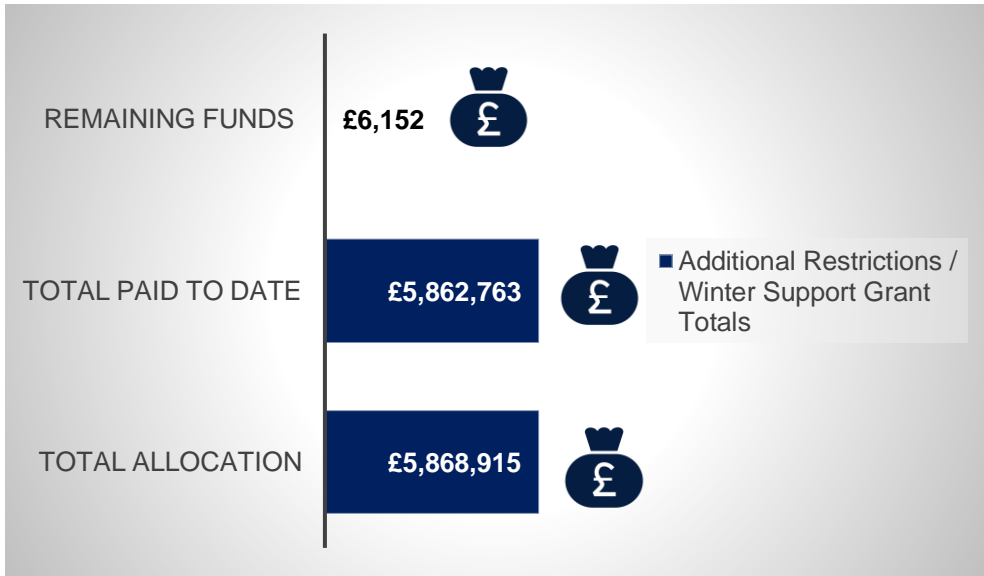


Chart C ECW5: Preserving valuable green spaces through planning

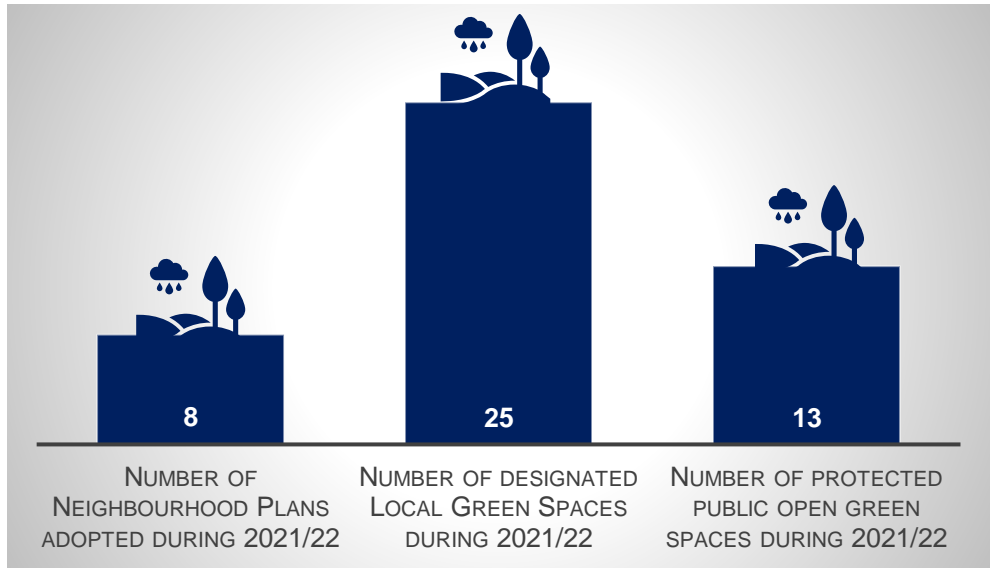


