WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2024** AT **7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 27 February 2024

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent "critical friend" challenge and to work with the Council's Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be viewed live using the following link:
https://www.youtube.com/live/Vwkvcjzc1_Q?feature=shared

This meeting may be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website. Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.

Our Vision
A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone.
- Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Providing Safe and Strong Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care.
- Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish.
- Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.

Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough

- Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future.
- Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy.
- Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers.
- Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

Be the Best We Can Be

- Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice.
- Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working.
- Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business.
- Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient.
- Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough.
- Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors

Alistair Neal (Chair)	Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair)	Andy Croy
Catherine Glover	Chris Johnson	Norman Jorgensen
Pauline Jorgensen	Adrian Mather	Stuart Munro
Caroline Smith	Alison Swaddle	

Substitutes

Charles Margetts	Graham Howe	Peter Dennis
Clive Jones	Morag Malvern	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Bill Soane	Jane Ainslie	Ian Pittock
Phil Cunnington	Marie-Louise Weighill	

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent
A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2024 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.35 PM**

Committee Members Present
Councillors: Alistair Neal (Chair), Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Andy Croy, Catherine Glover, Chris Johnson, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Caroline Smith, Phil Cunnington and Graham Howe

Other Councillors Present
Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth and Ian Shenton

Officers Present
Narinder Brar, Head of Enforcement and Safety
Steve Brown, Assistant Director, Enforcement and Safety
Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Louise Livingston, Assistant Director, Corporate Services

68.   APOLOGIES
Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Stuart Munro and Alison Swaddle.

Councillors Phil Cunnington and Graham Howe attended the meeting as substitutes.

69.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

70.   DECLARATION OF INTEREST
Councillor Phil Cunnington declared a personal interest in Item 73 – Recruitment and Retention Update – as he worked with a recruitment agency. However, there were no links to the Council's recruitment and retention activities.

71.   PUBLIC QUESTION TIME
There were no public questions.

72.   MEMBER QUESTION TIME
There were no Member questions.

73.   RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION UPDATE
The Committee considered a presentation, set out on Agenda pages 15 to 28, which provided an update on recruitment and retention issues at the Council.

Rachel Bishop-Firth (Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty) attended the meeting to answer Member questions, supported by Louise Livingston (Assistant Director Corporate Services).

The presentation reminded Members that a new Human Resources team had been established in November 2022. The team had developed strong relationships with the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and established a Workforce Programme in order to review all elements of human resources and organisational development. In addition, a dedicated resourcing team had been set up which was delivering improved value for money and a more professional approach to tackling specific skills shortages.

The presentation highlighted a number of improvements relating to recruitment and retention, including:

- Stable levels of staff turnover and a number of initiatives aimed at retaining talent;
- A new recruitment process resulting in increased application levels and savings on the use of recruitment agencies;
- A new microsite for senior management recruitment;
- A number of staff retention projects including employment projects, review of policies (including absence management), learning and development and health and wellbeing;
- Developing the Council's Graduate Academy;
- Utilising the apprenticeship levy to upskill existing staff.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and questions.

The increased level of professionalism relating to recruitment was welcomed. Were officers monitoring the cost per hire? It was confirmed that officers were starting to introduce this type of monitoring.

The saving delivered in relation to more effective recruitment was estimated at £129k. What percentage was this of the total expenditure? It was confirmed that, at present, the budget came from individual service areas, so it was difficult to provide an exact figure. Savings were achieved through greater use of social media and Linked In. Job adverts in the Guardian and Municipal Journal were limited to targeted posts. It was noted that the budget for agency staff also sat within individual service areas.

What proportion of staff stayed on the books after the end of their probation period? It was confirmed that the proportion was high. Overall, turnover rates had decreased.

What steps were being taken to recruit and retain women, for example through an improved childcare offer? It was confirmed that increased flexibility and support for women was one of the issues being explored in the Modern Workforce programme (under development).

The list of staff retention projects did not refer to flexible working. What was the Council's approach? It was confirmed that the Council currently had a flexible working policy in place. This would also be addressed in the Modern Workforce programme.

In September 2023, Children's Services social workers had attended the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss recruitment and retention issues. One of the issues raised was the lack of flexible car parking spaces near to the Shute End offices. What steps were being taken to address this? It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing with relevant officers to address this issue. Officers were also looking at staff pay in specific areas where skills shortages resulted in the use of agency staff.

In relation to apprentices, what proportion of apprentices went on to become full-time employees? An example was given of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) which was a support programme for newly qualified social workers. Of 10 ASYE staff, nine had moved into full-time employment.

What steps were being take to address any organisational culture issues which may result in staff leaving the Council? It was confirmed that a staff survey would be carried later in 2024 which would provide feedback on any organisation culture issues which needed to be addressed. Steps were also being taken to improve the process for staff exit interviews.

How did the Council promote team working and positive mental health? Some organisations used "speak up" champions who were able to represent the views of staff who did not wish to raise issues of concern. It was confirmed that the Council was working to develop the wellbeing offer to staff e.g. through the Employee Assistance Programme and mental health first aiders. Suggestions and information on good practice elsewhere was welcomed.

RESOLVED That:

1) Rachel Bishop-Firth and Louise Livingston be thanked for attending the meeting to give the presentation and answer Member questions;

2) the update on recruitment and retention issues at WBC be noted;

3) the Committee supports initiatives for working people with caring responsibilities, to help them to gain and retain employment with the Council;

4) the Committee supports the greater use of information, such as cost-per-hire, as part of the recruitment and retention data submitted to the Personnel Board.

74.   AIR QUALITY
The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 29 to 148, which provided an update on air quality monitoring and reporting in the Borough.

Councillor Ian Shenton (Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure) attended the meeting, supported by officers, to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report stated that the Council had a statutory duty to monitor air quality and identify areas where the national air quality objectives were not being met. Air quality in three locations had been identified as not meeting an objective, resulting in the declaration of three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The pollutant of concern giving rise to the AQMAs was the annual mean Nitrogen Dioxide concentration.

The report stated that Annual Status Reports (ASRs) were required to be completed and submitted to the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The latest status report (June 2023) provided data up to the end of 2022. In 2022 there were no exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective either within or outside the AQMAs. Air quality had improved in the Borough to such an extent that it was considered appropriate that two out of the three AQMAs (Twyford town centre and the M4 motorway) be revoked. AQMA revocations were programmed to occur in the spring of 2024, subject to agreement of the Executive.

The report confirmed that local authorities with AQMAs were required to have Air Quality Action Plans in place and to keep these under review. The current air quality action plan was dated March 2018 and was overdue for completion of a formal review and update. The report recommended that an overview of Air Quality in the Borough be submitted to

the Committee in late summer/early autumn 2024, in order that the latest information could be considered shortly after the Annual Status Report was produced.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and questions.

As the only ongoing AQMA was Wokingham town centre, what steps were being taken to improve air quality in that location? It was confirmed that officers would be reviewing the situation in specific parts of Wokingham town centre. The Council's wider policies would also have an ongoing impact, e.g. the LCWIP, Local Transport Plan 4, Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Local Plan Update,

Did the Council monitor air quality at industrial sites adjacent to residential properties? One site was mentioned which caused concern for local residents. It was confirmed that the site in question had been checked and was not a cause for concern for officers. Officers were happy to discuss specific sites with Members.

Would air quality monitoring continue across the Borough? It was confirmed that officers continued to carry out monitoring at specific sites, as and when necessary. Some old locations had been dropped with some new locations added. Similarly, officers monitored new planning applications and would consider new locations within the context of a limited budget.

What factors had led to the improvement of air quality in the Borough? It was confirmed that, post Covid, more residents were working from home which meant less traffic on the roads. There was also a growth in the number of electric vehicles and reduced emissions from petrol and diesel vehicles. Other council areas in Berkshire, such as Bracknell, Reading and West Berkshire, were also reducing the number of AQMAs. It was confirmed that data on air quality improvements in other areas could be shared with Members.

RESOLVED That:

1) Ian Shenton, Narinder Brar, Steve Brown and Emma Choules be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;

2) the Committee note that air quality monitoring in 2022, indicated compliance with the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective at all monitoring locations within existing Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the Borough and at all monitoring locations outside of the AQMAs;

3) the Committee note that, due to ongoing compliance with the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective it is anticipated that two out of the three Air Quality Management Areas will be revoked in spring 2024, i.e. Twyford Town Centre and M4 motorway.

4) the Committee note that one AQMA will be retained – Wokingham Town Centre;

5) the Committee note that a formal update of the Air Quality Action Plan is required and will be progressed in 2024;

6) a further update on Air Quality in the Borough be submitted to the Committee in late summer/early autumn 2024;

7) the Council be recommended to develop a strategy for communicating updates to stakeholders (residents, businesses, community groups, etc.) in the AQMAs;

8) officers be recommended to develop a mechanism for identifying appropriate new locations where air quality data can be collected, including data on particulates.

75.   OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMMES 2024-25

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 149 to 154, which set out details of the process for developing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes for 2024/25.

The report stated that effective work programming was a Member-led process aimed at shortlisting and prioritising issues of community concern together with issues arising out of the Community Vision, Council Plan and major policy or service changes. It aimed to:

- reflect local needs and concerns;
- prioritise topics for scrutiny which have the most impact or benefit;
- involve local residents and stakeholders;
- be flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues.

Each year the Committee approved work programmes for itself and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report considered the process for identifying potential items for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programmes for 2024/25. This included consideration of suggestions from residents, Town and Parish Councils and WBC Members.

The report stated that the 2024/25 work programmes would be finalised at the Committee's meeting on 6 March 2024.

RESOLVED That:

1) the process and timeline for developing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes for 2024/25, as set out in the report, be approved;

2) the process for public consultation on the draft work programmes be approved;

3) the 2024/25 Work Programmes be finalised at the Committee's meeting on 6 March 2024.

76.   EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a copy of the Executive Forward Programme as set out on Agenda pages 155 to 162.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Forward Programme be noted.

77.   O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES 2023-24

The Committee considered its forward work programme and that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out on Agenda pages 163 to 174.

Members raised the following points:

In addition to the annual Budget Scrutiny process, the Committee consider the development of ongoing Budget Scrutiny during the year.

The draft update of the Council Constitution be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny work programmes, as amended, be approved.

78. ACTION TRACKER
The Committee considered the regular Action Tracker report, set out at Agenda pages 175 to 180.

RESOLVED: That the Action Tracker report be noted.

Community Vision - CLT Update

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

What has happened | Phase 1 informal engagement

NOV - JAN 24

Steering Group analysing feedback and identifying emerging themes.

SEPT 23

Online surveys and targeted group engagement using steering group contacts.

JUN 23

Internal and external steering group set up and agreed 6 key engagement themes.

FEB 24

End of phase 1.

Begin 1st draft of Community Vision and consider design options.

JUL - SEPT 23

Informal engagement starts. Community Engagement team gathered feedback at Community events.

OCT - NOV 23

Youth Council created draft logo designs for the vision document.

MAR - MAY 23

New Local Workshops with partners and councillors.

Who have we engaged with | Phase 1 informal engagement profile

Borough ethnicity

White British and All Other Ethnicities 2021

Wokingham... ● White: English, Welsh, Scottish, N... ● Other

- 48K (27.28%)
- 129K (72.72%)
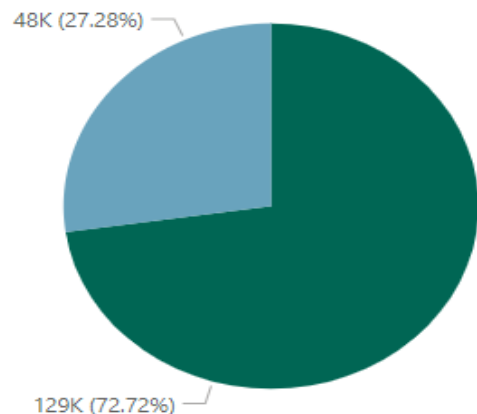
The ethnicity of those that engaged

What race or ethnicity best describes you?
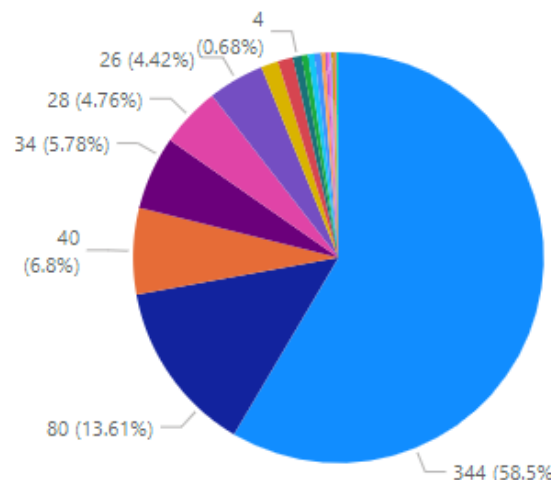
What race or ethnicity best ...
- ● White: British
- ● -
- ● Irish
- ● White: Other
- ● Prefer not to say
- ● Asian/British Asian: Indian
- ● Mixed race
- ● Asian/British Asian: Chinese
- ● White English
- ● African
- ● Asian/British Asian: Pakist...

- 4 (0.68%)
- 26 (4.42%)
- 28 (4.76%)
- 34 (5.78%)
- 40 (6.8%)
- 80 (13.61%)
- 344 (58.5%)

There were a proportion of people who preferred not to tell us about themselves, and some where data was not collected.

Borough age profile - %

(bar chart with age groups: -17, 18-20, 21-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+)
- -17: 26
- 18-20: 5
- 21-29: 11
- 30-39: 10
- 40-49: 16
- 50-59: 12
- 60+: 20
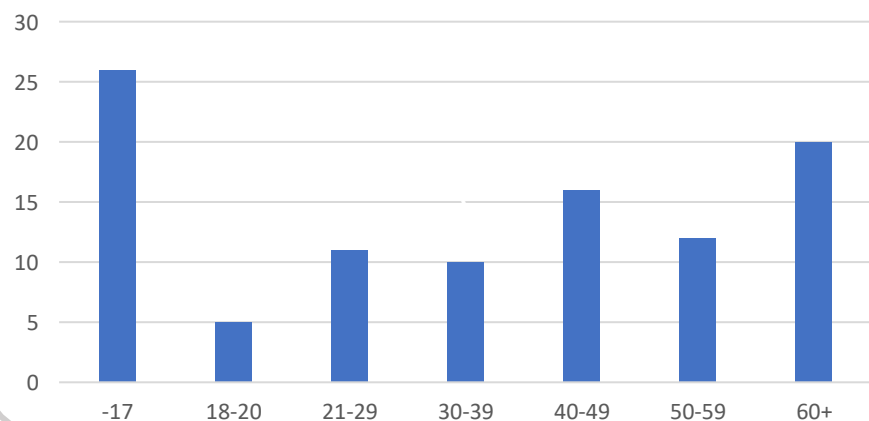
Engagement age profile - Volume

(bar chart with age groups: -17, 18-20, 21-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+)
- -17: ~95
- 18-20: ~25
- 21-29: ~10
- 30-39: ~50
- 40-49: ~100
- 50-59: ~85
- 60+: ~200

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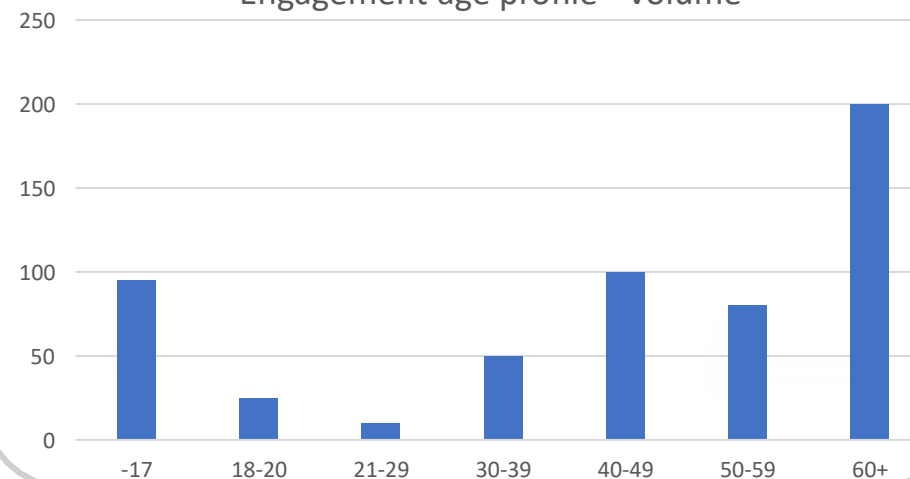
Who have we engaged with | Phase 1 informal engagement

We used the networks within the external steering group to increase reach:

505 Online Survey Reponses

30 Charities

51 Community Groups

34 Targeted engagement sessions

Examples of targeted engagement sessions – reaching 350 people

Wokingham Today	Twyford Community	Places Leisure x6 face to face sessions
Wokingham Positive Difference	Woodley Share	Reading Football Club – aged 8-18 (71 responses)
Involve Community Services	Woodley event	Clerk's forum
St Paul's (Churches Together)	Norreys HaF	BEP (Borough Education Partnership)
Housing Solutions	Emmbrook School	WIP (Wokingham Integrated Partnership)
Social Care Futures	Hardship Alliance	Borough Parish Liaison Forum
Sunflower Club	VSAG (Voluntary Sector Action Group)	
Equality Forum	FBC (Family activities)	CSP and DA (Community Safety Partnership / Domestic Abuse

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Community vision | Emerging themes from engagement

1. Physical environment

Protecting and perfecting our places.

A clean and vibrant place with access to green spaces.

2. Mobility and connectivity

Making it easy for people to access the things they want and need.

Access to greener travel options that enable connectivity.

3. Community cohesion

Building and maintaining great communities.

Safe places that bring people together, where everyone can contribute to their community.

4. Equal Opps / belonging

Providing fair opportunities for everyone.

A strong and inclusive community providing opportunities for all, where people feel they belong.

5. Economic Growth

Write an economic success story that everyone is part of.

A place with thriving town centres where there is something for everyone.

6. Healthy & independent living

Living happy, healthy and independent lives and help others do the same.

A place where everyone can live healthy and independent lives.

15

Next steps

MAR 24

2ND draft of the vision created with steering groups input.

APR 24

3rd draft of the vision socialised with CLT.

MAY 24

Start formal public consultation w/c 6th. Online survey live.

JUNE 24

Hold Town & Parish Council and partner workshops to update and consult 4/5th June.

O&S 18th June - TBC

Executive 27th June - TBC

JUL 24

Consider results from formal consultation and partner sessions.

AUG 24

Final draft of vision.

SEPT 24

SG sign off & enact plan for launch.

OCT – DEC 24

Council endorsement. CLT Executive Council

Timeline

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

17

Vision 2nd draft

Vision 3rd draft

Partner Workshops

External SG sign off

Final draft

Formal Consultation – 6 weeks

Consider feedback

Election

O&S

Executive

Pre-election period

Council endorsement

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

Phase 2 – Draft vision | **Phase 3 – Formal engagement & final draft** | **Phase 4 – Final sign off** | **Phase 5 - Launch**

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TITLE   **Quarter 3 23/24 Performance Monitoring Report**

FOR CONSIDERATION BY   Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee on 6th March 2024

WARD   (All Wards);

LEAD POLITICIAN   Stephen Conway – Leader of the Council

LEAD OFFICER   Sally Watkins - Chief Operating Officer

| **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY** |
|---|
| This report provides accountability and transparency against the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for service areas and provision of these to our customers. |
| **RECOMMENDATION** |
| To note the performance of the KPIs relevant to this committee. |
| **SUMMARY OF REPORT** |
| Quarter 3 KPIs shows continued good performance despite significant continued challenges to delivery. The highlights of quarter 3 for the Council include:

• Bid for Planning Skills Delivery Grant successful, winning £92k to support specific work around sustainable building and biodiversity net gain.
• The Council was successful in a regional bid submitted to the DfE to implement a number of improvements to boost the number of foster carers and experience of prospective foster carers.
• Wokingham Borough has ranked number one in England for the proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment for 2022/23.

Looking forward, whilst inflation has decreased its effects continue to be felt with the increase in the cost of delivering services running ahead of the increase in funding available. Inflation drives up the costs of everything the council does, and higher interest rates make borrowing money for capital investment more expensive.

The council is also seeing increasing demand to many services which is compounded with more complex issues. Positively the revenue monitoring position has held at the same position as last quarter, stopping the previous trend. The end of the year forecast is running with an overspend of approximately £3.6 million.

Further details of all KPIs are listed in Appendix A which accompanies this report. |

Background

- The Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measure how well each service is delivering against its current objectives.
- This performance report and appendix covers Q3 2023/24 (October, November and December 2023).
- Where available benchmarking information is included to give greater context.
- Each KPI should have a SMART target (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely), which takes into account historic trend information and benchmarking to compare Wokingham Borough performance with national trends.
- KPIs are assigned a RAG status (Red, Amber, Green) to indicate whether performance is on target (Green), close to target (Amber) or missing the target (Red).

Indicators are assigned to a Director and Lead Executive Member. Commentary including highlights, focuses for the future and potential challenges from the CEO, Deputy CEO and each Director can be found in Appendix A, which accompanies this report.

Analysis

The Council provides a wide range of services to its residents and so the reporting of a single bottom line is not possible. For this reason, the Council uses a balanced scorecard approach, reporting a mixture of KPIs covering service activity, financial performance, indicators on the health of the work force and customer excellence scores. The following analysis is intended to give a picture of the overall health of the Councils performance at the top level and to highlight areas performing below target, the actions being taken to improve this, and the challenges faced.

Quarter 3 23/24 Performance
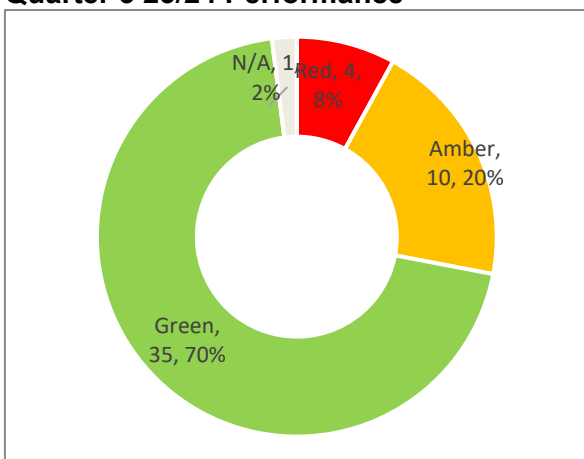
Quarter 3 KPIs show sustained performance despite significant continued challenges to delivery. High inflation driving up the cost-of-service delivery coupled with financial uncertainty at a global level has made this a challenge to deliver. The number of red KPIs is 4 with improvements in crime figures and recycling rates moving PG8 and PG9 to amber. There are 10 amber KPIs and 35 green.

Red KPIs in Quarter 2 2023/24
The following information below gives details of the KPIs reported as Red in Q2 23/24 with background and context of performance and the corrective action being taken.

CEX8 – Proportion of Wokingham resident pupils eligible for FSM in Wokingham borough schools
This KPI measures the number of children who have applied for and are eligible for means-tested free school meals as a proportion of all pupils on the roll. It has increased from 8.8% to 8.9% from Q1 to Q3.

This is measured as part of a continued push through the Tackling Poverty Strategy to increase access to support for residents on low incomes. The target was initially 9% and was increased to 10% during 23/24 to become a stretch target. There is no government data which would allow the Council to clearly quantify the number of children in the borough who would be eligible. As a result the council has set this stretching target to push performance and maximise take up.

Actions to increase take up of FSM since Q1 are to target schools, particularly those where take up is lower than expected, to promote and support parents to claim. We will be working with schools admissions to identify opportunities to promote FSM during the admissions process.

CS5 – Proportion of all EHC plans issues in 20 weeks (including exceptions)
Whilst EHCP timeliness in Wokingham remained, on average, above national and statistical neighbours, it is recognised that there was a drop in the latter part of the autumn term. Timeliness was impacted by the spike in EHC assessments requests in the spring term (Q2), which were the highest recorded in Wokingham to date. This compounded pressure on the EP service as well as therapy assessments through CYPIT.
To reverse this trend, the SEND Service held a meeting with the Performance Team and Principle Education Psychologist, with the following developments:
- A new 'timeliness' dashboard has been developed (currently in beta form), that provides live data and can be used as a supportive tool by SEND Managers to monitor and step in if any EHC Plans appear to be at risk of being overdue.
- An EHC assessment request dashboard has also been produced- which will help with short-, medium- and long-term planning, to support staff to prioritise, and request additional capacity to assist with peaks in demand.
- Through Commissioning, we will continue to monitor (and raise concerns if required) the timeliness of statutory advice through CYPIT, which currently impact overall EHCP timescales".

The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022 calendar year for all EHC plans issued in 20 weeks (including exceptions) are 38.5% and 49.1% respectively.

AS1- Social work assessments allocated to commence within 28 days of the requests (counted at point of allocation)
This is not monitored as a national performance measure, however, numbers of people waiting for assessments, packages of care or reviews is collected regularly for all Local Authorities in the South East. Currently 26% of people are waiting longer than 6 months across the region. 28 days is a local target to ensure best practice.

There is a process of triaging and risk assessing all contacts received to ensure those requiring immediate attention are prioritised. Changes were made to the Adult Social Care pathway in Q2, and it was anticipated that this could have an impact on performance data during Q3. Expectation that figures will improve in Q4.

RA10 – Revenue monitoring forecast position
The revenue monitoring position has improved from 2% at the end of Q2 to 1.98% at the end of Q3 and work continues to balance the position for the year end. Full details can be found in the December 2023 executive paper.

KPIs without Targets

There is currently 1 KPI without a target, reported as N/A. PG2 – Number of households in emergency nightly-let/B&B accommodation is reported to give visibility of the level of demand experienced by the housing service and its associated risks. Targeting of this KPI may drive the wrong behaviour and has limited value.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION
The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Nil	Nil
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Nil	Nil

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
This report covers the whole of the Council's operations.

Public Sector Equality Duty
This report covers a full range of services across the council. It is for noting and discussion and does not contain recommendations for approval that would involve a policy or service alteration that would have implications upon people with protected characteristics under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*
This report covers a full range of services across the council. It is for noting and discussion and does not contain recommendations for approval that would involve a policy or service alteration that would have implications for the climate emergency.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers

Contact Will Roper	**Service** Chief Executive's Office
Customer Insight & Performance Manager	**Email** will.roper@wokingham.gov.uk

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Appendix A:
Quarter 3 2023/24
Key Performance Indicators
Wokingham Borough Council

Overview

Along with the hard work needed to deliver the continued strong results reported here there has been significant activity from officers across the council to deal with the financial challenges we face. The headwinds coming from the cost of living and a potential recession threaten the Council's income streams and are compounded by high inflation which mean that everything the council does costs more.

Top Wins

- Holding the revenue monitoring position given the current financial climate
- Continued good performance dealing with freedom of information requests
- Continued performance of business rates collections
- Budget engagement sessions with Overview and Scrutiny

Top Opportunities

- Service remodelling across sports and leisure to further expand our community outreach programmes
- Review of our constitution to improve governance
- Appointment of a contractor to the Carnival Place residential programme and work commenced
- Working to review KPIs in particular under RA4 which will be launched in the new municipal year

Challenges

- Cost of living crisis continues to impact

Quarter 3 Performance Summary

- 1 KPI is reported as below target, Red
- 3 are reported as (slightly-off target) Amber
- 8 of KPIs achieving target, Green
- No KPIs are reported as Pending
- No KPIs are reported as N/A

Amber, 3, 25%

Green, 8, 67%

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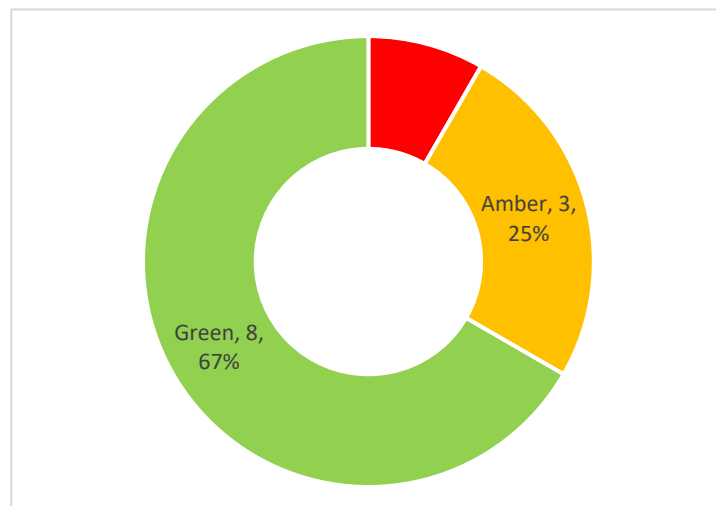
Appendix E-1: Resources & Assets Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Summary Table

| Ref	Description	RAG Q1	DoT Q1	RAG Q2	DoT Q2	RAG Q3	DoT Q3
RA1A	Junior activities – attendances for junior swim/fitness and swimming lessons	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Better
RA1B	All centre attendances – gym, swim, group ex	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Worse
RA2	Participation in leisure activities to support those who may be experiencing social isolation (Moving with Confidence programme & Active Ageing programme).	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Worse
RA3	Completion to time and budget of regeneration projects (Residential Works)	Amber	Better	Amber	N/A	Amber	No Change
RA4	Occupancy rate of WBC-owned Regeneration units	Green	Worse	Green	Better	Green	Worse
RA5	Council Tax Collections	Amber	Worse	Green	Better	Amber	Worse
RA6	Business rates collection	Amber	Worse	Green	Better	Green	Better
RA7	Return on investment portfolio - Property Investment Fund	Amber	Better	Amber	Better	Amber	Worse
RA8	Number of Freedom of information requests handled within statutory time frames.	Green	No Change	Amber	Worse	Green	Better
RA9	Number of data breaches reported to the ICO working days of decision to hold them	Green	No Change	Green	No Change	Green	No Change
RA10	Revenue monitoring forecast position	Amber	Worse	Red	Worse	Red	Better
RA11	Capital monitoring forecast position	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Better

Appendix E-2: Resources & Assets Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Detailed Information

RA1A – All centre Junior activities – attendances for junior swim/fitness and swimming lessons

| Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	130311	130000	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	136923	130000	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	165683	130000	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		130000		
Year End				
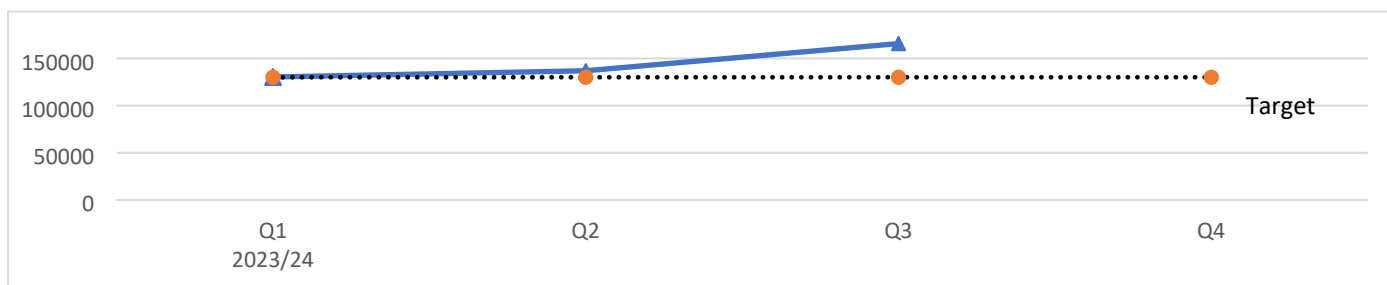
Service Narrative:
We have seen an increase this quarter overall with junior activities increasing mainly within the gym setting. The numbers for swim school remain on target even during the quieter Christmas period at the end of the quarter.

RA1B – All centre attendances including Junior activities – gym, swim, group ex

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	301266	280000	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	328854	280000	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	285384	280000	Green	Worse
Q4 23/24		280000		
Year End				
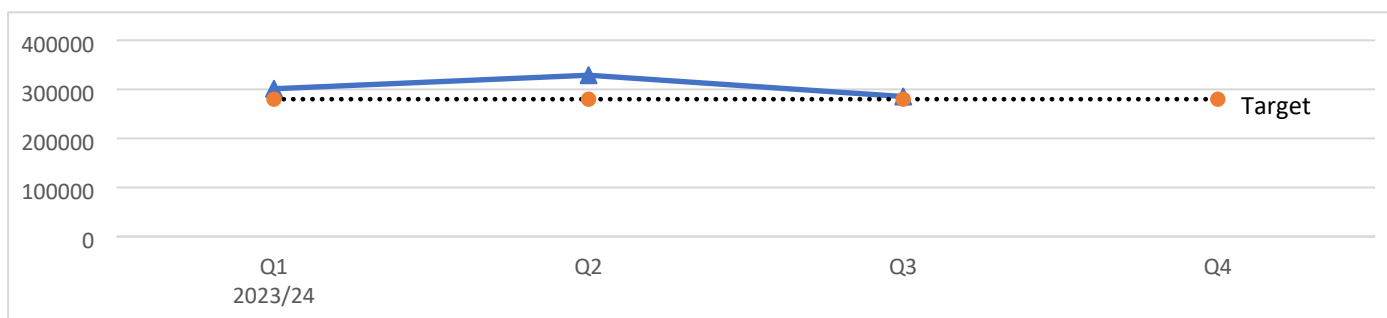
Service Narrative:

Usage has seen a decrease this quarter as was expected at the start of the year, this is due to a season decline during December which is across all areas of activities but still within the target threshold. We expect to see a rise against target in the last quarter of the year as per previous years with Q4 being the busiest across all sites.

RA2 – Participation in leisure activities to support those who may be experiencing social isolation (Moving with Confidence programme & Active Ageing programme).

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT

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Q1 23/24	1735	1130	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	1798	1130	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	1784	1130	Green	Worse
Q4 23/24		1130		
Year End				
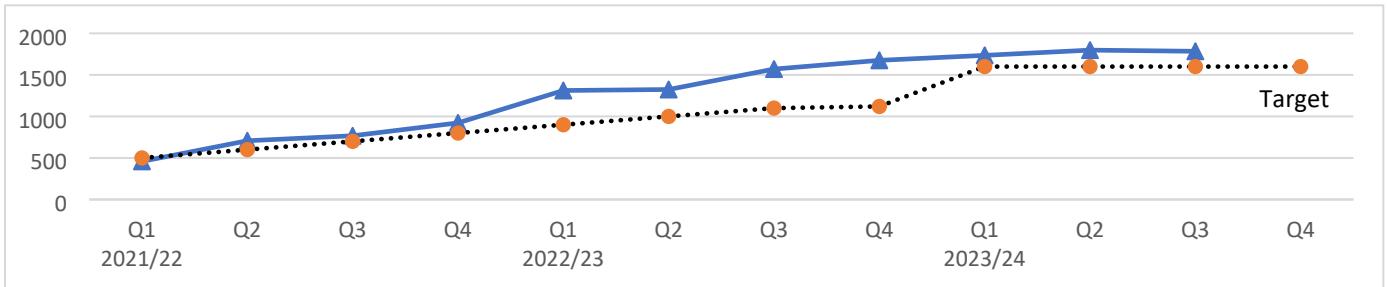
Service Narrative:

We have seen a small decrease for this quarter which is positive with the demographic the sessions are delivered to, this is seen with consistent attendance on our falls prevention cohort and the consistent demand for those most vulnerable through 1:1 home visits on the moving with confidence programme.

RA3 – Completion to time and budget of regeneration projects (Residential Works)

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	Amber	Green	Amber	Better
Q2 23/24	Amber	Green	Amber	No Change
Q3 23/24	Amber	Green	Amber	No Change
Q4 23/24		Green		
Year End		Green		

Service Narrative:
In this quarter the contractor has been carrying out their due diligence and detailed designs for the building. Works to install the new roof will continue until early March. The main contract works will start March 2024 after the roof works are complete.

RA4 – Occupancy rate of WBC-owned Regeneration units

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	96.1%	90%	Green	Worse
Q2 23/24	97.4%	90%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	96.9%	90%	Green	Worse
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
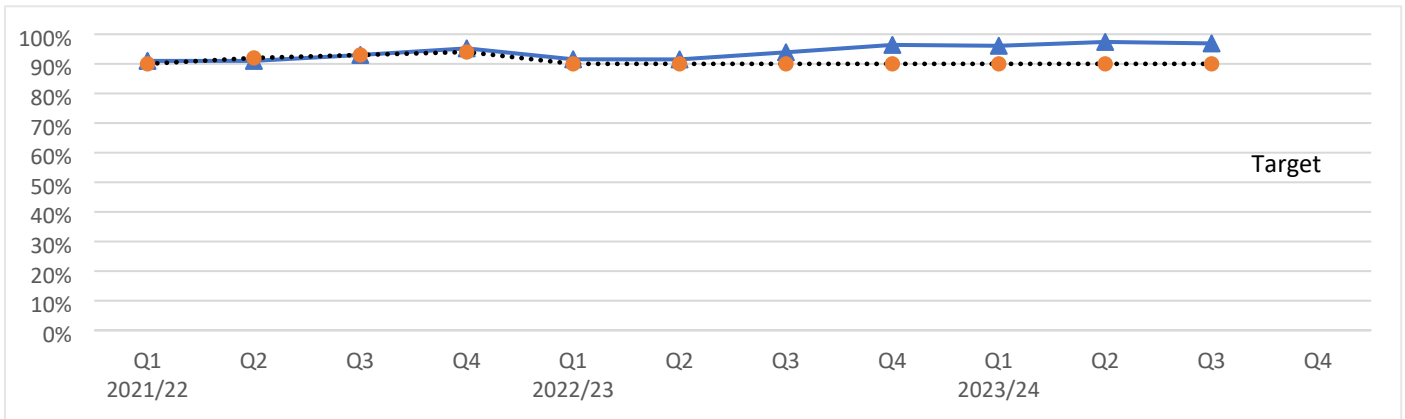
Service Narrative: The town centre regeneration portfolio has experienced a strong quarter's performance against continued market and economic uncertainty for high street retailers. The reduction in the occupancy level is caused this quarter by the repossession of 5 Rose Street (formerly Beyond the Download). A potential replacement tenant for this unit has been identified and we are aiming for them to be in situ by March.

RA5 – Council Tax Collections

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	29.84%	30.5%	Amber	No change
Q2 23/24	57.39%	57%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	85.08%	85.55%	Amber	Worse
Q4 23/24		99%		
Year End				
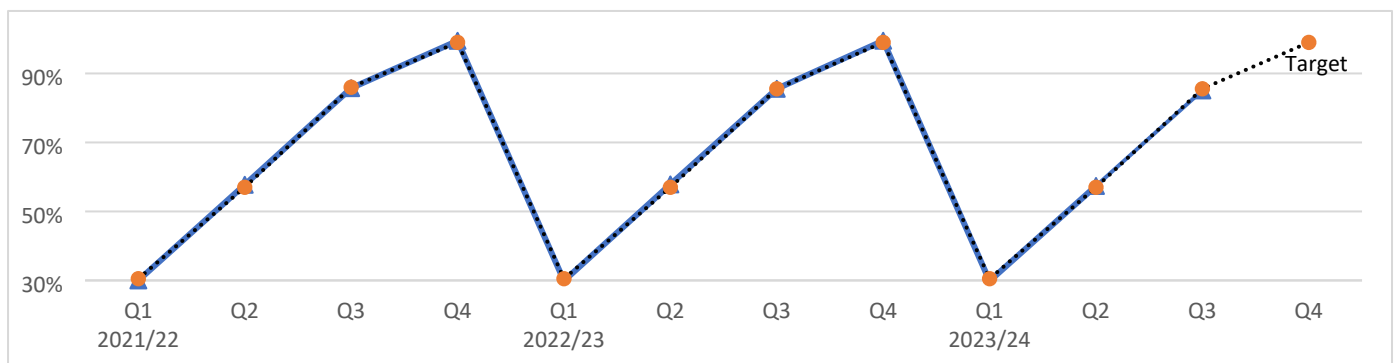
Service Narrative:
The net collectable debit is significantly higher than compared to the same period last year. Staff continue to work with those in financial difficulty and extended their payments plans until the end of the financial year, this has a particularly notable effect in quarter 3s results. Analysis is continuing to support those who are struggling to pay their Council tax even though they are receiving Council tax reduction.

RA6 – Business rates collection

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	30.5%	31.2%	Amber	No Change
Q2 23/24	58.44%	58%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	82.24%	80%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		99%		
Year End				
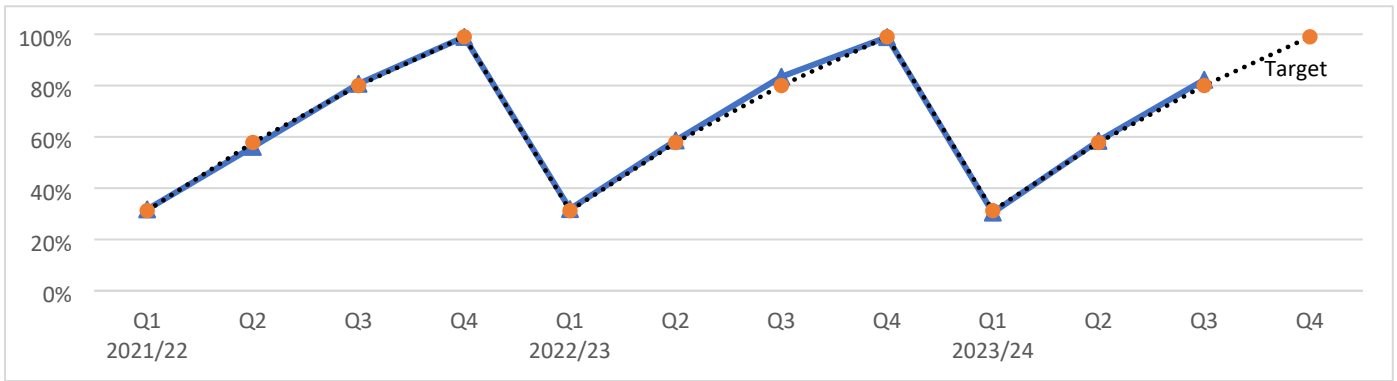
Service Narrative:
Business rate collection remains strong.

RA7 – Return on investment portfolio - Property Investment Fund

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	4.65%	5%	Amber	Better
Q2 23/24	4.69%	5%	Amber	Better
Q3 23/24	4.66%	5%	Amber	Worse
Q4 23/24		5%		
Year End				
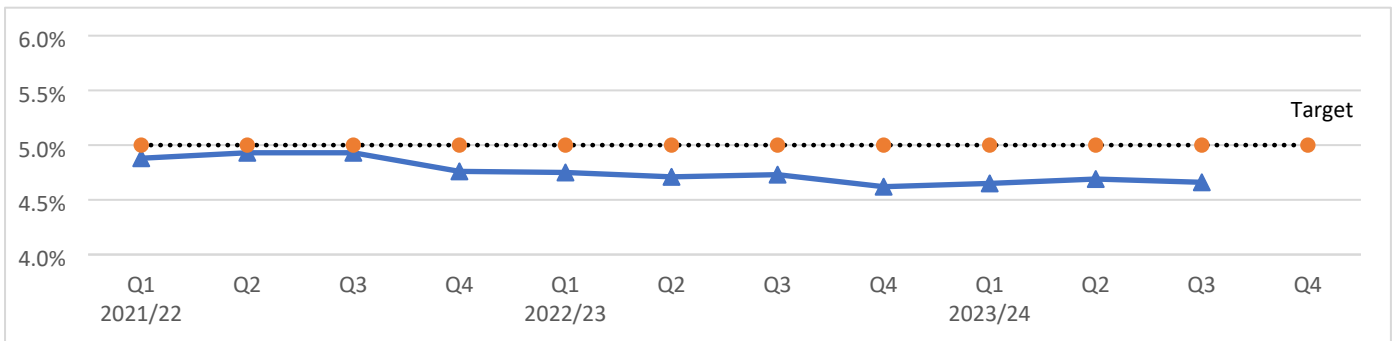
Service Narrative: The slight movement in the rate is due to recent new lease expiries across the portfolio. Overall performance is undermined by exposure to the office market at Denmark St and Mulberry, both assets are subject to strategic review but improving in short term due to new lettings in hand. If/when portfolio fully let, return would exceed target rate. Excluding the two office assets the portfolio ROI is currently 5.15% exceeding target.