Chart D.1 ECW7: Number of abandoned vehicles

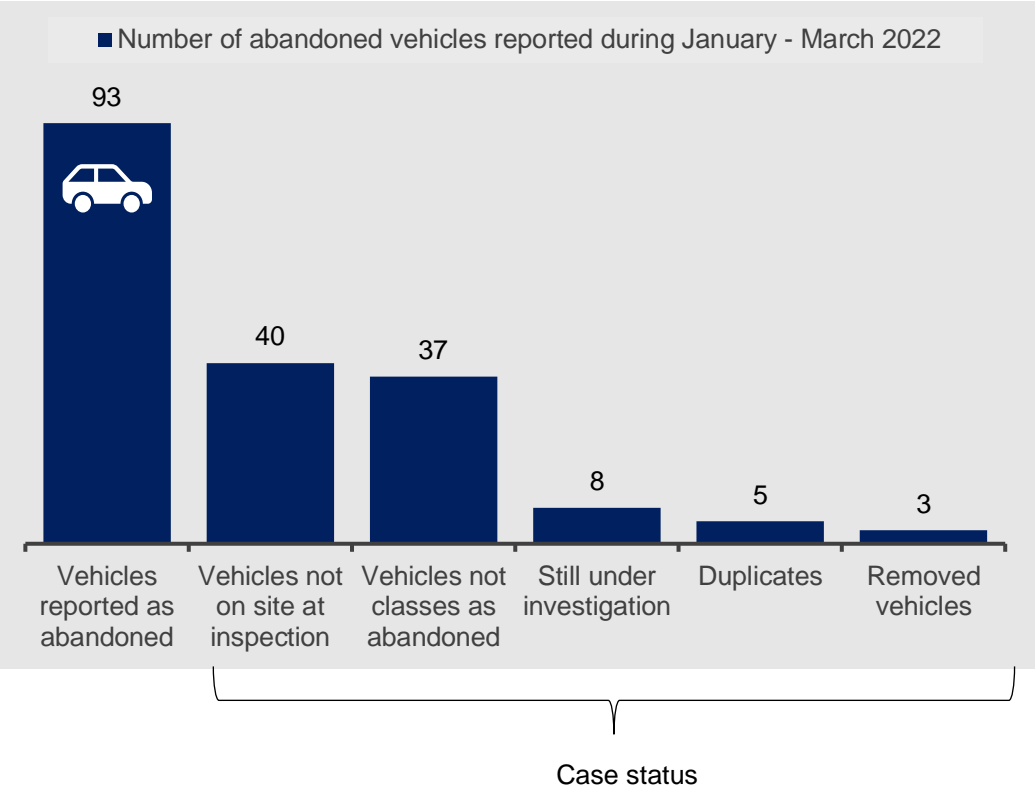
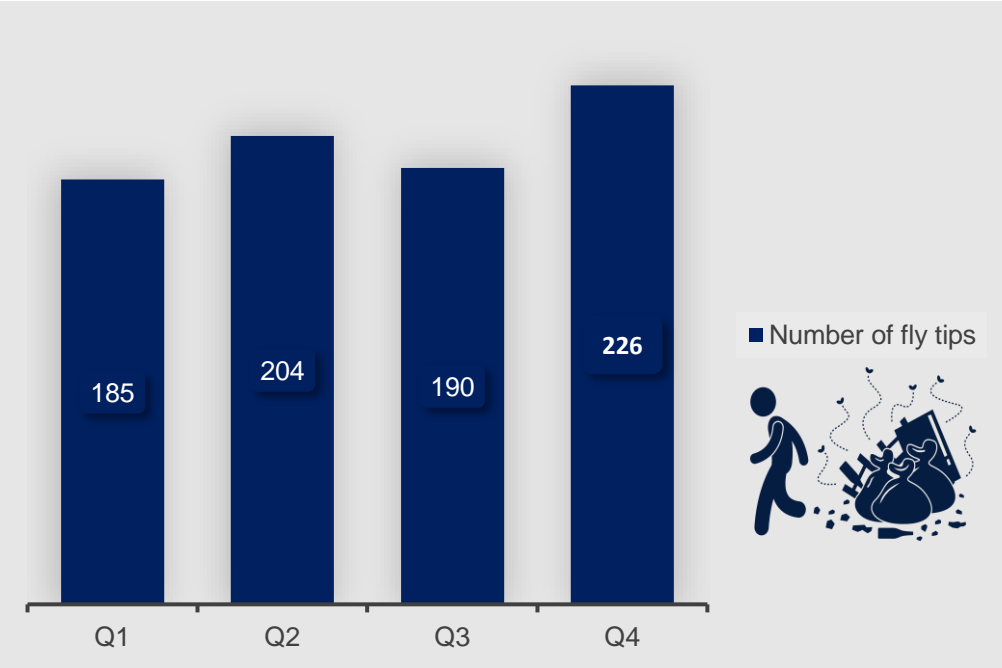