RA8 – Number of Freedom of information requests handled within statutory time frames.

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	91.5%	90%	Green	No change
Q2 23/24	88.0%	90%	Amber	Worse
Q3 23/24	90.1%	90%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		90%		
Year End				
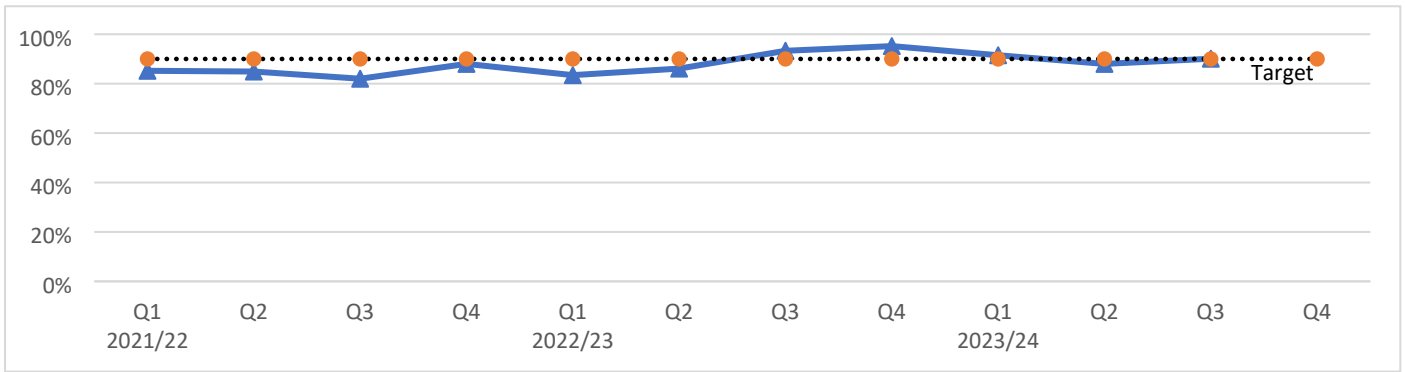
Service Narrative:

In Q2 we saw an almost 20% increase in FOI/EIR requests received and just missed out on the 90% target. In Q3 the requests remained at the same level, and despite the challenges of the Christmas break were able to achieve just over the 90% target.

RA9 – Number of data breaches reported to the ICO working days of decision to hold them

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	0	0	Green	No change
Q2 23/24	0	0	Green	No change
Q3 23/24	0	0	Green	No Change
Q4 23/24		0		
Year End				
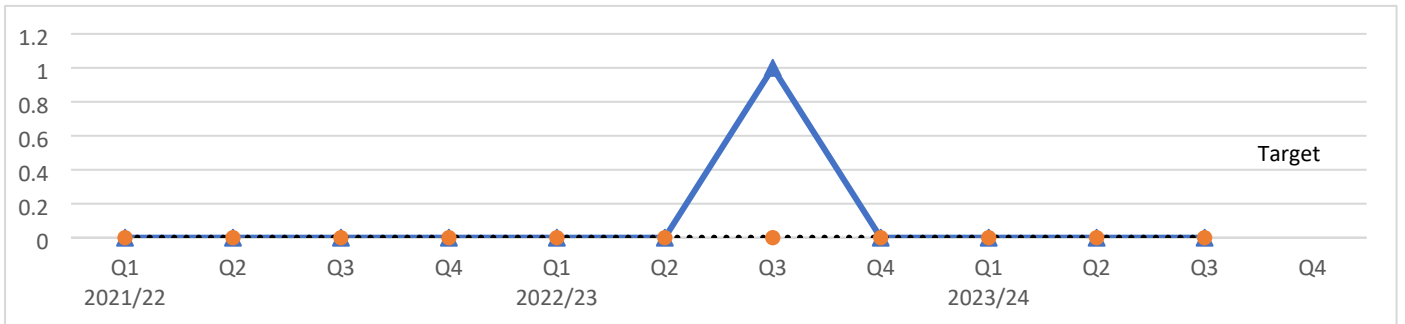
Service Narrative:

None - Reporting to ICO doesn't mean we get in trouble and demonstrates compliance (or wanting to) with DP legislation. Refresher training has just been launched Dec 2022.

RA10 – Revenue monitoring forecast position

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	1.59%	1%	Amber	Worse
Q2 23/24	2.00%	1%	Red	Worse
Q3 23/24	1.98%	1%	Red	Better
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
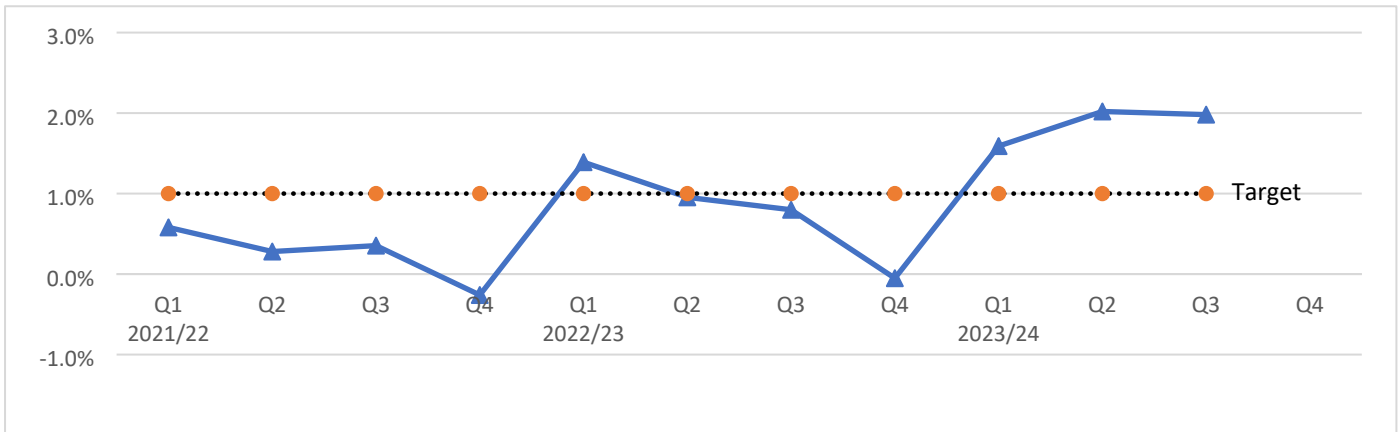
Service Narrative: Outlined in the December 2023 Executive Paper.

RA11 – Capital monitoring forecast position

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	-0.21%	1%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	-0.52%	1%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	-24.40%	1%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
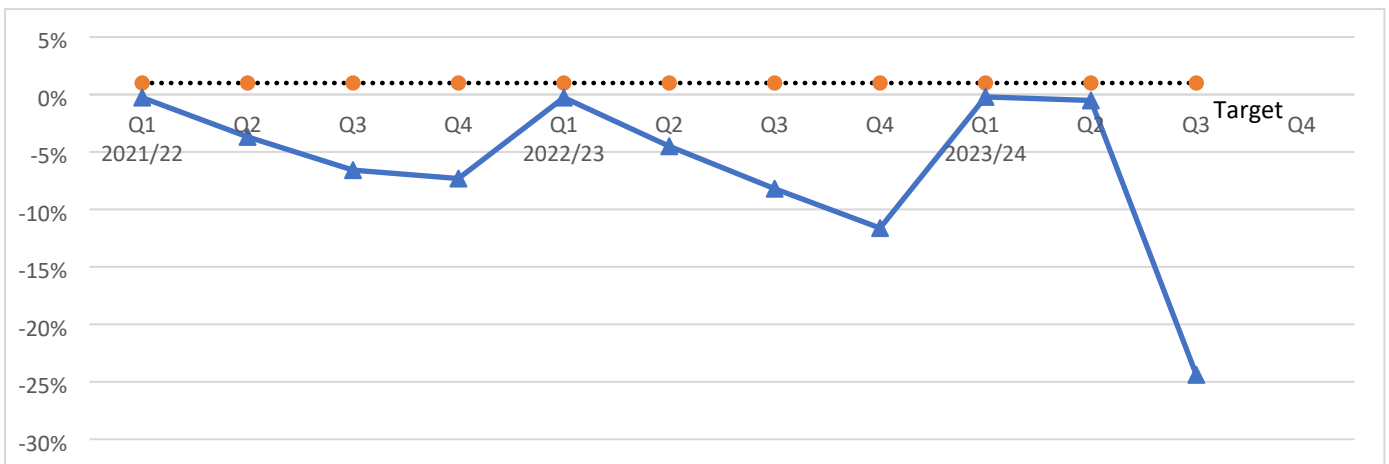
Service Narrative: Outlined in the December 2023 Executive Paper.

Overview

This directorate continues to perform well considering increased demands for services primarily caused by the economic downturn and the cost-of-living crisis while managing a significant savings programme.

There are many challenges that remain. The directorate continue to use agency staff where recruitment remains challenging and where resources are needed to deliver key projects and services. This is in areas like highways and building control where a national shortage of skills and an agile and contracted market due to national schemes which can typically command higher market rates in the short term.

The economic downturn will undoubtedly continue to increase demand for services in some areas, particularly in housing, where the causes of homelessness are becoming far wider reaching.

Top Wins

- Bid for Planning Skills Delivery Grant successful, winning £92k to support specific work around sustainable building and biodiversity net gain.
- Government implemented the National Planning Fee increase in December 2023, writing to all local authorities to also make clear that it expects councils to protect the resources available to planning teams moving forward to ensure improved performance in return for enabling the planning fee increase.
- Strong Partnerships especially on the Community Safety Partnership with partners looking at social / crime / ASB.
- Specialist procurement contractor appointed to support waste and highway procurement projects.
- MTO cameras are operational, and the required warning period ends in March which is when true data and enforcement can commence. At a few locations safety is being observed through 100% compliance with the order.
- School keep clears (2 sites) are showing a mix of income generation and compliance, with a general improvement overall. Consideration for roll out to further locations which will reduce reliance on officer time in physical enforcement.
- South Wokingham Distributor Road grant funding approved by Homes England.
- Specialist procurement contractor appointed to support waste and highway procurement projects.

Top Opportunities

- Greater collaboration with Reading University
- Energy schemes to support borough wide renewable energy generation and retrofitting.
- Local Housing Authority rates are increasing from April, making PRS more affordable for those in housing need.
- More Emergency Accommodation providers are entering the market, providing more off-the-street options for entrenched rough sleepers.
- Progression of bid with Homes England to support the delivery of the South Wokingham Distributor Road.
- Public communications regarding the waste strategy continuing.
- Local Transport Plan with a focus on healthier, green and safer transport, is currently being consulted on until the 23 February 2024.
- Progression of the Berkshire Prosperity Board with reports to all Berkshire Councils in February and March.

Challenges

- Publication of the national planning policy framework and implications for the Local Plan in relation to previous over delivery of housing.
- Government is tightening the Planning Guarantee for local planning authorities to produce planning decisions within a maximum of 16 weeks rather from 26 weeks. This will increase the chances of planning fees being handed back to applicants in future, adversely impacting gion budget.
- Balancing performance management against the current financial position for services and the wider council.

- Increasing number of homelessness and domestic abuse presentations, a record number in a financial year.
- Providing appropriate support to refugees within the Borough including those in hotel accommodation.
- Cost of living, driving crime and domestic / homeliness issues

Quarter 3 Performance Summary

- 0 KPI is reported as below target, Red
- 2 KPIs are reported as (slightly-off target) Amber
- 12 KPIs are achieving target, Green
- 0 KPIs are reported as Pending
- 1 KPI is reported as N/A

N/A, 1, 7%

Amber, 2, 13%

Green, 12, 80%
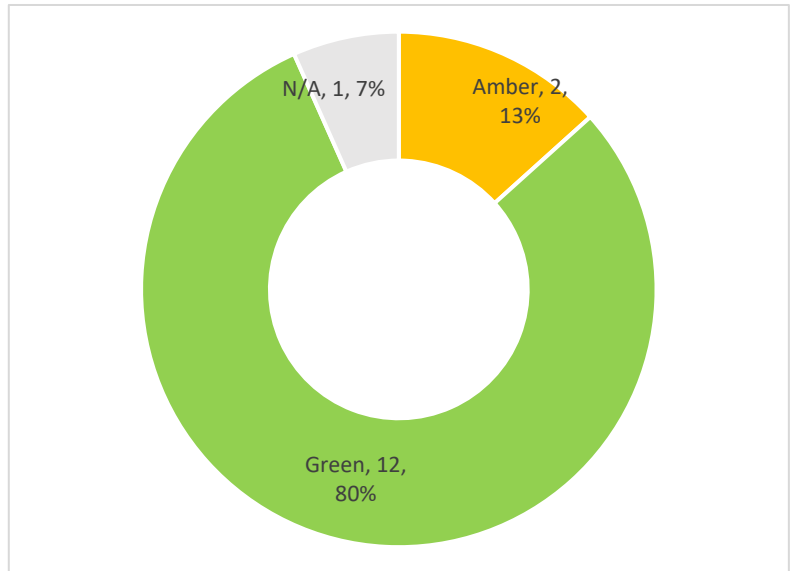
Ref	Description	RAG Q1	DoT Q1	RAG Q2	DoT Q2	RAG Q3	DoT Q3
PG1	Number of households for whom homelessness has been prevented	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	No Change
PG2	Number of households in emergency nightly let/B&B accommodation	N/A	Worse	N/A	Better	N/A	Better
PG3	Percentage of planning appeals won	Green	Worse	Green	Better	Amber	Worse
PG4	Percentage of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time	Green	No change	Green	Worse	Green	Better
PG5	Number of quarterly business engagement events to provide advice and guidance delivered	Green	N/A	Green	Better	Green	Better
PG6	Percentage of waste recycled, composted and reused	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Worse
PG7	Average number missed collections per 100,000 collections	Green	No change	Green	No change	Green	No Change
PG8	Total household tonnes	Red	Worse	Red	Worse	Green	Better
PG9	All recorded crime in Wokingham borough (excluding fraud) (sourced from data.police.uk)	Red	Worse	Red	Better	Green	Better
PG10	Number of ASB service requests	Green	N/A	Green	N/A	Green	N/A

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

PG11	Proportion of ASB service request cases, opened and closed within the period, that were responded to within 1 day	Green	Better	Amber	Worse	Green	Better
PG12	Place and Growth Customer Excellence Score	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Worse
PG13	Highways 2hr and 24hr response to defects	Green	N/A	Green	Better	Green	Better
PG13A	Completion of standard works orders within 28 days	Green	N/A	Green	Better	Amber	Worse
PG14	The Percentage of live Streetworks sites which were compliant	Green	Better	Green	Worse	Green	Better

Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places

PG1 – Number of households for whom homelessness has been prevented

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	53% (65/121)	50%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	68% (97/147)	50%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	68% (87/128)	50%	Green	No Change
Q4 23/24		50%		
Year End				
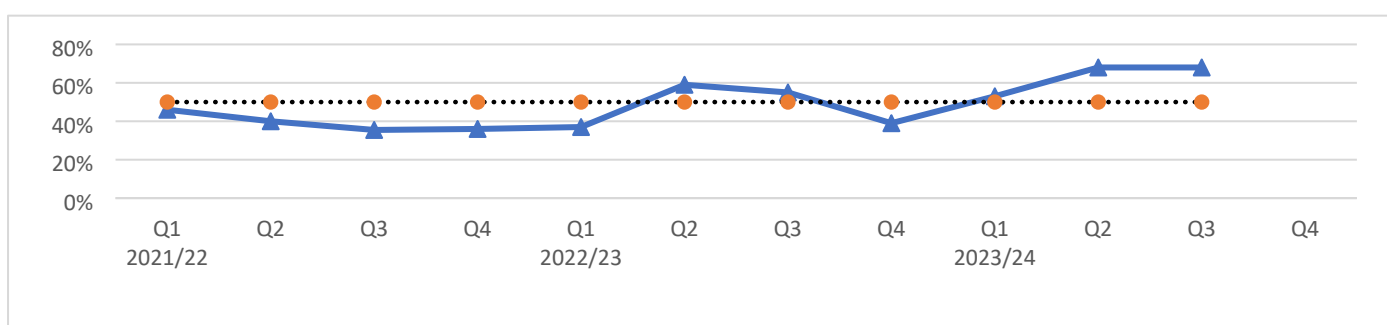
Service Narrative: In Q3, 298 households presented to the service, out of which we had a legal homelessness duty to 128 households, who were either homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. During this period, we were able to prevent or relieve homelessness for 87 households, which was ten less than the previous quarter but is still one of the highest numbers we have ever prevented or relieved in a quarter since the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in 2017. This was achieved through increasing the number of

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private sector offers made to households to end their homelessness duties, through early intervention activities which resulted in halting family evictions and private sector evictions and through offers of social housing through the housing register. However, we are still seeing a significant demand on the service from households fleeing domestic abuse and refugee households and it is predicted that this demand will continue to increase into Q4. We have also seen 33 households presenting as homeless due to private sector evictions in Q3. While we're improving our access to the private rented sector, the increasing number of evictions, particularly those related to no-fault s21 cases, can be linked to rising rents caused by inflation, landlords viewing the sector as less financially viable due to mortgage costs, and additional regulatory burdens. The proposal to end section 21 in the Renters (Reform) Bill would strip landlords of the ability to reclaim their property without providing a reason. This uncertainty is prompting some landlords to contemplate selling their properties while they still have these options.

Actions to Improve: Continue to procure privately rented properties onto our Rent Guarantee Scheme to ensure that we can maintain the same level of homelessness preventions to prevent households from requiring emergency accommodation placements; to achieve this continue to hold regular landlord forums and seek opportunities to work with private landlords. We are also planning ahead for expected staff shortage due to staff leaving the Homelessness Team and the impact that this will have on case loads, which is not addressed will result in missed opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness.

PG2 – Number of households in emergency nightly-let/B&B accommodation

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	24	N/A	N/A	Worse
Q2 23/24	22	N/A	N/A	Better
Q3 23/24	11	N/A	N/A	Better
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
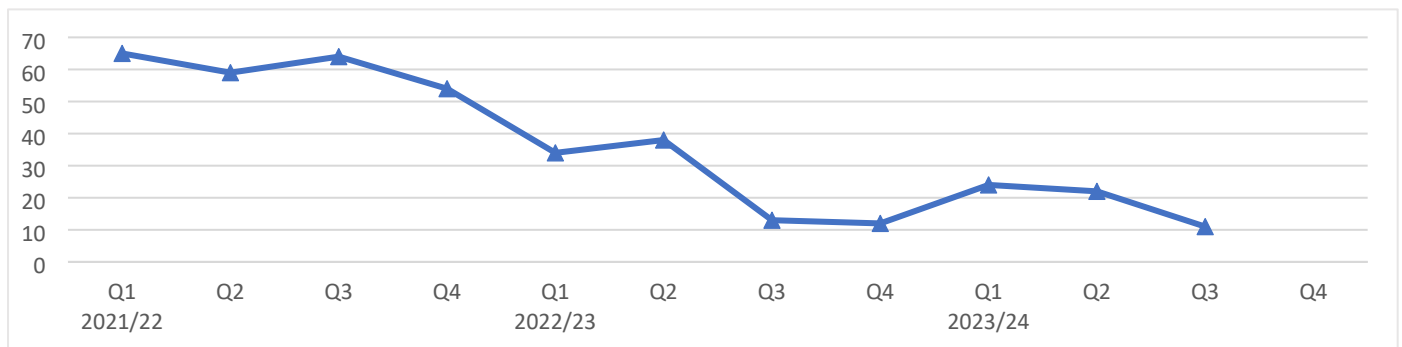
Service Narrative: In Q3 we made 38 new Emergency Accommodation (EA) placements and there were 11 households in EA at the end of Q3. This is a significant improvement on the previous quarter where 51 placements were made in total and 24 households remained in EA at the end of Q2. The number of 11 households at the end of Q3 marks the lowest number of EA placements since the pandemic. The partial delivery of the second phase of Grovelands in Q3 has contributed to a much needed increase in family-sized Temporary Accommodation, playing a role in reducing EA figures. Currently, 17 Grovelands units are allocated for homeless families, with an additional 4 set to be operational in Q4. Despite this increase in options, there is still an anticipated shortfall in accommodation supply. Therefore, more timely interventions and financial incentives are needed

to both prevent and relieve homelessness, if we are to continue to see a decrease EA placement numbers.

Actions to Improve: Continue to procure privately rented properties onto our Rent Guarantee Scheme to ensure that we can maintain the same level of homelessness preventions to prevent households from requiring emergency accommodation placements; to achieve this continue to hold regular landlord forums and seek opportunities to work with private landlords.

PG3 – Percentage of planning appeals won

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	70% (7/10)	60% or more	Green	Worse
Q2 23/24	74% (14/19)	60% or more	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	53% (8/15)	60% or more	Amber	Worse
Q4 23/24		60% or more		
Year End				
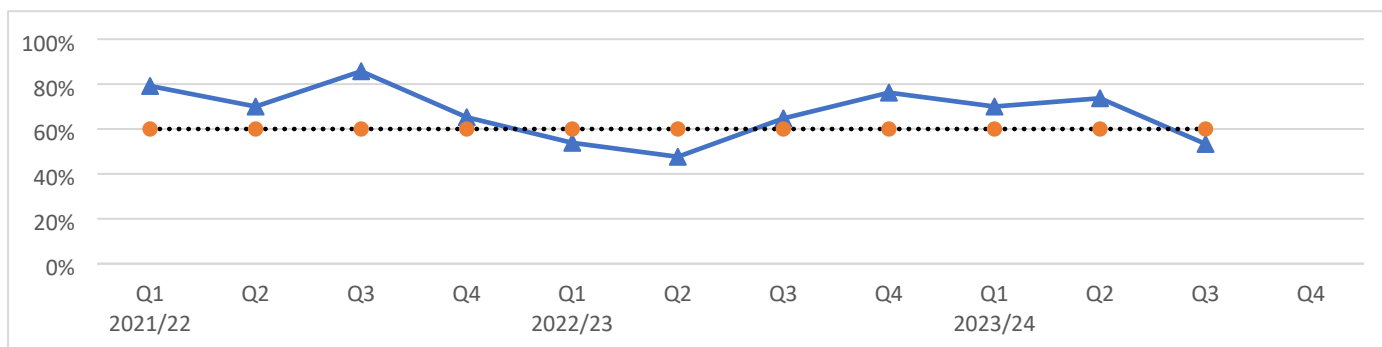
Service Narrative:
Appeal performance can vary due to the small number received each quarter. Nonetheless it is expected this will improve in the first quarter of 2024.