Chart D.2 ECW7: Fly-tipping activity



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>In Q4 2021/22, the Economic Development team continued to work with OxLEP on progressing several Community Employment Plans (these will provide employment and skills opportunities across major developments such as Valley Park and Didcot A).</p> <p>The February 2022 figures for unemployment claimants in the region showed a year-on-year reduction in the numbers for South Oxfordshire (from 3,030 to 1,810). The overall unemployment rate in the district was 2.5% (in February 2021 it was 4.3%) and is the lowest in the county.</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 Q4 2021/22, the priority for the Economic Development team was the administration of the Additional Restrictions Grant top-up funding announced by HM Government late in Quarter 3. This top-up funding of £350,175 was combined with £1,239,551 retained from previous rounds of funding. Before the scheme's deadline of 31 March, South Oxfordshire issued £1,583,844 of grants to 293 businesses.</p> <p>By the end of Q4 2021/22, there were 2,449 subscribers to South and Vale's economic development newsletter. A grand total of 16,708 newsletters were sent between January and March, resulting in 10,024 opens and 3,826 clickthroughs – our open rate sits at 60.20% which compares favourably to the average for a business services newsletter of 8.01%.</p> <p>The Council's Business Support website was visited 41,696 times in Q4 2021/22. On Twitter, we had 15,000 impressions, 74 link clicks, 80 retweets, 101 likes, 9 replies and gained 13 new followers between January and March. On Facebook we had 9,753 impressions, 154 page visits and 8 new page likes.</p> <p>During February, the Economic Development team launched a series of eight Digital Skills workshop events (funded by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund). These covered a range of key skills designed to both help businesses develop a digital presence and attract new customers across social media. South and Vale received 336 workshop registrations in total (172 of which were from businesses based in South, 85 from businesses in the Vale, 25 from businesses in both and 54 who were based in neither).</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>Council charges related to the establishment of wayleaves has been highlighted by providers as a potential barrier to the rollout of superfast broadband within the district. To address this issue, work has begun on investigating whether it is possible for South Oxfordshire to reduce these costs.</p> <p>The Economic Development team also continue to work with the County Council to support rollout in the district. This includes collaborating with their colleagues to improve lines of communication to help minimise disruption in areas where improvements are being made. Officers and members continue to play an active role in the Oxfordshire Digital Partnership Board.</p> <p>Work on Phase 1 of the Science Vale Active Travel Network was finished during Q4 2021/22 and will help to support the placemaking agenda for Didcot Garden Town. The five completed routes – which are currently undergoing a naming exercise involving local partners – contribute 10km of improved provision for both cyclists and pedestrians. Plans are now being made for the creation and development of wayfinding opportunities for this part of the Active Travel Network.</p> <p>In addition, the Didcot Garden Town team completed Stage 1 of the Department for Transport's guidance on the preparation of Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans. This work was informed by the key priorities raised through the sounding boards and a report on the local area from HarBUG (Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group).</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	During Q4 2021/22, officers continued to collect data to inform the development of the new Community Wellbeing Strategy. In addition, an initial programme timetable was prepared.
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>South Oxfordshire adopted eight Neighbourhood Plans during 2021/22. Six of these designated a combined total of 25 Local Green Spaces (which offer the highest level of protection possible in planning policy). In addition, three of these Plans included policies to protect 13 public open green spaces (sites which do not meet the tests to be designated as Local Green Spaces but are still considered worthy of protection from harmful development).</p> <p>The Council currently has six more emerging Neighbourhood Plans at examination. These contain proposals to protect 23 green spaces through Local Green Space designations. They also contain measures to protect a further 13 green spaces through other forms of policy protection.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire are also supporting the preparation of 12 new Neighbourhood Plans and five Neighbourhood Plan reviews. All are considering the preservation of important green spaces.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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>As part of South Oxfordshire's budget setting process, £2,419,500 was allocated to district council projects in the 2022/23 capital programme.</p> <p>During Quarter 4, Oxfordshire County Council submitted a request to draw down their 2020/21 CIL allocation of £6,485,821.49. This was approved. In addition, the Oak Tree Health Centre in Didcot successfully applied for £39,015.45 from the CIL health care allowance to reconfigure the facility to create more consulting space.</p> <p>The next parish council CIL allocation payments will be paid in April 2022. These will be reported in the next quarter.</p>
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>In Q4 2021/22, there were 226 fly tips in South Oxfordshire. This was a decrease on the same period last year (282).</p> <p>During the quarter, the Council issued eight Fixed Penalty Notices for waste crimes, three for littering and one for abandoning a vehicle. There was also one waste crime prosecution (there are, however, six prosecutions pending).</p> <p>In addition, officers carried out 93 abandoned vehicle inspections between January and March. Of these, 40 vehicles were not on site, 37 were identified as not abandoned, five were duplicate cases, three were removed and eight remain open.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire also ran the following comms campaigns during Q4 2021/22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • highlighting a crackdown by the police on unauthorised waste carriers. • encouraging people to report fly tipping. • promoting the Council's litter patrols. • publicising the county's fly tipping campaign.
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	<p>Civil parking enforcement – undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council contractors – has now been introduced in the district. All towns and villages where there are traffic regulation orders in place are now patrolled.</p> <p>Enforcement is focused upon those areas where illegal parking is having the greatest impact on road safety and congestion. Fines are being issued to those who are in contravention of existing parking restrictions – challenges and appeals are dealt with by the County Council's existing inhouse team.</p>