PG4 – Percentage of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	100% (7/7)	60%	Green	No change
Q2 23/24	92% (11/12)	60%	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	100% (11/11)	60%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		60%		
Year End				
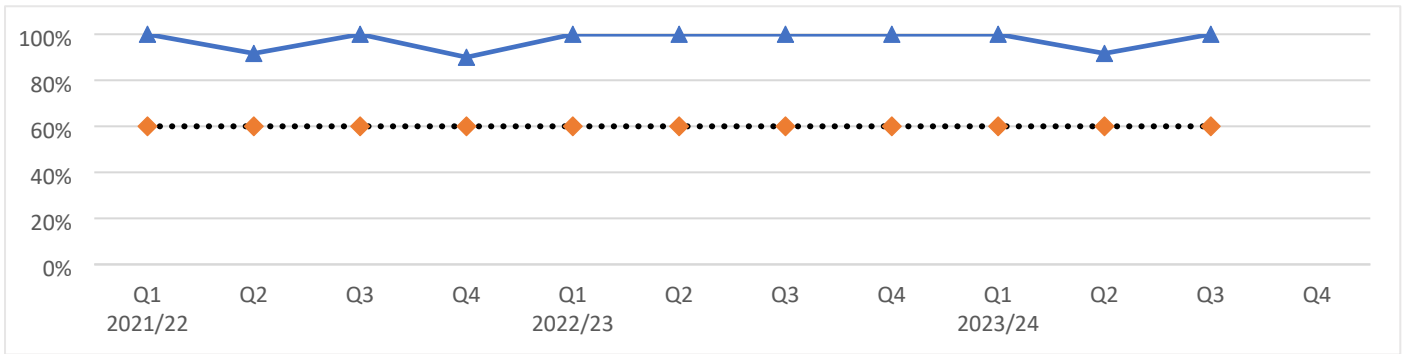
Service Narrative: The time taken to determine planning applications remains significantly higher than statutory targets at 98% or above. No concerns are raised at this time.

Enriching Peoples Lives

PG5 – Number of quarterly business engagement events to provide advice and guidance delivered

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	3	2 + per quarter	Green	N/A
Q2 23/24	3	2 + per quarter	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	4	2 + per quarter	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		2 + per quarter		
Year End				
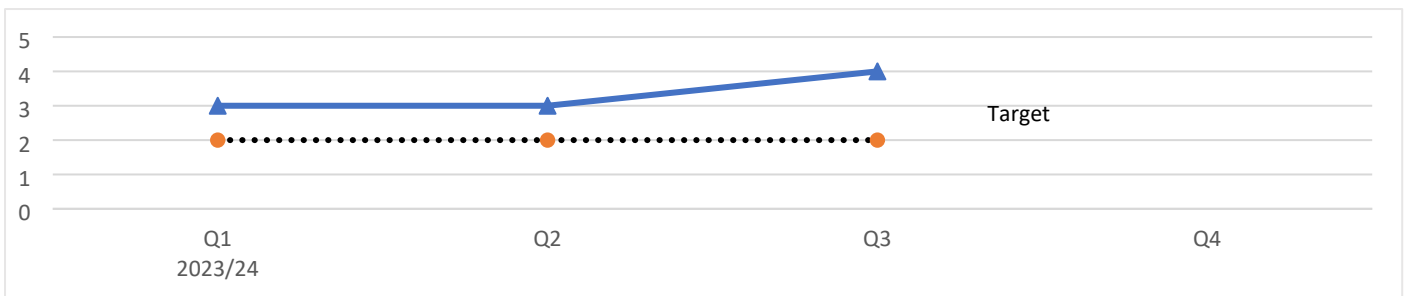
Service Narrative: We have offered a range of business engagement events from business drop in sessions, job fairs and events aimed at connecting business to the voluntary sector. We have overachieve on our yearly target with the last quarter still to go.

Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough

PG6 – Percentage of waste recycled, composted and reused

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	57.9%	52%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	57.97%	52%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	53.53%	52%	Green	Worse
Q4 23/24		52%		
Year End				

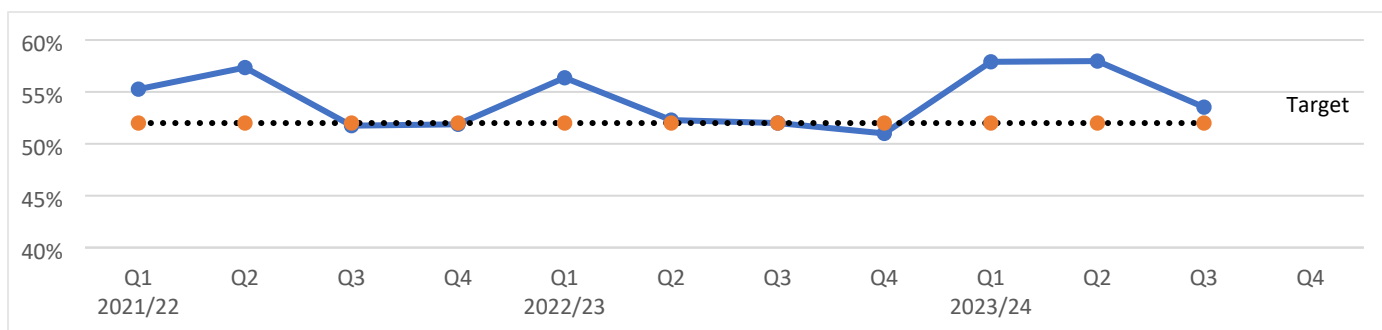**Service Narrative:** This Quarter's recycling performance is lower than Q1 & Q2 due to a reduction in garden waste which is to be expected at this time of year. The tonnages for kerbside recycling and food waste continue to increase each quarter, whilst residual kerbside waste tonnages have reduced from Q1 & Q2 showing a significant change in resident behaviours to waste. The overall recycling percentage for the 3 Q's is 56.43% which is nearly 3% higher than at this time last year.

Actions to Improve: Continue to increase communications to drive recycling from the blue bags to green recycling bags/food waste. Focus on waste minimisation. Review KPI's for 2023/24 to ensure relevancy and continuous improvement

PG7 – Average number missed collections per 100,000 collections

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	0.002% (5.6)	0.003%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	0.002% (5.4)	0.003%	Green	No change
Q3 23/24	0.002% (5.6)	0.003%	Green	No Change
Q4 23/24		0.003%		
Year End				

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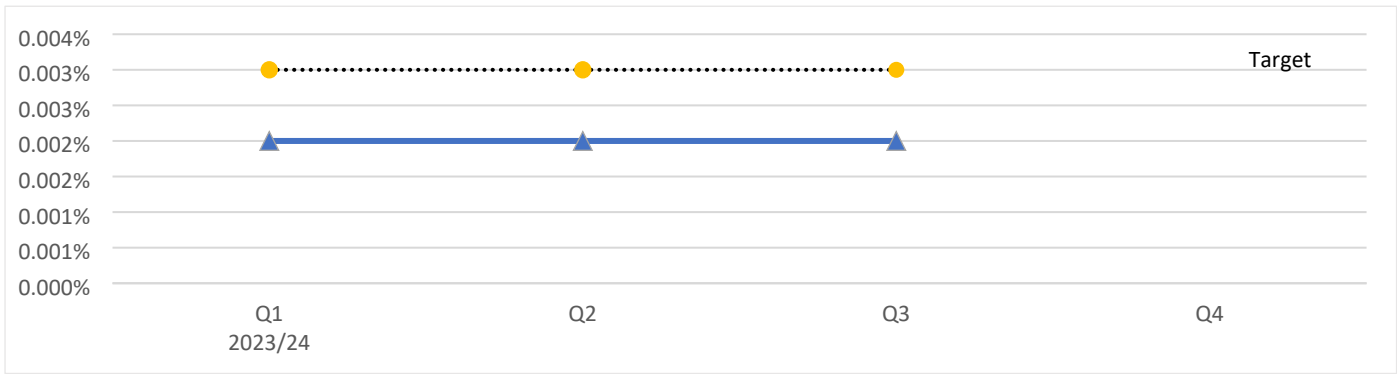
Service Narrative:

In order to present a cleared picture of the performance of this service the calculation for this KPI has been revised with garden waste collections removed from the total. As a result the historic performance has changed and the target has been revised to reflect the new measurements.

There has been a continued low level of missed bins (refuse, recycling, food waste) and this is seen in reduced contact by residents to the Council.

Actions to Improve: Continue to reduce missed bins overall including repeated missed. Daily checks with the contractor.

PG8 – Total household tonnes

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	18595.06	16500	Red	Worse
Q2 23/24	16813.49	16500	Red	Better
Q3 23/24	16436	16500	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		16500		
Year End		66000		
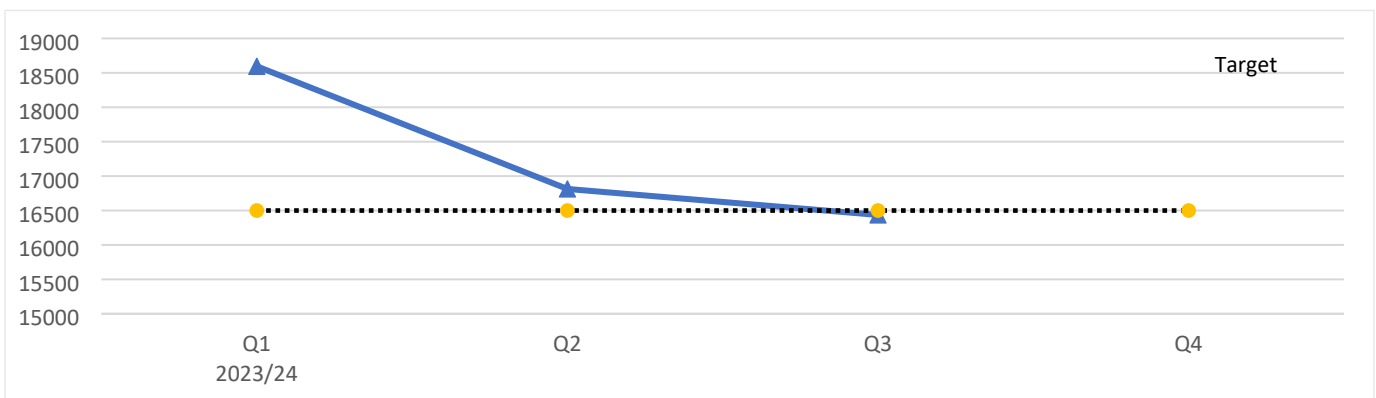
Service Narrative: From Q1 to Q2 there has been a decrease of total household tonnes by 1781.57t. This has dropped slightly again in Q3 but still only just sits within target. A number of comms pieces highlighting recycling and waste reduction have been sent out and this is likely to have assisted in this reduction.

Actions to Improve: Further communications work on a general and targeted approach.

Providing Safe and Strong Communities

PG9 – All recorded crime in Wokingham borough (excluding fraud) (sourced from data.police.uk)
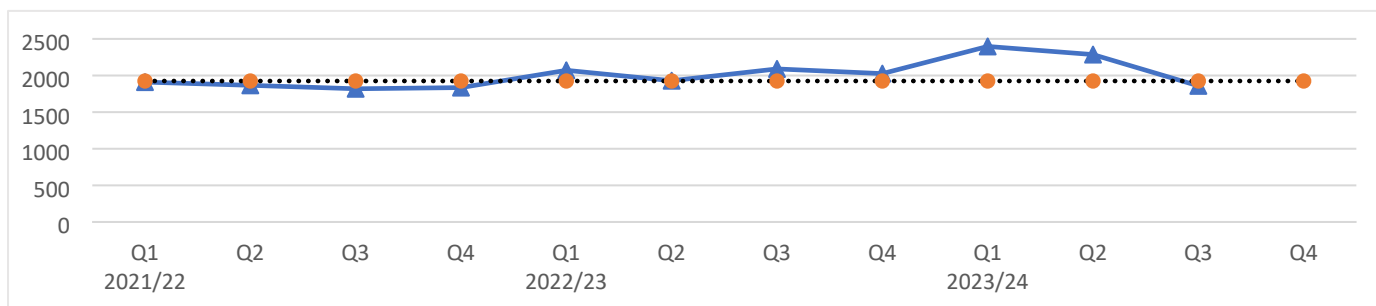
Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	2397	1925	Red	Worse
Q2 23/24	2286	1925	Red	Better
Q3 23/24	1859	1925	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		1925		
Year End				

Performance has improved since last quarter with levels dropping below target. Analysis is of the numbers is ongoing and will be made public once the council has liaised with its partners in the police

PG10 – Number of ASB service requests

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	661	Pending	Green	N/A
Q2 23/24	574	Pending	Green	N/A
Q3 23/24	357	Pending	Green	N/A
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
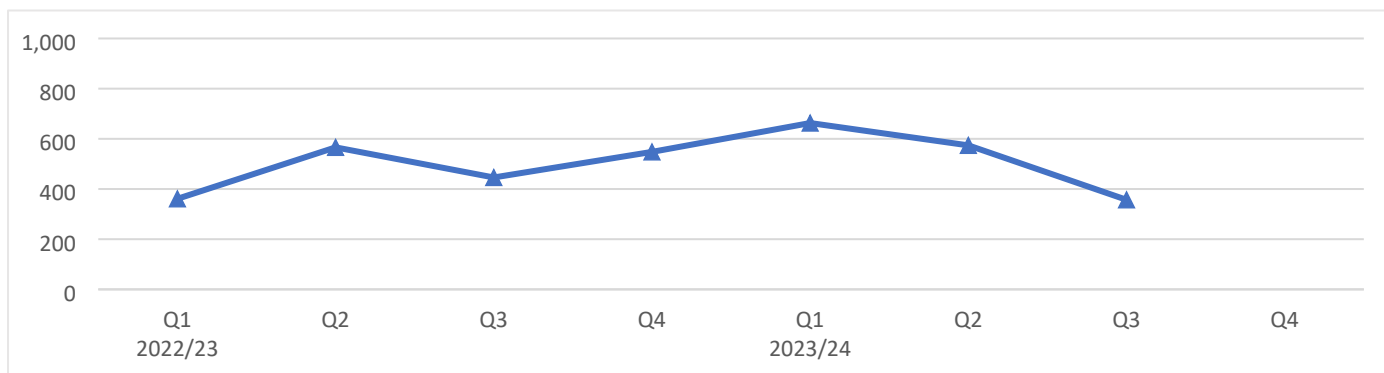
PG11 – Proportion of ASB service request cases, opened and closed within the period, that were responded to within 1 day

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	93%	80%	Green	Better

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q2 23/24	78%	80%	Amber	Worse
Q3 23/24	81%	80%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		80%		
Year End				
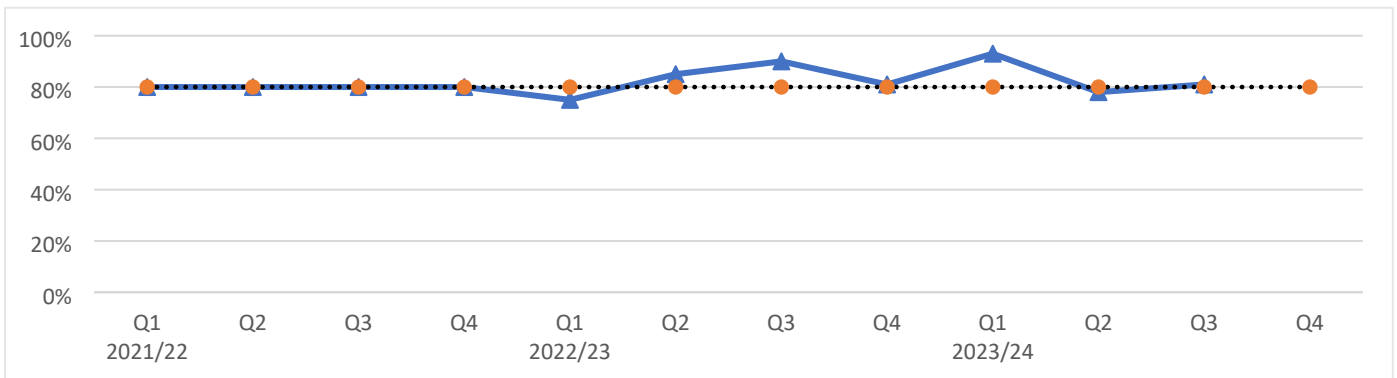
Change the Way We Work For you

PG12 – Place and Growth Customer Excellence Score

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	60% (79)	50%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	64% (58)	50%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	58% (80)	50%	Green	Worse
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
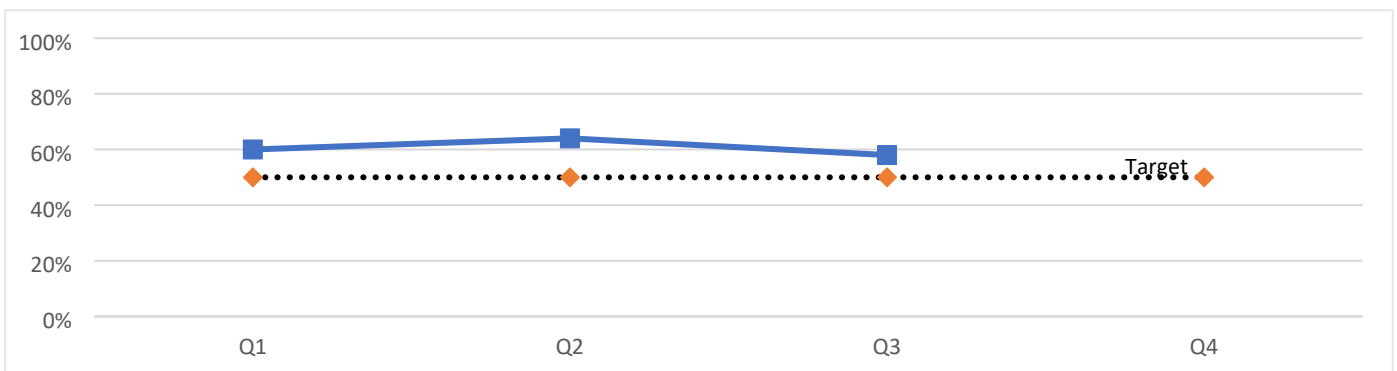
Service Narrative:
In the third quarter of the 23/24 financial year, the Housing Service recorded 80 responses to the telephone survey, an increase of 22 responses from the previous quarter. Of these an average of 58% were satisfied with the outcome of the call (a 6% decrease from the previous quarter) and an average of 29% dissatisfied with the final outcome of the call, a 4% increase from the previous quarter.

As with the previous quarters data, the main reason for a dissatisfied call was due to a lack of call back from the service (48%) or from a contractor (24%). Satisfaction with the Call Handlers, who take calls for the Housing Service, remains positive with 80% of respondents agreeing they were friendly and helpful and 79% agreeing they took the time to listen.

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However, after seeing an average 63% of callers agreeing there were clear outcomes from the call, this has decreased in Q3 to 51%. This needs to continue to be the next area of focus to improve tenant's customer experience with the service.

The main action point for improvement is to ensure a clearer outcome of what tenants should expect after they have made a call. One of the challenges are passing on calls on to relevant officers and ensuring those officers respond to requested call backs. There are expectations that need to be balanced, as in some circumstances officers may not be able to call back on the same day.

Keeping the Borough Moving

PG13 – Highways 2hr and 24hr response to defects

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	76.14% (1164)	75%	Green	N/A
Q2 23/24	80.13% (642)	75%	Green	N/A
Q3 23/24	81.3% (682)	75%	Green	N/A
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
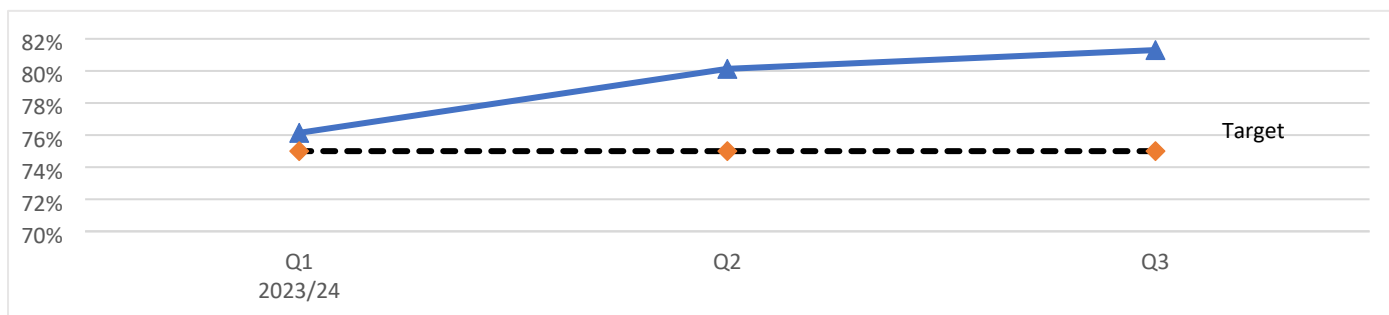
Service Narrative:

Quarter 3 has shown a slight improvement in the contractor's responsiveness to 2- and 24-hour pothole repairs.
Work is continuing with the contractor to make sure this indicator improves by increasing the capacity to deal with emergencies, alongside a more planned approach to reduce the number of emergencies being received.

PG13A - Completion of standard works orders within 28 days

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	76% (719)	75%	Green	N/A
Q2 23/24	80% (866)	75%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	62.1% (418)	75%	Amber	Worse
Q4 23/24				
Year End				

Benchmarking:

Percentage of unclassified roads where maintenance should be considered, Wokingham, South-Eastern Average and England Average, 2012-2022. Data from DfT

Percentage of B & C roads where maintenance should be considered, Wokingham, South-Eastern Average and England Average, 2012-2022. Data from DfT

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Percentage of A roads & motorways where maintenance should be considered, Wokingham, South-Eastern Average and England Average, 2012-2022. Data from DfT

Service Narrative:

Although the road condition data shows WBC as being higher than average nationally. Quarter 3 is showing a dip in the amount of 28 days that have been completed within timescales.

One of the main reasons behind the performance reduction has been due to a proportion of 28-day task orders requiring a road closure to safely carryout the works. This currently requires a 12-week lead-in time to process. Ongoing discussions on how we can streamline this process is being had with the Street works team.

Volker Highways are engaging with new subcontractors that provide additional labour support to address the backlog of works that haven't been completed on time. This will increase the number of gangs available to catch up on work activities, such as carriageway patching.

Volker Highways have set up additional meetings to improve their programming of work, looking at identifying trends of any arising issues and review processes to resolve these.

PG14 – The Percentage of live Streetworks sites which were compliant

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	83%	70%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	78%	70%	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	85%	70%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		70%		
Year End				

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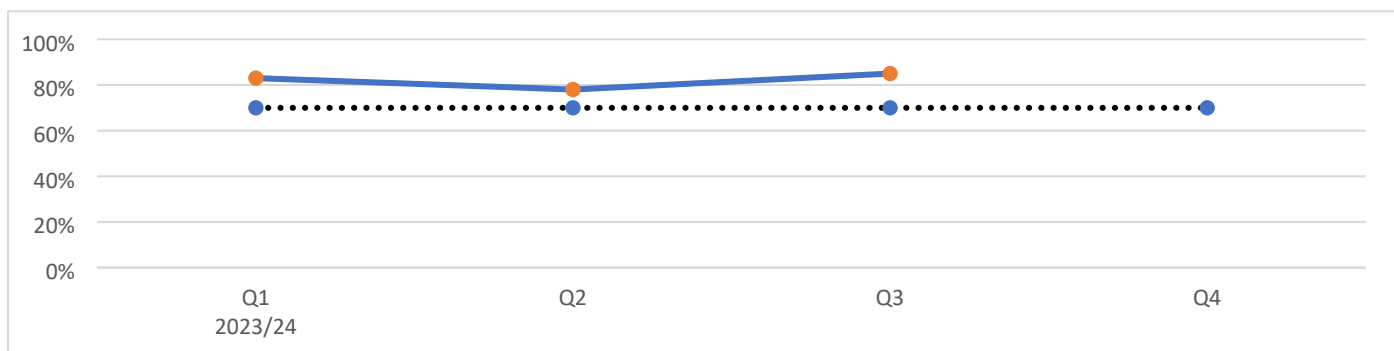
Service Narrative: Officers in the Streetworks Team undertake a randomly sampled amount inspections of live utility company (gas, electricity etc) worksites, based upon the utility companies nationwide performance, to ensure that the sites are safe for passing vehicles, pedestrians and the work force themselves (complying with the Safety at Streetworks and Roadworks: A Code of Practice) and that the highway is being reinstated correctly (complying with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways) to minimise the amount highway defects that might appear as a result of such work. The Streetworks Team also undertake routine inspections based upon customer reports or issues that the Inspector witnesses. These are known as Category A (Live Site Inspections). The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that such works are carried out safely and that the structure of the highway asset isn't negatively affected.

This KPI indicates the number of inspections that are carried out and the percentage that have failed that inspection. If an inspection fails, it is the responsibility of the utility company to make the necessary changes within either 2 hours or 4 hours, depending on severity. Further sample and routine inspections, not covered by this KPI, are carried within the first 6 months of interim or permanent reinstatement (category B inspections) and within 3 months of the end of the guarantee period, which is 2 years or 3 years from deep excavations (Category C)'

Performance has recovered following a slight drop in Q2.

Overview

Officers in the CEO's Office are enablers, supporting other areas of the council and partner organisations to deliver what's most important to our residents. This includes work with the voluntary sector to help those most in need, helping the wider organisation to ensure the support available to residents is effectively communicated and supporting services to continue to develop through the change programme.

Top Wins
- Improving performance across the complaints process with a reduction in formal stage 1's this quarter. This is because of improved guidance and training given to officers around good practice complaints resolution and ongoing support from the Corporate Complaints team.
- Continued increase seen quarter on quarter in digital transactions across high volume processes (Waste, Highways, Blue Badges) because of uncomplicated online processes.

Opportunities
- Learning from customer feedback to successfully increase the number of online digital services to better manage demand, whilst offering an enhanced 24/7 service
- To use the new customer relationship management system across a wider range of services, to maximise opportunities to shift demand to cheaper more manageable digital channels.
- Development of a series of initiatives in the workforce programme which will support the Council to retain its skilled workforce, using apprenticeships and a newly developed leadership programme to develop staff.

Challenges

- Inflation which whilst recently declining still continues to drive up our operating costs
- Cost savings to ensure our continued financial stability
- Recruitment to key skilled roles

Quarter 3 2023/24 Performance Summary

- 1 KPI is reported as red (below target)
- 3 are reported as (slightly-off target) Amber
- 5 of KPIs achieving target, Green
- No KPIs are reported as Pending

49
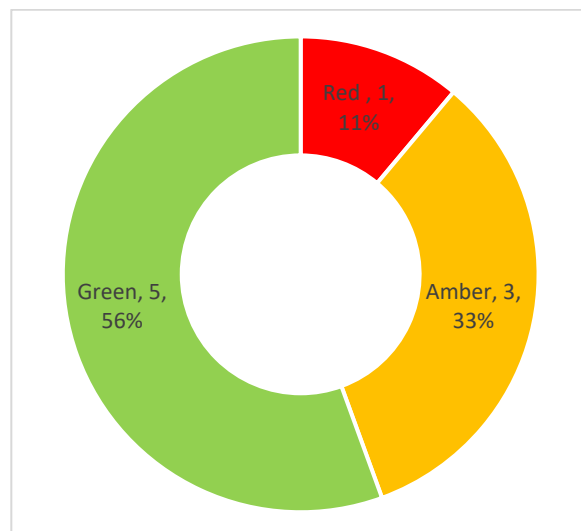
Appendix B-1: Chief Executive's Office Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Summary Table

Ref	Description	Q1 RAG	Q1 DoT	Q2 RAG	Q2 DoT	Q3 RAG	Q3 DoT
CEX1	Number of people registered on the Engage platform	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Better
CEX2	Corporate customer experience score	Green	No Change	Green	Worse	Green	Better
CEX3	Customer Services Satisfaction score	Amber	Worse	Green	Better	Green	Better
CEX4	Customer Satisfaction Web	Green	Better	Amber	Worse	Amber	Better
CEX5	Channel Shift - Please see definition in the rationale field.	Green	No Change	Green	Better	Green	Better
CEX6	Expected voluntary staff turnover (turnover reported on a rolling 12 month basis)	Amber	Better	Amber	Better	Amber	Better
CEX7	Sickness absence (absence reported on a rolling 12 month basis)	Amber	Better	Amber	Better	Amber	Better
CEX8	Proportion of Wokingham resident pupils eligible for FSM in Wokingham borough schools	Red	Better	N/A	No change	Red	Better
CEX9	Early resolution versus stage one complaints	Amber	Pending	Green	Better	Green	Better

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

Appendix B-2: Chief Executive's Office Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Detailed Information

CEX1 – Number of people registered on the Engage platform

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	16,775	16,500	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	18,330	16,750	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	18,993	17,000	Green	Better
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
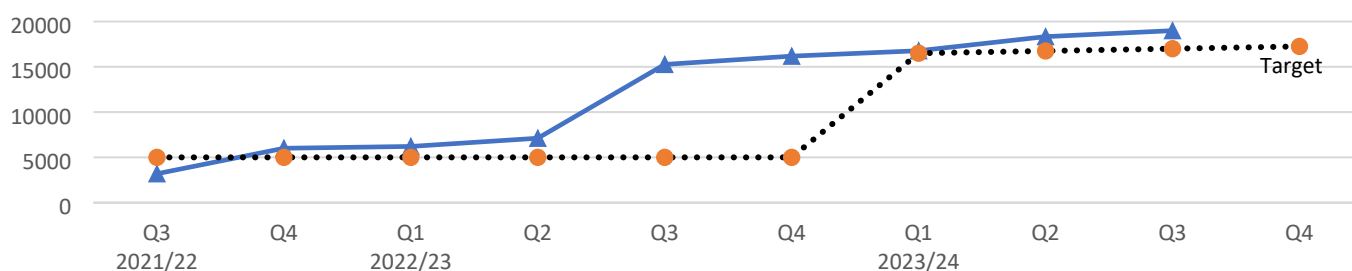
Service Narrative: The increase from Q2 to Q3 is partially due to a survey on changes to the Council's waste/recycling collections, which had over 9K responses.

CEX2 – Corporate customer experience score

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	78%	70%	Green	No Change
Q2 23/24	75%	70%	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	77%	70%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24				
Year End				
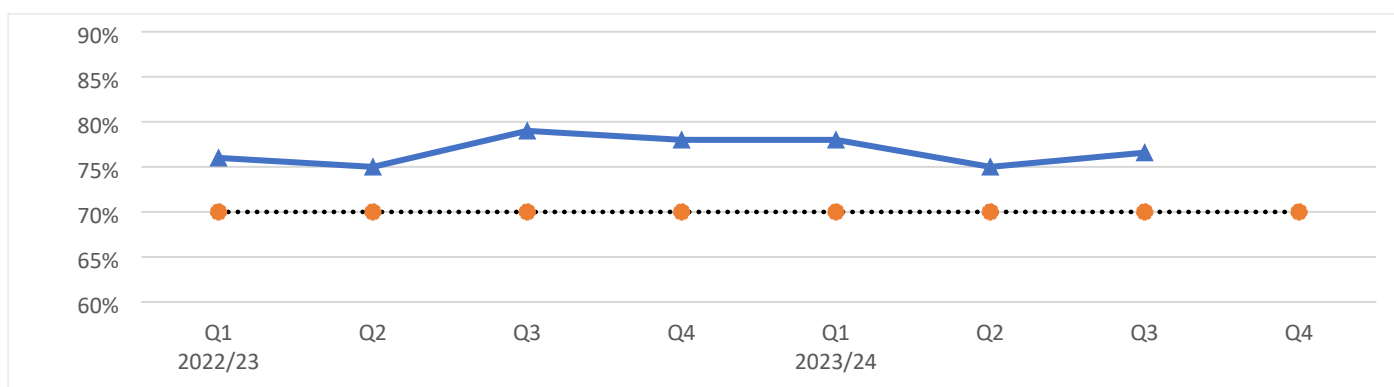
Service Narrative: The holiday period will have impacted on the number of people giving feedback. There is an increase in satisfaction and comments are singling out individuals and the organisation as a whole. Total volume has decreased, driven by the holiday period from 1572 in Q2 to 1072 this quarter.

Action to Improve: In December we engaged with services and we will continue to proactively share customer comments to the teams directly and follow up with the leadership teams.
We are also reviewing customer contact points with services to identify improvement opportunities.

CEX3 – Customer services team satisfaction score

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	76%	70%	Green	No Change
Q2 23/24	78%	70%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	80%	70%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		70%		
Year End				
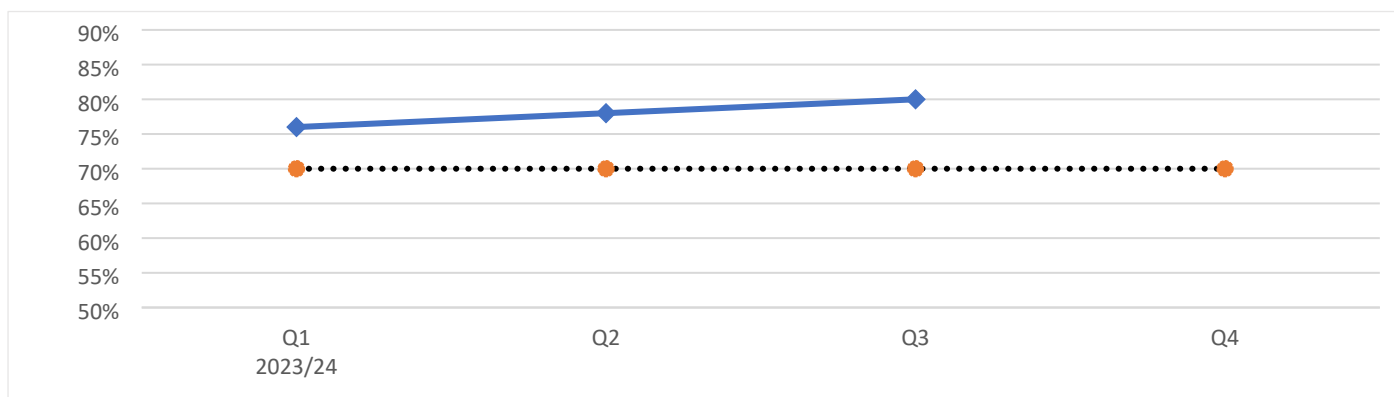
Service Narrative: Total feedback across all channels, bar web, was 549 compared to 458 in Q2. We had positive feedback for the crews collecting rubbish over Christmas.

Actions to Improve: We are working with Digital to review the waste calendar interactions over Christmas, reviewing 'what went well and even better if'. We are also supporting services to explore why some customers choose to call us when there is an online alternative and we signpost to encourage channel shift.

CEX4 – Customer Satisfaction Web

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	69%	75%	Amber	N/A
Q2 23/24	59%	75%	Amber	Worse
Q3 23/24	70%	75%	Amber	Better
Q4 23/24		75%		
Year End				
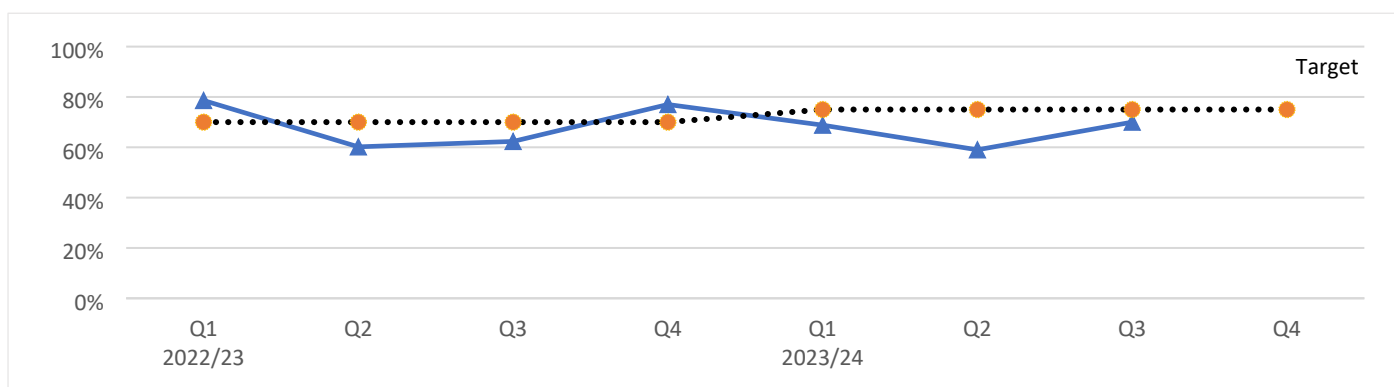
Service Narrative: The KPI target we set ourselves is a purposely high at 80% and it reflective of our digital ambitions as a Council. GovMetric publish a league table of the top ten councils web satisfactions results, Wokingham has placed incredibly well in the league table:

June 2023 = 4th
September 2023 = 3rd
December 2023 = 2nd

The published league table shows that whilst our performance is slightly below the KPI target when compared to satisfaction across the sector, we are regarded as a leading authority. Having said this our direction of travel is of an upward trajectory following the launch of the new website.

Action to Improve: Plans to continue to further improve the overall web satisfaction include, increasing the number of online forms to move away from resource intensive PDFs. The Council are also making changes to the reporting structure of GovMetric on the website to enable us to further break down feedback and enable insight into satisfaction of the use of the website and services hosted on the website.
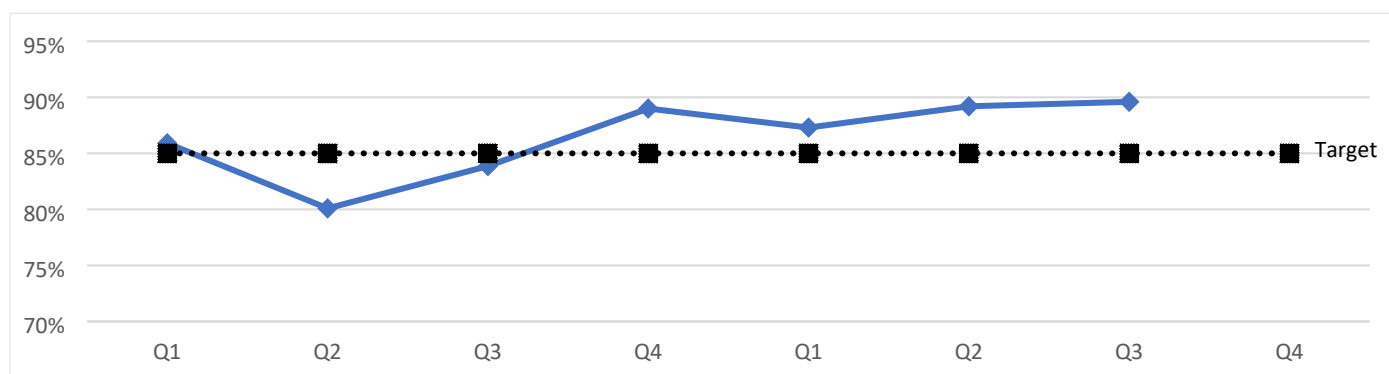
CEX5 – Channel Shift

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	87.30%	85%	Green	N/A
Q2 23/24	89.20%	85%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	89.60%	85%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		85%		
Year End				

Service Narrative:

This KPI covers online processes that are managed by Customer Services, and are available for customers to self-serve online; 11 Waste processes, Abandoned Vehicle, Apply for or renew a blue badge, Highways request and Vegetation (grounds maintenance). The overall self-serve percentage reflects those digital services used by a customer, where they did not need assistance from a team member. A high percentage of customers self-served due to these digital journeys being easy to use, intuitive and available 24/7. The increase in percentage (0.4%) is due to a slightly higher uptake of transacting these processes online than via mediated support i.e. phoning to speak to a Customer Services Adviser for help.

Actions to Improve: The new website was launched on 19th July, last year. We are being proactive and carefully monitoring customer feedback and will use this to continue making improvements to the site to improve the experience. A new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is being developed. All current digital customer journeys will be reviewed for any improvements, following implementation. There will be a forward plan of new digital services to develop and launch over the next 2 years. We are also working with services that interact with customers on the front line to identify opportunities to digitise as much of the customer contact as possible through process redesign.

CEX6 – Expected voluntary staff turnover (turnover reported on a rolling 12-month basis)

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	13.2%	10%	Amber	Worse
Q2 23/24	12.7%	10%	Amber	Better
Q3 23/24	12.55%	10%	Amber	Better
Q4 23/24		10%		
Year End				
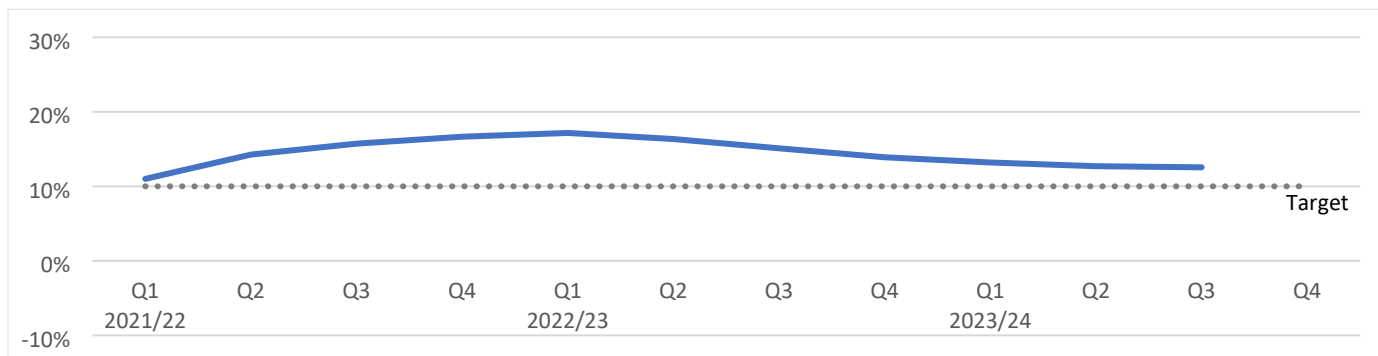
Bench Marking:

Service Narrative: Staff turnover has dropped slightly to 12.55%, this continues to be monitored and the HR & OD team are working with directorates to develop initiatives to help strengthen the retention of our workforce. These include the use of apprenticeships to progress professional qualifications and assist with career development, the development of a leadership programme and a pathway for the development of aspiring leaders.

CEX7 – Sickness absence (absence reported on a rolling 12-month basis)

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	7.2 days	6.6 days or less	Amber	Better
Q2 23/24	6.9 days	6.6 days or less	Amber	Better
Q3 23/24	6.8 days	6.6 days or less	Amber	Better
Q4 23/24		6.6 days or less		
Year End				
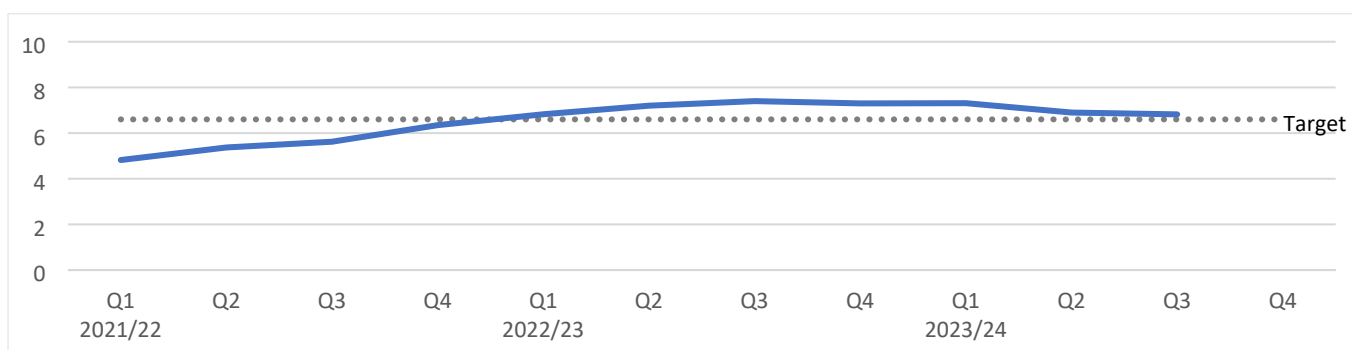
Bench Marking:

Service Narrative: The absence rate for Q3 has fallen slightly again and it has been fairly static for the year with it being just above target. The Absence Management Policy has been strengthened and is currently being consulted on with managers and staff, when this is introduced, there will be training to

support mangers to ensure they fully understand the new policy and how to apply it to support the wellbeing of the workforce.