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 Q4:

This quarter, the Council has continued to deliver a range of work to eliminate homelessness and rough sleeping across South Oxfordshire. For the second consecutive quarter, on a rough sleeping count date (31 March 2022), South Oxfordshire recorded **zero** rough sleepers. Additionally, the homeless prevention rate for 2021/22 was 94.0%, which is above the target of 80.0%. The very low levels of rough sleeping seen within the district reflects the success of the Council's preventative approach.

A key challenge for South Oxfordshire in terms of housing, is providing new homes that people can afford to live in. During this quarter, a further 46 affordable properties have been delivered, bringing the yearly total for 2021/22 to 288 affordable homes, which is above the target of 280 for the year. Major sites currently under construction include Great Western Park (Didcot), Benson, Henley, Rotherfield Greys and land west of Wallingford.

Moreover, during quarter four a consultant was appointed to develop a new Joint Housing Strategy that will include consideration of how the councils can help deliver more affordable and sustainable housing for the district. The Council is also working with external partners to bring empty properties back to use for community benefit, in Didcot and Cholsey, in line with our aims.

Work has also continued on the development of the new Joint Design Guide (JDG) Supplementary Planning Document, which incorporates new guidance on zero and low carbon construction, through the holding of the public consultation this quarter. Feedback received included a specific request for more guidance on the siting and design of renewable energy schemes. The completed 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. A Sustainable Construction Checklist was also produced this quarter to help applicants demonstrate they are meeting the requirements of Policy DES8: Sustainable Design of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035.

To support the delivery of new council-owned homes with a focus on quality of design, affordability and local requirements, this quarter an offer was accepted (subject to contract) for the purchase of a house in Didcot to provide temporary accommodation. In addition, progress was made on the Broadway project to deliver further housing stock options.

Work continues on the transformation of Berinsfield into a thriving Garden Village with improved facilities, developed in line with the community's needs and aspirations. In addition, work to identify all of the existing land assets and landownerships was completed. This will not only allow for the creation of an asset map, but also provide insight into the potential options for co-locating community organisations and facilities in Berinsfield. Work to develop the Berinsfield Grants Scheme also continued this quarter, ready for its scheduled launch next quarter 2022/23. A webinar was held to support applicants with understanding the scheme and how to complete the application, with follow-up meetings being held to support the community groups, in order to provide opportunity for local community organisations to bid for funding to support services in the area.

Additionally, progress continues to be made to increase sustainable transport solutions, through enhancing Electric Vehicle capacity in order to help reduce car dependency and air pollution. This quarter, work commenced to install 62 electric vehicle (EV) charging points in 5 car parks in South Oxfordshire, as part of the Oxfordshire wide "Park and Charge" project. It is envisaged that the Park and Charge project will unlock the possibility of EV ownership for residents across Oxfordshire, by providing a convenient, affordable and user-friendly EV charging solutions.