CEX8 – Proportion of Wokingham resident pupils eligible for FSM in Wokingham borough schools

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	8.8%	10%	Red	No change
Q2 23/24	N/A	10%	N/A	No change
Q3 23/24	8.9%	10%	Red	Better
Q4 23/24				
Year End				

This KPI measures the number of children who have applied for and are eligible for means-tested free school meals as a proportion of all pupils on the roll. It has increased from 8.8% to 8.9% from Q1 to Q3.

This is measured as part of a continued push through the Tackling Poverty Strategy to increase access to support for residents on low incomes. The target was initially 9% and was increased to 10% during 23/24 to become a stretch target. There is no government data which would allow the Council to clearly quantify the number of children in the borough who would be eligible. As a result the council has set this stretching target to push performance and maximise take up.

Actions to increase take up of FSM since Q1 are to target schools, particularly those where take up is lower than expected, to promote and support parents to claim. We will be working with schools admissions to identify opportunities to promote FSM during the admissions process.

CEX9 – Early resolution versus stage one complaints

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	Early resolutions- 82% (324) Stage one complaints- 18% (73)	Target ER 23/24- 70% Target S1 23/24- 30%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	Early resolutions- 83% (366) Stage one complaints- 17% (74)	Target ER 23/24- 70% Target S1 23/24- 30%	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	Early resolutions- 70% (146) Stage one complaints- 30% (64)	Target ER 23/24- 70% Target S1 23/24- 30%	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		Target ER 23/24- 70% Target S1 23/24- 30%		
Year End				
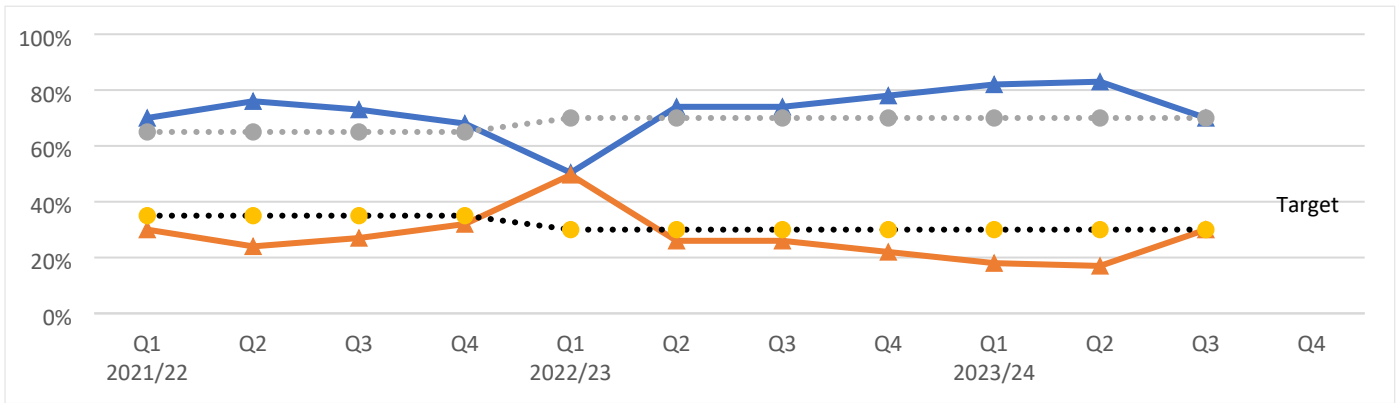
Service Narrative:
The overall volume for complaints is down. This change is related to initiatives aimed at enhancing customer reporting and service team communication. The website underwent updates for improved transparency around decision-making and empowered customers to self-serve solutions. Teams also refined their ability to differentiate between complaints and service requests, which contributed to the overall drop in recorded complaints.

Actions to Improve: In Qtr.3, Service teams used insight to demystify processes and empower customers to independently resolve issues. By continuing efforts in this area, customers will be more informed about what to expect, reducing their reliance to have such matters addressed through the complaints process.

Overview

Children's Services are responsible for undertaking the LA statutory duties in relation to education including the provision of services for children with SEND, the delivery of statutory social care services and a range of early help provision, together with the services which support, and quality assure these functions. We focus on making a difference, we aim high, we are strategic, efficient and effective, we value our people and we drive partnership, collaboration and co-production. We are striving to become a child friendly community, where children are safe and cared for, they enjoy and achieve, are healthy and resilient, ready for adulthood and are happy, hopeful and loved.

Top Wins

- Power BI dashboards for Childrens Social Care and SEND have been launched successfully to support monitoring the performance and timeliness in both services.
- Child & Family Assessment timeliness have improved significantly this quarter, which is above national and regional averages.
- The new Registered manager of our children's homes commenced their employment with Wokingham which will accelerate the opening of the new children's home.
- WBC were successful in a regional bid submitted to the DfE to implement a number of improvements to boost number of foster carers and experience of prospective foster carers.
- A robust system of monitoring, tracking and interventions resulted in lower (better) than expected number of Children Missing Education in Wokingham.
- Wokingham Early Years children's outcomes were confirmed to be among the very best in the country, featured in a Guardian report.

Top Opportunities

- A focused working group with our housing colleagues to increase our housing options for our Children in care aged 16/17 and our care leavers.
- A review of the short Breaks offers for Children with Disability commenced.
- DfE recognised and praised our creative approaches and partnership working for School Place Planning achieved sufficient secondary school places for next three years, while the pressure on future years beyond 2027 is eased.

Challenges

- Managing inflationary uplifts on our placement costs, along with additional costs on our former unregulated placements linked to the new the registration process.
- SEND Team customer service design and implementation started with the support of the Corporate Customer Service but we need to accelerate the pace to implementation so that our SEND community has the confidence of the system with good communication with parents and carers.

Quarter 3 Performance Summary

- 1 KPI is reported as below target, Red
- No KPIs are reported as (slightly-off target) Amber
- 5 KPIs achieving target, Green
- No KPIs are reported as Pending
- No KPIs are reported as N/A

Red , 1, 17%

Green, 5, 83%

58
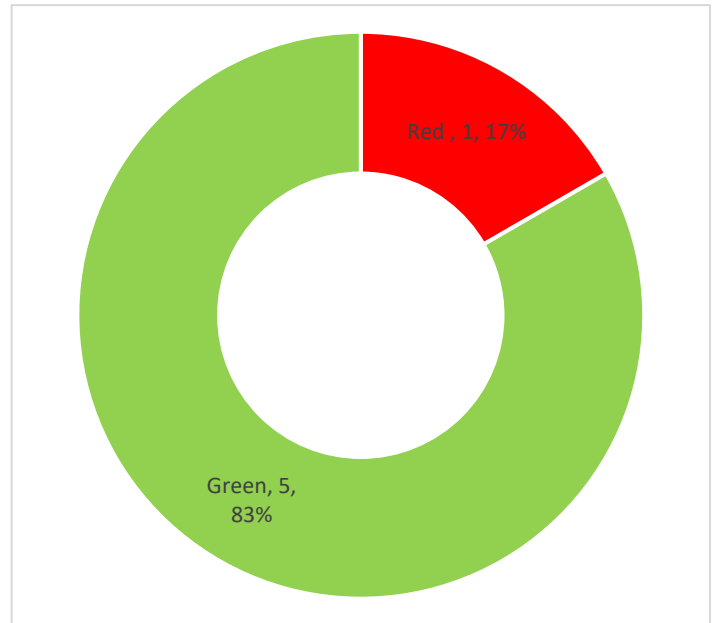
Appendix C-1: Children's Services Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Summary Table

Ref	Description	RAG Q1	DoT Q1	RAG Q2	DoT Q2	RAG Q3	DoT Q3
CS1	Percentage of Continuous Assessments completed within 45 working days	Amber	Better	Red	Worse	Green	Better
CS2	Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days of the start of the Section 47 which led to a conference	Green	Better	Green	Worse	Green	Better
CS3	Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more which cease during the year	Green	Better	Green	No Change	Green	No Change
CS4	Percentage of Care leavers 19 to 21 in suitable accommodation at period end	Green	No Change	Green	Worse	Green	Better
CS5	Proportion of all EHC plans issues in 20 weeks (including exceptions)	Green	Better	Green	Worse	Red	Worse
CS6	CME (children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school) in a period	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Better

Appendix C-2: Children's Services Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Detailed Information

CS1 – Percentage of Continuous Assessments completed within 45 working days

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	74% (317/426)	80% or more	Amber	Better
Q2 23/24	70% (278/398)	80% or more	Red	Worse
Q3 23/24	89% (357/401)	80% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		80% or more		
Year End		80% or more		

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.
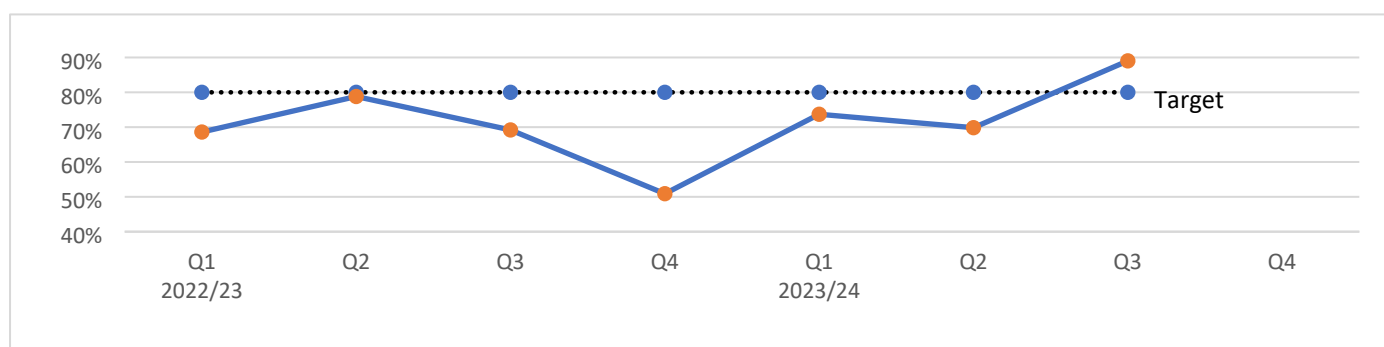
Benchmarking:
The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022-23 for assessments completed within 45 days are 83.77% and 82.50% respectively.

Service Narrative:
The service aims to complete 80%, of the assessments within 45 working days.
There were some challenges in terms of staff movement and sickness in the teams along with a higher number of assessments, which impacted on the performance. The development of a new data set has supported a greater focus on bringing performance back in line by targeting open assessments to ensure they are completed within timescale. Day 25 supervisions are booked, providing an effective mechanism to address issues about potential delays earlier.
Early analysis of in quarter data is evidencing a positive impact with figures exceeding the target of 80% being achieved currently.

CS2 – Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days of the start of the Section 47 which led to a conference

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	100% (40/40)	80% or more	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	89% (34/38)	80% or more	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	90% (38/42)	80% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		80% or more		
Year End		80% or more		
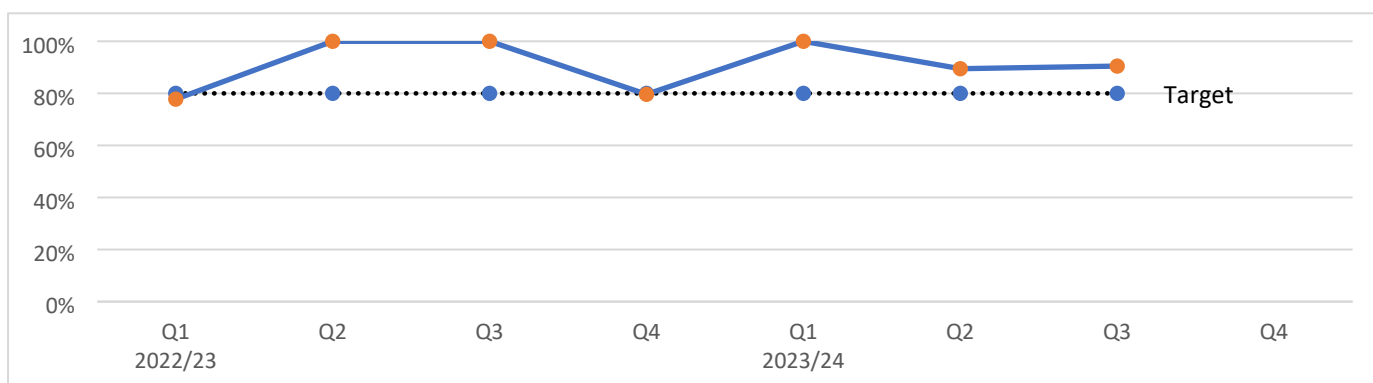
Benchmarking:
The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022-23 for Initial Child Protection Conferences within 15 working days of the start of the Section 47 which led to a conference are 77.36% and 78.40% respectively.

Service Narrative:
ICPC timeliness performance remains consistently strong. Quality Assurance Safeguarding Team are now notified on day 3 of the S47 when an ICPC is needed, and we aim to allocate a CP chair and book a conference meeting within 24 hours of the notification a ICPC is needed so this takes placed within 15 days of the strategy discussion that decided a S47 was required.

CS3 – Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more which cease during the year

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	0% (0/29)	3.1%	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	0% (0/38)	3.1%	Green	No Change
Q3 23/24	0% (0/42)	3.1%	Green	No Change
Q4 23/24		3.1%		
Year End		3.1%		
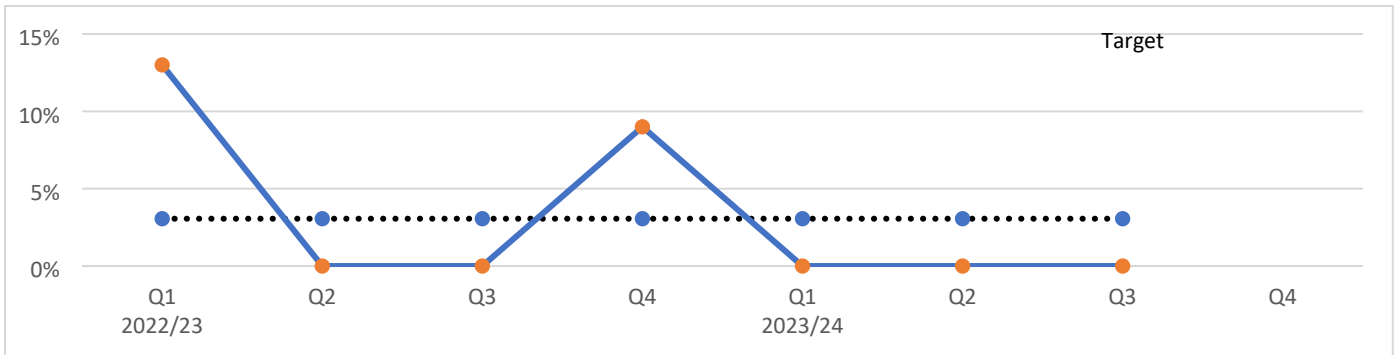
Benchmarking:
The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022-23 for Child Protection plans lasting 2 years or more which cease during the year are 4.01% and 3.9% respectively.

Service Narrative:
Lower percentage indicates better performance.

CS4 – Percentage of Care leavers 19 to 21 in suitable accommodation at period end

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	95% (60/63)	88% or more	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	90% (60/67)	88% or more	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	91% (59/65)	88% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		88% or more		
Year End		88% or more		
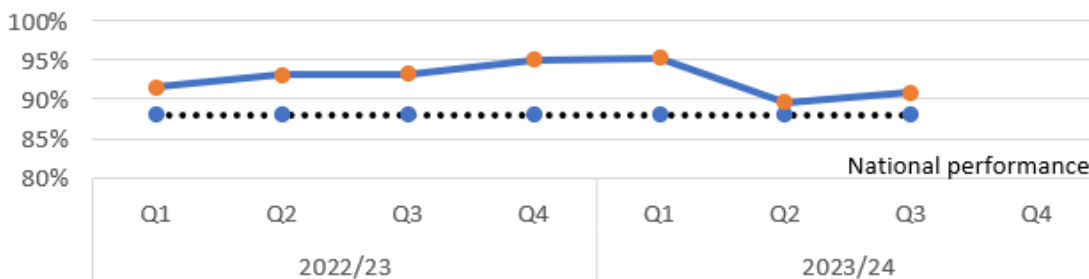
Benchmarking:
The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022-23 for Care leavers 19 to 21 in suitable accommodation are 89.8% and 88% respectively.

Service Narrative:
Care Leavers have allocated personal advisors who actively seek to engage the young people with the service. In addition, young people are discussed in the Housing panel, about how to support the young people into suitable accommodation where they may be living in unsuitable accommodation.

CS5 – Proportion of all EHC plans issued in 20 weeks (including exceptions)

Period	Actual	Target/National	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	76% (55/72)	70% or more	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	70% (59/84)	70% or more	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	57% (30/53)	70% or more	Red	Worse
Q4 23/24		70% or more		

Year End		70% or more		
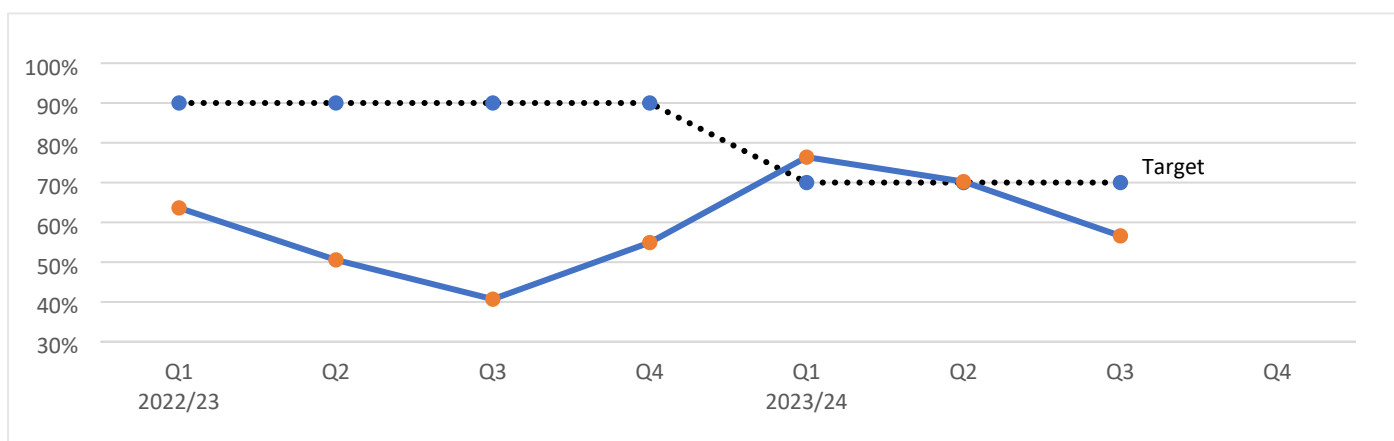
Benchmarking:
The statistical neighbour and England averages in 2022 calendar year for all EHC plans issued in 20 weeks (including exceptions) are 38.5% and 49.1% respectively.

Service Narrative:
Whilst EHCP timeliness in Wokingham remained, on average, above national and statistical neighbours, it is recognised that there was a drop in the latter part of the autumn term.
Timeliness was impacted by the spike in EHC assessments requests in the spring term (Q2), which were the highest recorded in Wokingham to date. This compounded pressure on the EP service as well as therapy assessments through CYPIT.
To reverse this trend, the SEND Service held a meeting with the Performance Team and Principle Education Psychologist, with the following developments:
- A new 'timeliness' dashboard has been developed (currently in beta form), that provides live data and can be used as a supportive tool by SEND Managers to monitor and step in if any EHC Plans appear to be at risk of being overdue.
- An EHC assessment request dashboard has also been produced- which will help with short-, medium- and long-term planning, to support staff to prioritise, and request additional capacity to assist with peaks in demand.
- Through Commissioning, we will continue to monitor (and raise concerns if required) the timeliness of statutory advice through CYPIT, which currently impact overall EHCP timescales".

CS6 – CME (children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school) in a period.

Period	Actual	Target/National	RAG	DoT
Q1 22/23	0.18% (53/29136)	0.33% or less	Green	Better
Q2 22/23	0.16% (47/29136)	0.33% or less	Green	Better
Q3 22/23	0.15% (43/29136)	0.33% or less	Green	Better
Q4 22/23		0.33% or less		
Year End		0.33% or less		

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.
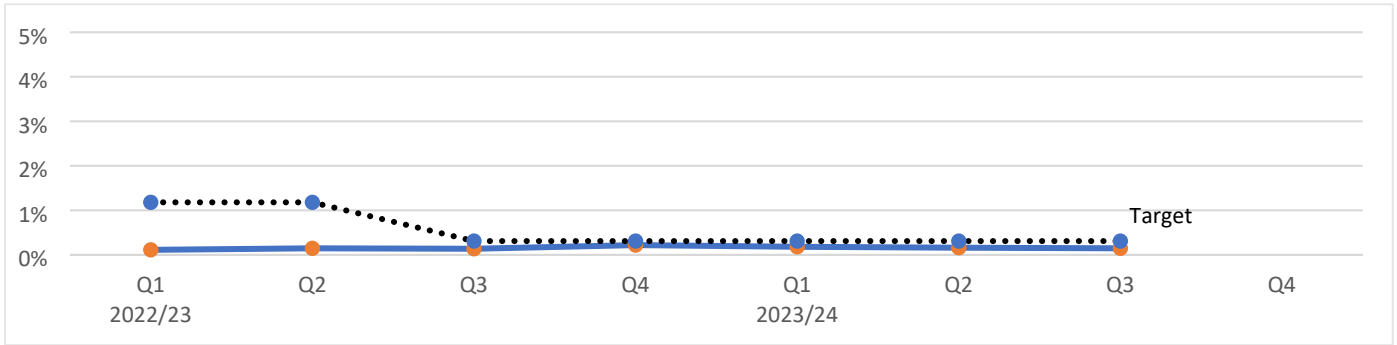
Benchmarking:
The statistical neighbour and England averages from January 2023 census day for CME (children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school) are 0.14% and 0.31%.