Chart E HILN10: Number of affordable homes delivered

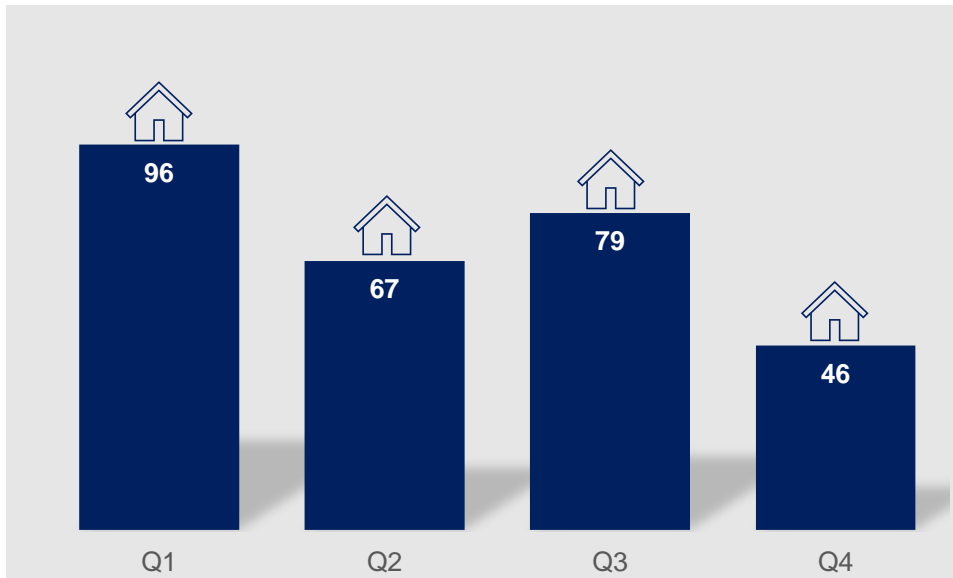


Chart F.1 HILN10: Average stay in emergency temporary accommodation

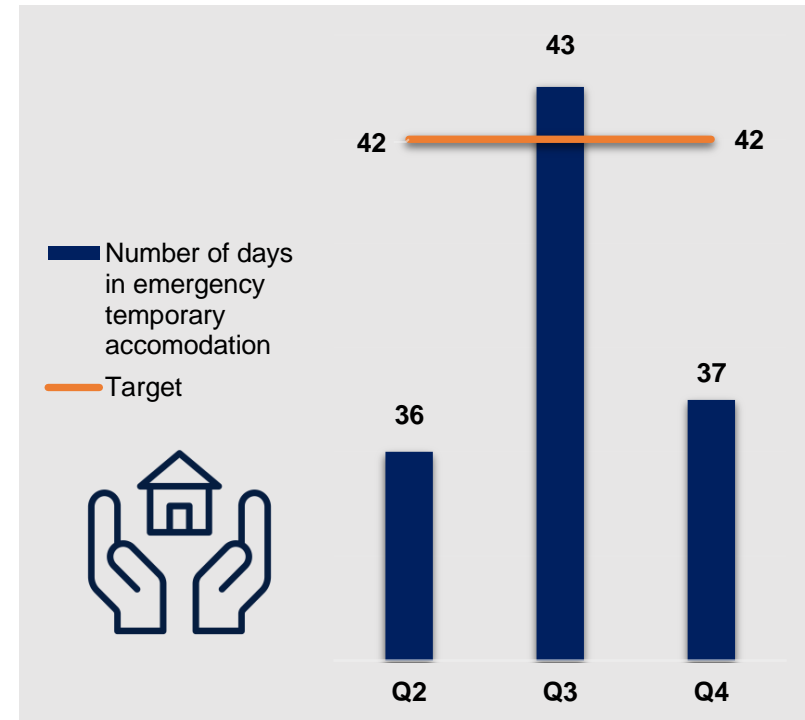


Chart F.2 HILN5: Rates of successful homelessness prevention

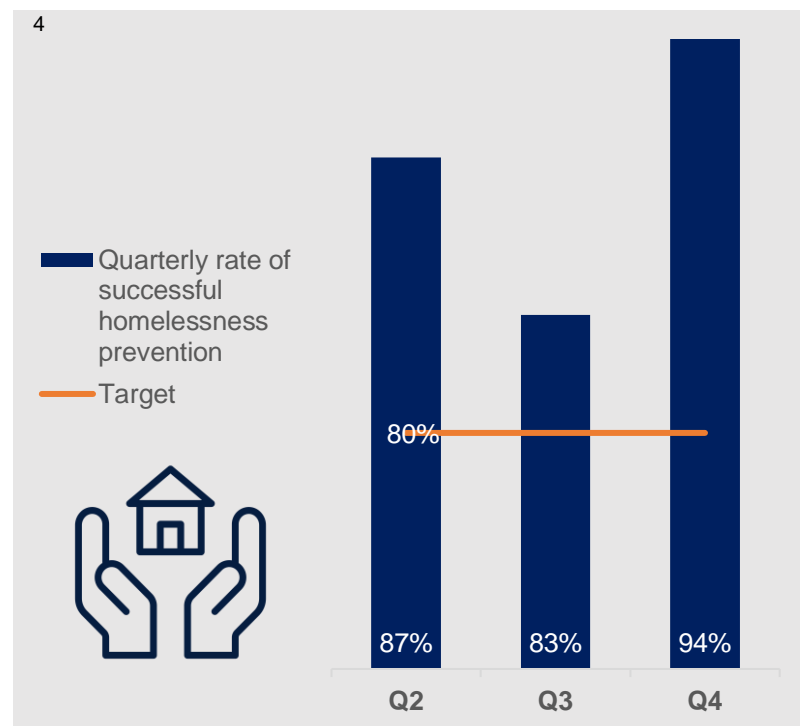
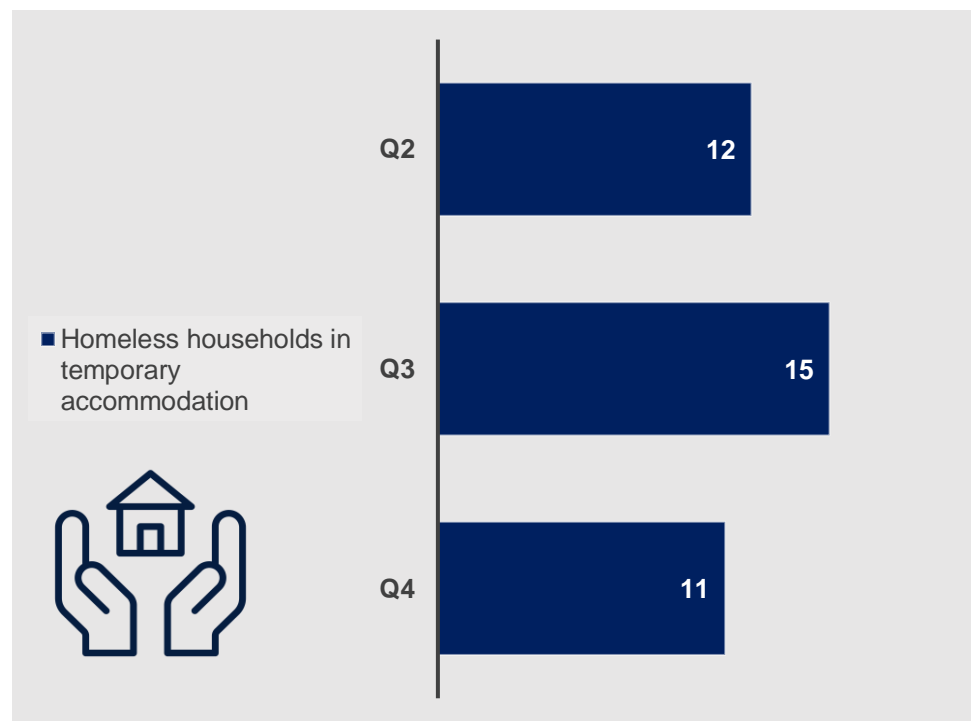