Service Narrative:
Lower percentage indicates better performance.
Quarterly figures provided do not co-relate to the benchmarking figures as the quarterly figures are the sum total of all CME in the quarter and the benchmarking figures are only those CME on the census day.
At the end of Q3 period, there were 17 CME, which was 0.05% - lower than statistical and national averages.

Overview

Our ambition is for Wokingham Borough to be one of the best boroughs for adults and carers in need of support to live, where they feel safe, included and a key part of the community. Our key priorities for the next four years are: keeping people safe, prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support, involve people in their care and support, work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money.

Top Wins

- Launch of Wokingham Borough's Social Care Future Charter. The new charter sets out a vision for social care in the borough with an emphasis on finding a way to ensure people who draw on social care support are central to the decisions being made about their support, sharing power as equals and enabling everyone to live 'gloriously ordinary lives'.
- Progress is being made refurbishing and improving The Berkshire Care Home.
- Wokingham Borough has ranked number one in England for the proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment for 2022/23.

Top Opportunities

The Adult Services Continuous Improvement Plan has identified opportunities over the next 3 to 4 years.

As part of our transformation work, Adult Social Care front door activity is under review, supported by IMPACT, and a strength-based approach will be used to manage the continuing increase in demand, which considers the person's own strengths and capabilities and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help. The work in this area will support the service to manage increasing demand and the increasing complex needs of our residents presenting to Adult Social Care to maintain our levels of performance across our Key Performance Indicators.

Challenges

Adult Social Care has been historically underfunded. Future demographic and inflationary pressures together with the significant funding pressures being unresolved, placing Adult Social Care statutory services and the wider care sector under increasing risk. More recently, the social care sector in Wokingham has experienced increased financial pressure, with a number of social care providers experiencing difficulties, effecting continuity of care within the local area.

Quarter 3 2023/24 Performance Summary

- 1 KPI is reported as below target, Red
- 2 are reported as (slightly-off target) Amber
- 5 KPIs achieving target, Green
- No KPIs are reported as Pending
- No KPIs are reported as N/A
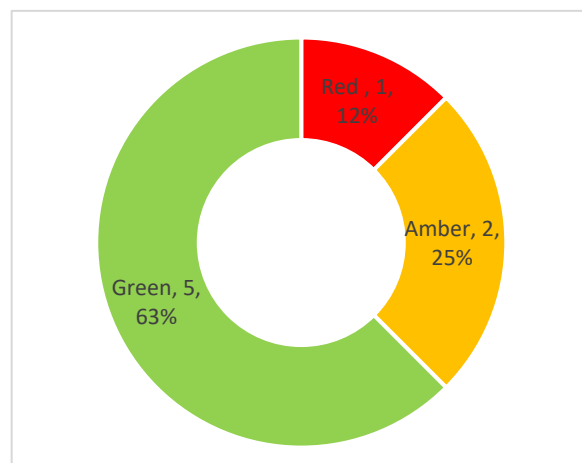
Appendix A-1: Adult Services Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Summary Table

Ref	Description	RAG Q1	DoT Q1	RAG Q2	DoT Q2	RAG Q3	DoT Q3
AS1	Social work assessments allocated to commence within 28 days of the requests (counted at point of allocation)	Red	No Change	Amber	Better	Red	Worse
AS2	Percentage of new contact referrals closed with advice, information or signposting.	Green	Better	Green	Worse	Green	Better
AS3	The proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family (ASCOF Measure 1G)	Green	No Change	Green	No Change	Green	Better
AS4	New permanent admissions to residential or nursing care homes (65+) (ASCOF Measure 2A2)	Red	Worse	Amber	Better	Green	Better
AS5	Proportion of people receiving long term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months	Amber	Better	Green	Better	Amber	Worse
AS6	Percentage of CQC-registered providers that are rated Good or Outstanding	Amber	Residential and Domiciliary Care: Better Nursing: Worse	Amber	Better	Amber	Worse
AS7	Proportion of section 42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome that this risk was reduced or removed.	Green	Better	Green	Better	Green	Better
AS8	Hospital discharge - % of people who were discharged to their normal place of residence	Green	No Change	Green	Better	Green	Better
AS9a&b	Annual measure: Increase in healthy life expectancy at age 65 (males/females)						
AS10	Annual measure: Percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese						
AS11	Annual measure: Percentage of adults meeting the recommended physical activity levels						
AS12	Annual measure: Reduction in the proportion of adults						

	feeling lonely often/always or some of the time					

Appendix A-2: Adult Services Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Detailed Information

AS1- Social work assessments allocated to commence within 28 days of the requests (counted at point of allocation)

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	72% (152/210)	90% or more	Red	No change
Q2 23/24	88% (177/202)	90% or more	Amber	Better
Q3 23/24	73% (154/211)	90% or more	Red	Worse
Q4 23/24		90% or more		
Year End				
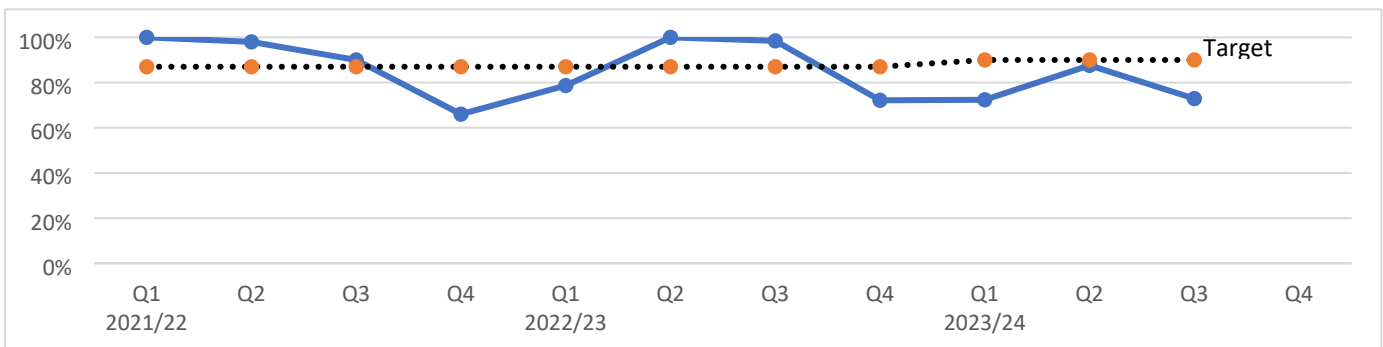
Benchmarking: This is not monitored as a national performance measure, however, numbers of people waiting for assessments, packages of care or reviews is collected regularly for all Local Authorities in the South East. Currently 26% of people are waiting longer than 6 months across the region. 28 days is a local target to ensure best practice.

Service Narrative: Priority: Involve people in their care and support.

There is a process of triaging and risk assessing all contacts received to ensure those requiring immediate attention are prioritised.

Changes were made to the Adult Social Care pathway in Q2, and it was anticipated that this could have an impact on performance data during Q3. Expectation that figures will improve in Q4.

AS2- Percentage of new contact referrals closed with advice, information or signposting.

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	28% (173/622)	20% or more	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	20% (151/757)	20% or more	Green	Worse
Q3 23/24	30% (263/873)	20% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		20% or more		
Year End				
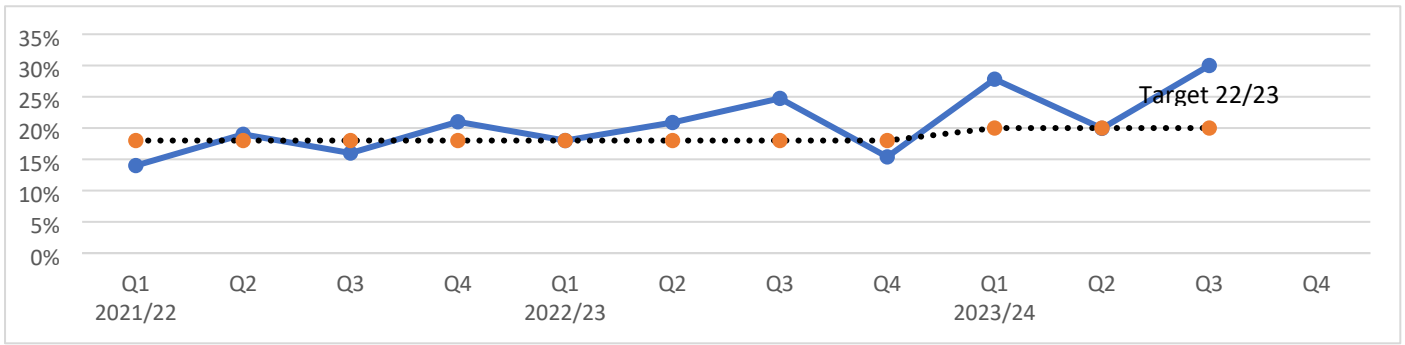
Benchmarking: The target is set with the aim of improving our local performance for this specific area (information and advice). Comparative data from our statutory return is not reported with the same definition but monitors all new contacts from the community, resulting in signposting or universal services. For this measure we were 7th highest in the region.

Service Narrative: Priority: Prevent, Reduce, Delay the need for formal care and support

We have improved performance in this area, despite increasing demand (873 in Q3 compared to 622 in Q1) and complexity at our front door.

AS3 – The proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family (ASCOF Measure 1G)

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	87% (460/529)	87% or more	Green	No Change
Q2 23/24	87% (455/525)	87% or more	Green	No Change
Q3 23/24	90% (419/463)	87% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		87% or more		
Year End				
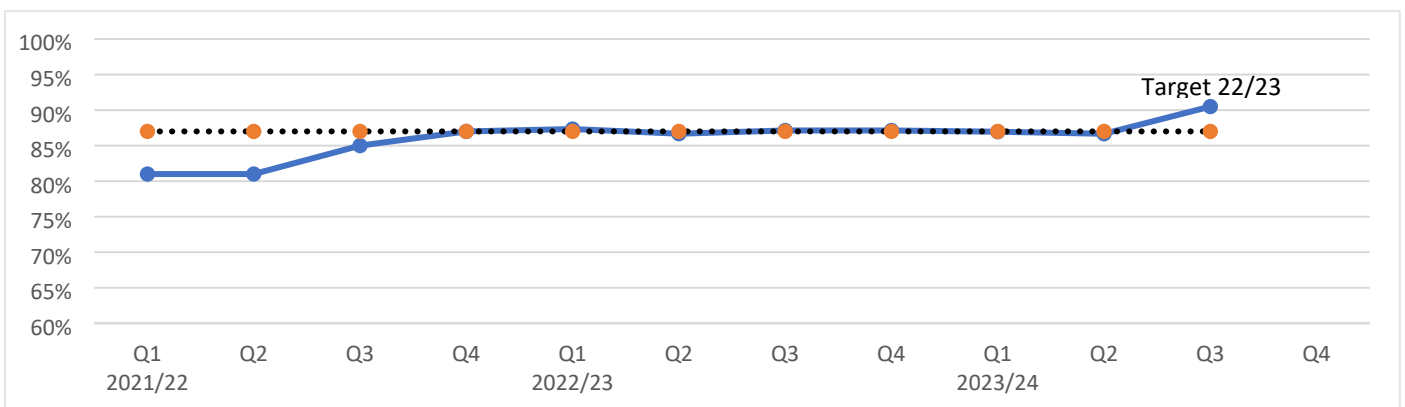
Benchmarking: Wokingham Borough Council scored 38 out of 152 Local Authorities for this ASCOF Measure in 2022/23 (where 1 is best). Wokingham achieved 87.7%, an improvement on the previous year (86.8%). This is significantly better than the England result of 80.5% and regional result of 78.3%.

Service Narrative: Priority: To involve people in their care and support.

We aim to support people with a learning disability to live independently in suitable accommodation for as long as possible.

We carried out work to improve data quality which highlighted that our performance is even better than previously reported, and our performance in this quarter improved to 90%.

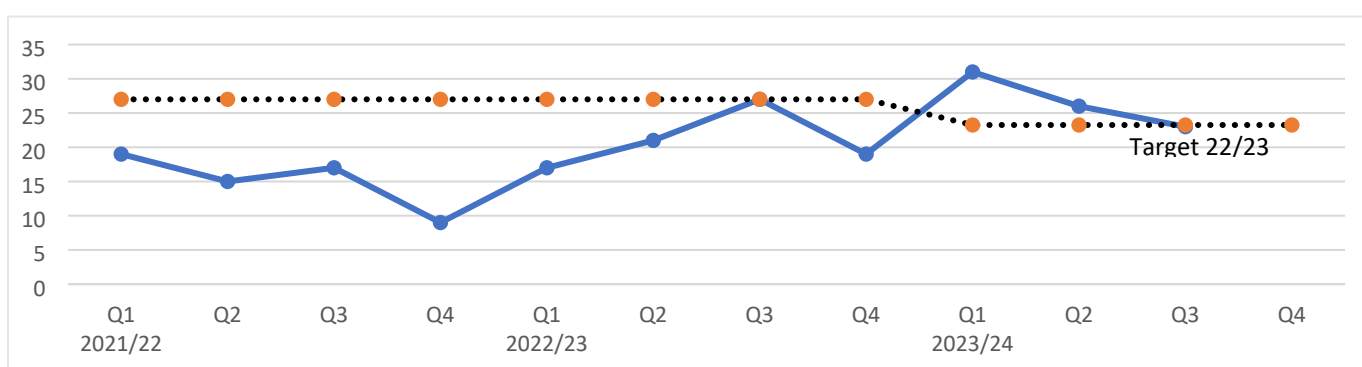**AS4 – New permanent admissions to residential or nursing care homes (65+) (ASCOF Measure 2A2)**

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	31	23	Amber	Better
Q2 23/24	26	23	Amber	Better
Q3 23/24	23	23	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		23		
Year End				

Benchmarking: Wokingham Borough Council scored 44 out of 152 Local Authorities for this ASCOF National Measure performance in 2022/23 (where 1 is best). Our aim is to reduce the number of long-term admissions to care homes.

In 2022/23 Wokingham reported, annually, 454.9 admissions to residential and nursing care homes for people aged 65+ per 100,000 population, compared to 556.9 in the South East and 560.8 in England.

Service Narrative: Priority: Prevent, Reduce, Delay the need for formal care and support.
Achieving a reduction in the number of people entering care homes (residential or nursing) evidences that we are putting in the right measures to effectively reduce, delay, prevent the need for long term care and support.

Numbers of new admissions decreased in Q3, for the second quarter running, improving our performance in this area.

AS5 – Proportion of people receiving long term care who were subject to a review in the last 12 months

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	69% (1,090/1,585)	70% or more	Amber	Better
Q2 23/24	70% (1,048/1,488)	70% or more	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	69% (1,112/1,605)	70% or more	Amber	Worse
Q4 23/24		70% or more		
Year End				
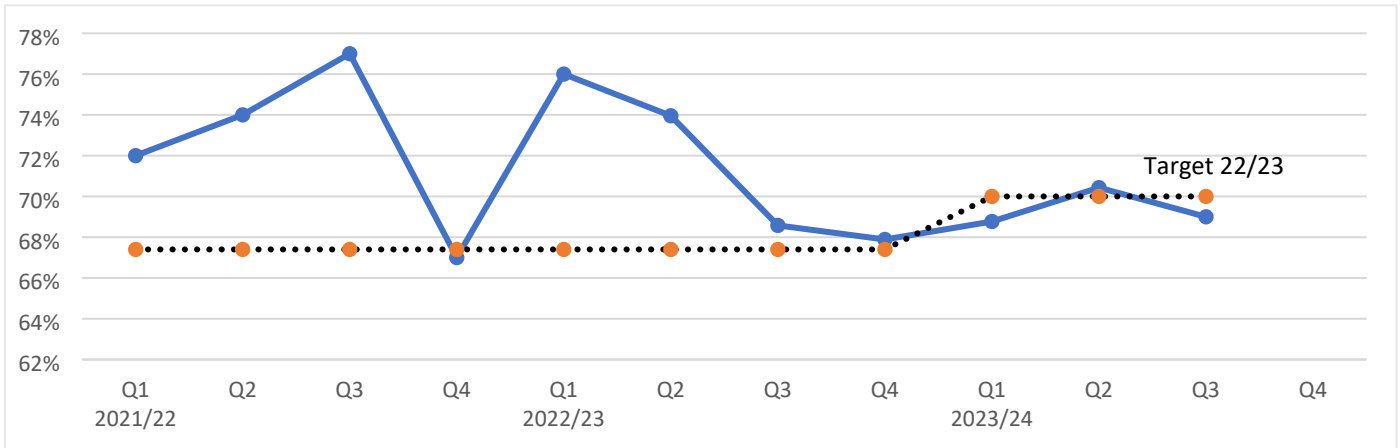
Benchmarking: Wokingham is ranked 2 out of 16 South East Local Authorities (where 1 is best). The 2023/24 target has been set as a challenging stretch target. Our aim is to perform in the top quartile in comparison to other Local Authorities. Currently our performance for people with a review or assessment in the last 12 months places us 2nd highest in the South East Benchmarking Club

Service Narrative: <u>Priority: Involve people in their care and support.</u>
 People must be provided with the right combination of care, in the right place at the right time, in ways that will be sustainable going forward.

Local Authorities have a duty under the Care Act to undertake reviews of care and support plans to ensure that plans are kept up to date and relevant to the person's needs and aspirations, provides confidence in the system and mitigates the risks of people entering a crisis situation.

Numbers fell slightly below target this quarter, but important to note the increase in volume (i.e. the total number of reviews carried out was higher). Performance has remained relatively steady for the last year, despite increasing numbers of people in receipt of Adult Social Care Services.

AS6 – Percentage of CQC-registered providers that are rated Good or Outstanding
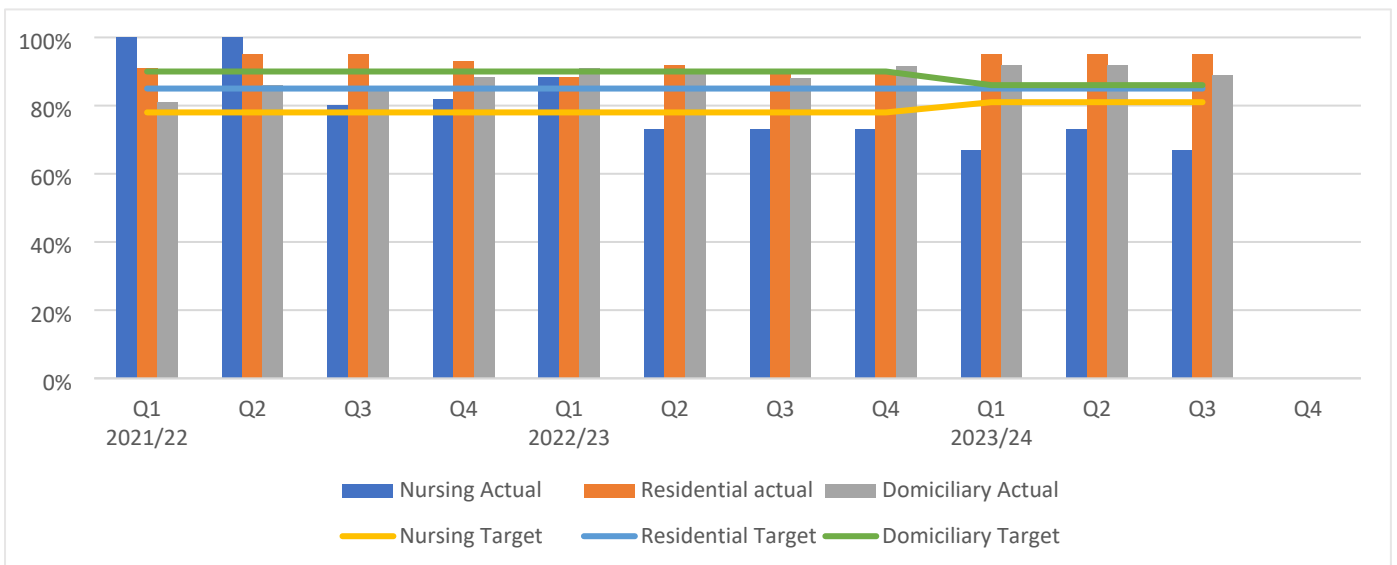
Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	Nursing Homes: 67%	Better than South-East:	Amber	N/A

69

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
	Residential Homes: 95% Domicilary Care: 92%	Nursing Homes: 81% Residential Homes: 85% Domicilary Care: 86%		
Q2 23/24	Nursing Homes: 73% Residential Homes: 95% Domicilary Care: 92%	Better than South-East: Nursing Homes: 81% Residential Homes: 85% Domicilary Care: 86%	Amber	Better
Q3 23/24	Nursing Homes: 67% Residential Homes: 95% Domicilary Care: 89%	Better than South-East: Nursing Homes: 81% Residential Homes: 85% Domicilary Care: 86%	Amber	Worse
Q4 23/24		Better than South-East: Nursing Homes: 81% Residential Homes: 85% Domicilary Care: 86%		
Year End				

Benchmarking: The target for this indicator is to perform better than South East region.

Service Narrative:
Priority: Work in partnership and commission services that deliver quality and value for money.
We aim to ensure we maintain a high proportion of regulated services in the local area that are judged as good or outstanding.

CQC inspection ratings for care providers are above national averages in Wokingham Borough as evidenced in our Market Position Statement.

Two of the three services (Residential and Domiciliary Care) are achieving target with a higher proportion of providers judged as good or outstanding in the Wokingham Borough area compared to the whole of the South-East.

The locally reported percentage for Nursing Homes is impacted by small numbers in the borough and therefore disproportionally skews the overall percentage. One Nursing Home is 9% of the total, which is why this measure is below target.
One Domiciliary Care Agency moved their office into the Wokingham Borough area in the quarter and have a historic inadequate rating which has caused the % of good/outstanding to drop.

AS7 – Proportion of section 42 safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified and the reported outcome that this risk was reduced or removed.