Chart F.3 HILN5: Homeless households in temporary accommodation



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>After the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board members brought forward their priorities (including a retail strategy, active travel infrastructure improvements and a public transport strategy) on 3 March, a mapping exercise took place to facilitate the development of a refocused delivery plan. This updated plan will be considered by the Cabinet during Q1 2022/23.</p> <p>In addition, the Didcot Garden Town team completed Stage 1 of the Department for Transport's guidance on the preparation of Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans during this quarter. This work was informed by the key priorities raised through the sounding boards and a report on the local area from HarBUG (Harwell Campus Bicycle Users Group).</p> <p>Phase 1 of the Science Vale Active Travel Network was also finished during Q4 2021/22 and will help to support the placemaking agenda for Didcot Garden Town. The five completed routes – which are currently undergoing a naming exercise involving local partners – contribute 10km of improved provision for both cyclists and pedestrians. Plans are now being made for the creation and development of wayfinding opportunities for this part of the Active Travel Network.</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 Q4 2021/22, negotiations continued between South Oxfordshire and the landowner's agent on reaching an accord regarding a land value for the Council's assets and progressing a land development agreement.</p> <p>In addition, work to identify all of the existing land assets and landownerships was completed by the Garden Communities team. This will not only allow for the creation of an asset map but also provide insight into the potential options for co-locating community facilities in Berinsfield.</p> <p>The launch of the Berinsfield Grants Scheme has also been scheduled for early in Q1 2022/23. This scheme will provide an opportunity for local community organisations to bid for funding to support the provision of services in the area.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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 Q4, an offer was accepted (on a subject to contract basis) for the purchase of a house in Didcot, for provision of temporary accommodation and work is ongoing to complete the purchase. Progress was made on the Broadway project to help us to deliver further housing stock options.</p> <p>A public consultation was held on the Joint Design Guide. Feedback received included a request for more guidance on the design of renewable energy.</p>
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	<p>During Q4 2021/22 South Oxfordshire optimised its ability to influence through membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, Environment Advisory Group. The group met on 24 March and discussed a county-wide climate communications project which will see a resident survey and website for climate change in Oxfordshire launched in Q1 of 22/23. The group also received an update the Pathway to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire work and a presentation from OxTrees.</p> <p>During the Quarter there was also a social media campaign around HM Governments Green Homes Grant Scheme to signpost and encourage residents to funding that may support them with retrofitting at low cost.</p>
HILN5	Elimination of homelessness in our District	<p>Narrative update on progress in this area</p> <p>Quantitative information on homelessness rates, homeless cases and TA numbers, length of stay in TA and effectiveness of interventions (avoided homelessness)</p>	Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers	Head of Housing & Environment	<p>South Oxfordshire recorded zero rough sleepers at the end of Q4 2021/22. The very low levels of rough sleeping seen within the district reflects the success of the Council's preventative approach.</p> <p>The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) in March 2022 was 11. The average length of stay in emergency accommodation TA was 37 nights which is below the ceiling target of 42. Phase 2 of Housing First was successfully completed during Q4 2021/22. All six residents have now been successfully accommodated and are maintaining their tenancies.</p> <p>For 2021/22, the rate of successful homelessness prevention was 94.0%. This was above the target of 80.0%. South Oxfordshire also continues to actively participate in the countywide Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. It is also helping to deliver the county's innovative alliance approach to single homelessness services.</p>

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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	<p>In March, officers from the Economic Development Officers team attended the bi-monthly board meeting of the Oxfordshire-wide Meanwhile project. They also received an update from Makespace Oxford who are delivering the project. The funding for Meanwhile in Oxfordshire ends on 30 June 2022, this means that Economic Development's current priority is to complete existing projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total leases signed in Oxfordshire as part of Meanwhile – 22. • The locations in South Oxfordshire are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOHA offices in Didcot - Cholsey Chapel - Makespace are progressing with this project but due to time constraints it will not fall into the current Oxfordshire Makespace project. <p>The anticipated investment in bringing these properties back to use as follows (funded through Meanwhile and external partners - no council investment included):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SOHA offices - £70k - Cholsey Chapel circa £500k <p>From Q1 2022/23, Economic Development will monitor the occupation of rated premises in the district on a quarterly basis.</p>

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>Insight and Policy currently support service teams by highlighting external funding opportunities. To further increase capacity in this area, during Q4 2021/22, South Oxfordshire ran a successful recruitment campaign for an External Funding Lead. This post will significantly enhance the Council's ability to identify third party income. A service induction has been prepared for the role, with their initial focus being on creating a compelling story around a potential bid for the Cornerstone into the next round of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – this will build upon the technical work completed by Concept Energy.</p> <p>HM Government, as part of the Spring Statement, also published the prospectus for round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund. If appropriate, the External Funding Lead will explore any potential opportunities arising from this with partners.</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	In Q4 2021/22, a public consultation was held on the Joint Design Guide. Feedback included specifically a request for more guidance on the siting and design of renewable energy schemes. The Sustainable Construction Checklist, produced to help applicants demonstrate they are meeting the requirements of Policy DES8: Sustainable Design of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, was published on our website. Updates were made to the Policy DES10 Advice Note to help DM officers implement the policy more effectively.
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	During Q4 2021/22, a report summarising the responses to the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 (2) consultation was drafted and published for review. This consultation set out a range of policy options in relation to health, wellbeing and sustainability. Following several planned amendments – resulting from feedback from Scrutiny Committees across the county – the report will carry forward into Q1 2022/23.

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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>46 affordable properties have been reported as delivered, bringing the yearly total (Apr-Mar) for 2021/22 to 288 affordable homes. The type and size of the 46 units delivered in Q4 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 x 1 bed flats - 12 x 2 bed flats - 17 x 2 bed houses - 12 x 3 bed houses <p>It should be noted that over the life of a development, different dwelling and tenure types will be delivered at varying rates, depending upon the developer's build programme.</p>
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 and Corporate Landlord	Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points are being installed in five car parks in South as part of the Oxfordshire wide "Park and Charge" project. They are due to be operational by 1 May 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 Q4:

In order to invest, save and act responsibly with our financial resources, this quarter the Council agreed the transformation delivery programmes and priorities for the next 12 to 18 months, which had been identified through the budget challenge process undertaken last quarter. Progress has also been made in establishing the team that will undertake this work.

Moreover, following South's approval of the Strategic Property Review last quarter, the Council's focus during this quarter has been on potential housing sites and their promotion via the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). An assessment of land availability identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over a plan period.

Additionally, the second meeting of South Oxfordshire's Asset Management Group was held this quarter. The aim of the Group is to assess the Council's land ownerships in a holistic manner and consider opportunities for their development, usage or disposal.

With the ambition of improving its effectiveness as an organisation, the Council completed the baselining of its services against the six principles set out in the Council's Customer Services Strategy this quarter. Significant work has also been undertaken in relation to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) project with the award of a contract for the successful solution expected quarter one 2022/23.

In order to maximise external funding opportunities to support services and to enrich the district's leisure, sporting and community activities, the Council ran a successful recruitment campaign for an External Funding Lead this quarter. This post will significantly enhance the Council's ability to identify third party income, with their initial focus being on creating a compelling story around a potential bid for the Cornerstone into the next round of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. 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, such as, if appropriate, exploring any potential opportunities arising from round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund, as announced by HM Government at the Spring Statement.

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	Deputy Chief Executive - Transformation and Operations	<p>The transformation delivery programmes and priorities for the next 12 to 18 months (which were identified through the budget challenge process) were agreed at Full Council in February. Progress has also been made in establishing the team that will undertake this work.</p> <p>During Q4, South Oxfordshire completed the baselining of its services against the six principles set out in the Council's Customer Strategy. In addition, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) project was mobilised with the award of a contract for the successful solution expected in Q1 2022/23.</p> <p>Good progress on the roadmap for the Technology Strategy was also made in Q4. Contracts are now in place or nearing completion for the Council's IT solutions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and Homelessness. • Licensing. • Property and Asset Management. • Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
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	Deputy Chief Executive - Transformation and Operations	Design work on the detailed design of the delivery of the new council offices continued during Q4 2021/22. Assessments of the scheme's viability and financing arrangements have also progressed. In addition, masterplanning is now in the final stages of sign-off.

Corporate Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead	Performance Update
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 scape, then once SPR has been delivered, the outcomes and future measures (quant element)	Cllr Leigh Rawlins	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>The second meeting of the Asset Management Group (AMG) was held during Q4 2021/22. The AMG will assess South's land ownerships and consider opportunities for their development, usage and disposal.</p> <p>The Strategic Property Review is designed to be an ongoing process. The Council's focus during this quarter has been on potential housing sites and their promotion via the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).</p>
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	<p>During Q4 2021/22, South Oxfordshire ran a successful recruitment campaign for an External Funding Lead. This post will significantly enhance the Council's ability to identify third party income. A service induction has been prepared for the role, with their initial focus being on creating a compelling story around a potential bid for the Cornerstone into the next round of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – this will build upon the technical work completed by Concept Energy.</p> <p>HM Government, as part of the Spring Statement, also published the prospectus for round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund. If appropriate, the External Funding Lead will explore any potential opportunities arising from this with partners.</p> <p>CIL/Section 106 broken down by parish is available to view in full on our website - https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/infrastructure-to-support-communities/community-infrastructure-levy-or-cil-header-page/community-infrastructure-levy-or-cil/</p>
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	No activity to report in Q4 2021/22.

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, implement the required programmes to do so and encourage Covid-19 vaccination uptake in the district.

From 24 February 2022 people were no longer legally required to self-isolate following a positive Covid-19 test and this meant that Test and Trace Support Payments also came to an end. During 2021/22, a total of 668 test and trace support payments were made to residents in South Oxfordshire. Chart G shows the quarterly breakdown of the number of people who received a £500 Test and Trace support payments, either from the main scheme or the discretionary scheme.

COVID-19 Community Hub Support distributed between 01 January – 31 March 2022:



Chart G: Test and Trace Support Payments