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	90% (74/82)	87% or more	Green	Better
Q2 23/24	94% (94/100)	87% or more	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	98% (127/129)	87% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		87% or more		
Year End				
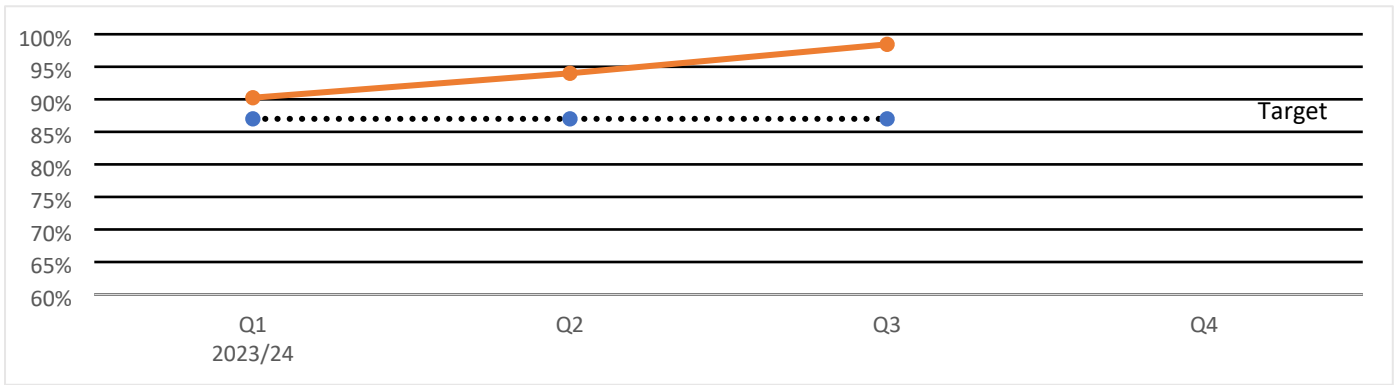
Benchmarking: The total for Berkshire Authorities was 89% for 2021-22 which was in line with WBC performance for that year.

Service Narrative: Priority: Keeping people safe

The Care Act (2014) places a statutory duty on local authorities to make enquiries or cause others to make enquiries where the adult at risk is; aged 18 years or over, has care and support needs, is at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect and, as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from that (risk of) abuse or neglect. WBC has a proven commitment and investment to the protection of their resident's rights. Safeguarding is an integral part of all our practice, viewed as everybody's business, there is a strategic approach in relation to safeguarding with clear roles and responsibilities for all staff.

This is a measure that is collected from all Local Authorities via the annual Safeguarding Adult Collection. From 2023-24 this is now an Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measure.

Wokingham Borough Council performs well in comparison to other areas and performance has continued to improve in Q3.

AS8- Hospital discharge - % of people who were discharged to their normal place of residence

Period	Actual	Target	RAG	DoT
Q1 23/24	91% (829/907)	91% or more	Green	No change
Q2 23/24	92% (1661/1797)	91% or more	Green	Better
Q3 23/24	93% (1667/1799)	91% or more	Green	Better
Q4 23/24		91% or more		
Year End				
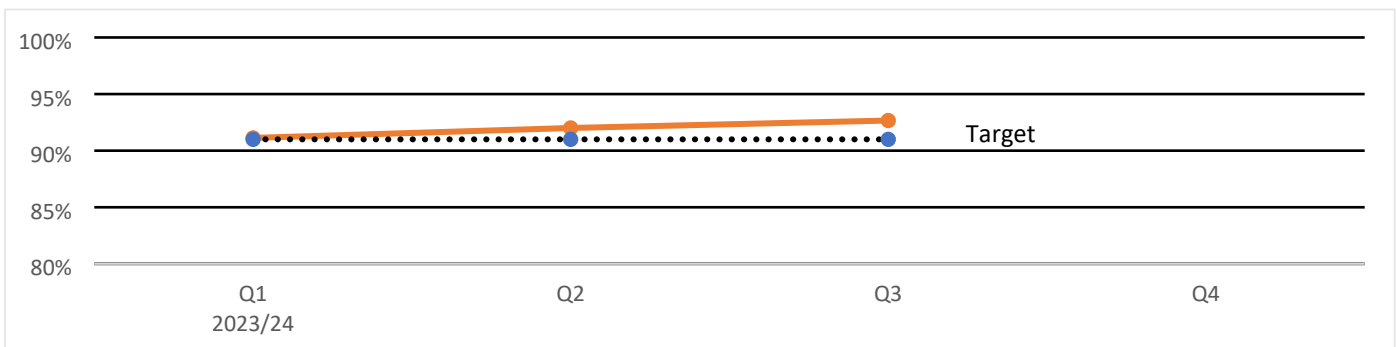
Benchmarking: All England performance for this measure at the end of Q4 2022-23 was 92.3%

71

Discharged to Usual Residence %

Legend: Wokingham - Actual, Wokingham - Forecast, Wokingham - Plan, England
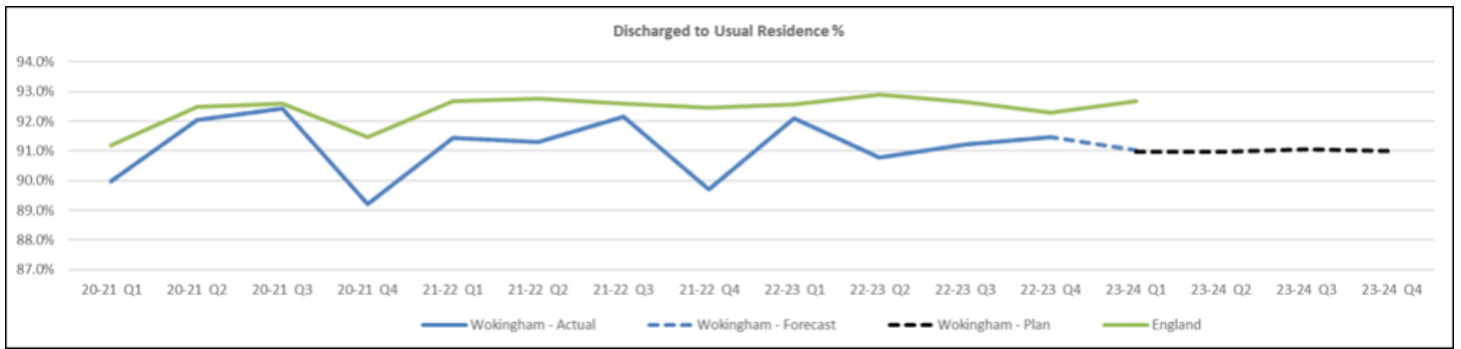
Service Narrative: <u>Priority:</u> Prevent, reduce, and delay the need for formal care and support.

We work closely with our partners, including health services and those who provide services to support with hospital discharge with the joint aim of reducing delays with hospital discharge and continue to support people to remain in their own home rather than move into extra or residential care.

Performance in this area is currently achieving target and increased compared to last quarter.

Q3 only includes October and November as this is a BOB metric and figures are released in arrears. We will be able to update this in February when the December figures are released.

TITLE   **Equality Plan Update**

FOR CONSIDERATION BY   Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 6 March 2024

WARD   None Specific

LEAD OFFICER   Sally Watkins, Chief Operating Officer

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY
The Equality Plan and accompanying annual action plan helps to ensure that the council continues to meet its equality obligations for the Borough and residents, progressing towards the "Achieving" level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

RECOMMENDATION
That the committee: • considers progress on delivery of the annual equality action plan • notes the proposed action plan for 2024/25 aimed at continued progression against the EFLG • notes the intention to refresh the council's Equality Plan and objectives ready for April 2025.

SUMMARY OF REPORT
In March 2021, the council approved the Equality Plan 2021-25 to deliver a programme of improvements against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The EFLG is a framework of continuous improvement designed help local authorities build equality into all aspects of service delivery and employment. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee received reports at its meeting on 23 February 2022, and 15th March 2023, on the progress achieved across the programme, together with the annual action plan for the subsequent year. Similarly, this report presents an update on progress made against this year's annual action plan and sets out proposed actions for the 2024/25 plan. A self-assessment against the EFLG conducted in December 2021 indicated that the council was at the 'Developing' level of the framework. This means that the organisation had established the building blocks for progression, had made an organisational commitment to improving equality, and was putting in place processes to deliver on equality issues. Delivery of improvement work across the programme has consolidated this position and is supporting progress towards the 'achieving' standard, as identified via subsequent self-assessments conducted in October 2022 and October 2023. The action plan for 2023/24 comprised 17 actions. Of these, 17 actions have commenced, with 15 complete or due to be complete by the end of March 2024 and 2 which will continue into delivery within the 2024/25 action plan. Highlights of the action plan are set out within the report and more details provided in Appendix 1. The proposed action plan for 2024/25 is included as Appendix 2.

Background

In approving the Equality Plan 2021-25, the Council set out its commitment to tackling inequality for all our communities, presenting three priorities and eight objectives to be delivered across the lifetime of the Plan. These are detailed below:

Priority 1 – Listen to and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone

- We will improve the collection of data about our communities.
- We will engage and communicate with our residents to encourage participation.
- We will use feedback from residents to identify barriers to equality of opportunity.

Priority 2 – Act on our commitments to equality, diversity, and inclusion in the way we plan, deliver, and shape our services

- We will embed our commitments to equality into the way we plan, purchase, and deliver.
- We will model active community leadership through collaboration and coproduction.
- We will strengthen and improve our use of Equality Impact Assessments.

Priority 3 – Build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected

- We will equip staff with the right tools to tackle inequality and meet the needs of our increasingly diverse community.
- We will honour the commitments agreed in our Equality Workforce Monitoring Report.

These priorities and objectives reflect the broad scope of the ambition required to make comprehensive progress against the EFLG. The goal of the EFLG is to mainstream the deliberate consideration of equality issues across the business of the organisation. Put simply, the EFLG aims to make sure we are thinking about the needs of different groups of people in everything that the council does: in our provision of services; in how we work with our partners; and in how we meet our responsibilities as an employer.

There are three levels of award against the EFLG, as follows:
- Developing - The organisation has made an organisational commitment to improving equality. It is putting in place processes to deliver on equality issues and is meeting the statutory requirements.
- Achieving - The organisation has policies, processes and procedures in place and is delivering some good equality outcomes. It is exceeding statutory requirements.
- Excellent – The organisation has mainstreamed equality throughout the organisation and can demonstrate that it is delivering significant outcomes across its services that are making a difference in its communities. The organisation is an exemplar council for equality and diversity.

The EFLG has four improvement modules and 17 priority themes as detailed below:

Understanding and working with your communities
1. collecting and sharing information
2. analysing and using data and information
3. effective community engagement
4. fostering good community relations
5. participation in public life.

Leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment
6. political and officer leadership
7. priorities and working in partnership
8. using equality impact assessment
9. performance monitoring and scrutiny.

Responsive services and customer care
10. commissioning and procuring services
11. integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes
12. service design and delivery.

Diverse and engaged workforce
13. workforce diversity and inclusion
14. inclusive strategies and policies
15. collecting, analysing, and publishing workforce data
16. learning, development, and progression
17. health and wellbeing.

Detail

2023/24 progress

The 2023/24 equality action plan sought to build on the progress achieved in the first two years of the equality programme, consolidating the 'Developing' position of the organisation by continuing to build the necessary supporting infrastructure, knowledge, and skills.

Appendix 1 sets out the progress made against each action thus far. Of the 17 actions within the plan, 15 complete or due to be complete by the end of March 2024 and 2 which will continue into delivery within the 2024/25 action plan.

It is important to note that as delivery against the Equality Plan continues, the organisation's equality and inclusion infrastructure is being developed, enabling continued focus through business as usual on some of the key areas targeted through our action plans.

Key achievements of this year include:

- Easy read guides for our most visited webpages, produced in-house by our communications and digital solutions teams and reviewed by CLASP.
- New standardised service planning template with a requirement to set out how a service is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or meeting the Equality Plan objectives.
- Increased range of training available to officers and members including:

- Updated mandatory EDI e-learning for all staff (completion rate of 55% as of 1 March),
- A suite of optional e-learning modules covering topics such as disability inclusion, LGBT+ inclusion, Neurodiversity inclusion, Allyship, Active Bystander Training, and micro-behaviours.
- Additional e-learning module prepared by Digital Experience colleagues on how to produce accessible documentation.
- New six weekly online training sessions on Equality Impact Assessments.
- Ongoing provision of various EDI sessions for members designed with and delivered by the LGA.
- Provision of online training for staff equality network leads

- Wokingham Borough Equality Forum supported to establish sub-groups including an Anti-Racism sub-group and a Violence against Women and Girls sub-group.
- Draft social value policy framework and implementation plan.

Appendix 2 sets out an introduction to and summary of activity of the Equality Forum.

Planning for 2024/25

The proposed annual action plan included at Appendix 3 has been compiled based on an updated gap analysis against the Equality Framework for Local Government, and in consultation with key stakeholders including staff equality networks and union representatives. The relevant EFLG themes are identified for each action.

An important action for 2024/25 is to undertake a review of the Equality Plan (the current plan runs from 2021-25) and the council's equality objectives. It is a requirement on the Public Sector Equality Duty that the council sets equality objectives at least every 4 years. A review of the council's Equality Plan and objectives is also very timely and will enable the plan to align with the Community Vision, the new Council Plan, as well as ambitions regarding our strategic approach to health inequalities/to become a Marmot Place.

Other proposed actions are designed to continue to build on the progress and learning of previous years' activity, including increased equality SME support to the service planning progress, inclusion of individual level equality related objectives within the appraisal process, and prototyping of a combined impact assessment.

Two actions in the proposed plan reflect a continuation of delivery from the previous years' plans in to 2024/25 plan, including the design and delivery of leadership and management training and the creation of an equalities-informed People Strategy and action plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION
The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?

Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£13,768	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£46,498	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	TBC		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
This is a cross-council programme requiring commitment and activity across all services.

Public Sector Equality Duty
The Equality Framework for Local Government is an improvement tool which supports organisations to enhance performance in delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The actions set out in the attached appendices detail activity that directly delivers against the council's Public Sector Equality Duty. An equality impact assessment was undertaken for the Equality Plan 2021-25.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*
There is no direct impact on achieving a carbon neutral borough, however the equality plan will help ensure that this aspiration is achieved in a just and equitable manner across the diverse communities in the Borough, taking regard of the protected characteristics.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
N/A

List of Background Papers
N/A

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Appendix 1: Equality action plan 2023/24 - Priority 1: Listen to and learn from our communities.

Equality Objective	EFLG Theme	Action	Progress update
2	Effective community engagement & priorities and working in partnership	Develop a consistent and long-term approach to working in partnership with our communities ensuring that we invest in community capacity and work to build trust with our communities.	A new Communities and Partnership Service has been established, leading a refreshed approach to partnership working which includes a focus on all our partners, including Town and Parish councils, and supporting the partnership production of a Community Vision for Wokingham.
5	Effective community engagement & priorities and working in partnership	Support the Equality Forum to create and implement development plan to extend the influence of the Forum across the borough with communities and partners.	The Equality Forum is an independent body that draws together Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that represent diverse groups and communities in Wokingham. The council has supported the establishment and development of the forum. This year this has included facilitating a discussion to identify development goals, ongoing support of bimonthly meetings of the forum, establishment of a bi-monthly newsletter, and establishment and support of sub-groups (VAWG & Anti-Racism), and a working group to take forward ambition for a community event in 24/25. Forum. The council has also provided funding for the Forum to administer another round of community grants. Further details are provided in Appendix 2.
5	Community engagement & participation	Draw lived experience and community expertise into our approach to our Customer Excellence Learning and Development Programme.	Staff equality network chairs have been engaged in a review of the Customer Experience training, as well as relevant elements of a revised EDI package of e-learning available to all staff. A trial and review of training external training provided via a local VCS organisation has also been undertaken.

Appendix 1: Equality action plan 2022/23 - Priority 2: Act on our commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in how we plan and deliver services

Equality Objective	EFLG Theme	Action	Progress update
7	Service design & delivery	Implement a programme of knowledge & skills raising to enable colleagues across the organisation to understand and meet their responsibilities with regard to digital accessibility	An internal communications plan has been implemented to raise awareness and new e-learning made available on producing accessible documents. Easy Read guides produced for frequently access areas of the council website.
4	Commissioning & Procuring Services	Develop a corporate social value policy that details how the council will consider social value in different types of decision making, including procurement, regeneration & housing, and grant funding, and sets out how this will reflect equality and inclusion priorities, alongside other important considerations such as climate change and employment & skills.	A draft social value policy framework and phased implementation plan will be in place by end of April 2024.
4	Using Equality Impact Assessments	The Equality SME to provide support to the Organisational Foundations Programmes to ensure that equality considerations run across all proposal development to support, robust, evidenced based decision making.	High level EqIAs for programmes were reviewed by Equality SME. OFPs were then transitioned into other formats/directorate improvement boards
8	Using Equality Impact Assessments	Continue to implement a robust training and awareness programme to enhance equality impact assessments.	A comms plan has been implemented for 23/24 with a focus on equality impact assessments (EqIAs) and design and delivery of new 6-weekly training. A sharepoint site has been developed to create a central store of EqIAs, with further work required to embed.
4.	Integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes	Develop a standardised approach to service planning ensuring that inclusion objectives are embedded, alongside other important considerations such as financial efficiencies & climate sustainability.	A service planning template was introduced with Equality related section which supported last year's round of service planning. Further actions to build on this are included in Y4 plan.
4	Commissioning & Procuring Services	Strengthen our use of equality data KPIs when establishing contract monitoring arrangements for commissioned and procured services.	Discussions held with internal Commissioning Learning & Support group to discuss requirements under PSED. Equality data monitoring guidance to be updated. Charter/guidance document to reflect requirements.

Appendix 1: Equality action plan 2022/23 - Priority 2: Act on our commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in how we plan and deliver services

Equality Objective	EFLG Theme	Action	Progress update
4	Commissioning & Procuring Services	Create an equality & inclusion charter to set out our values and expectations for suppliers who wish to work with us, ensuring they understand and embed EDI in all that they do.	This document is being drafted and will be in place by end of March 2024.
	Service design and delivery, and performance monitoring and scrutiny.	Collate and develop a suite of performance indicators that detail the breadth of work undertaken by the council to address inequality, promote inclusion and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.	A proposal has been agreed to develop a BI Dashboard for equality related data based on the four improvement module themes of the Equality Framework for Local Government. The indicators are collated. In support of this, additional optional equality questions have been included within the Gov Metrics customer satisfaction feedback process, and an initial review of data has been undertaken.

Appendix 1: Equality action plan 2022/23 - Priority 3: Build a diverse and engaged workforce

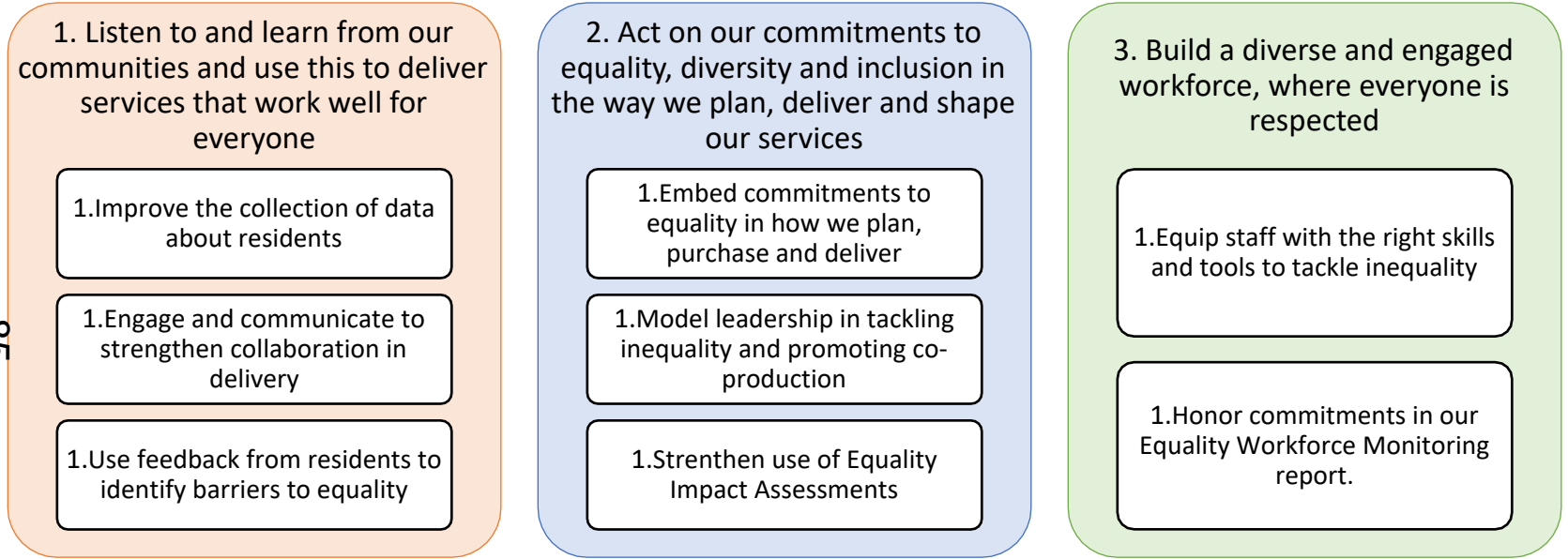| Equality Objective	EFLG Theme	Action	Progress update
7	Learning and development	Provide support & training to our political and officer leadership to become visible champions of equality & inclusion, enabling a long-term programme of culture change.	Further EDI related Member Learning and Development Sessions have been held across 2023/24, with EDI included in draft Member and Development Programme for 2024/25. A new suite of EDI e-learning has been made available to staff and members which includes an updated mandatory EDI module for all staff. This has included the launch of digital badges for completion of set programmes. The Inclusion elements of the planned leadership & management training have been agreed and delivery of this training will extend into 2024/25.
7	Learning and development	Provide training to managers to equip them to manage inclusively, with a focus on skills and behaviours	The Inclusion elements of the planned leadership & management training have been agreed and delivery of this training will extend into 2024/25.
8	Inclusive strategies and policies	Continue to develop the staff equality network structure to ensure that the employee voice of underrepresented groups is heard and is able to influence the workplace culture and environment.	The council has two staff equality networks: the Ethnically Diverse Staff Network (EDSN), and the Neurodiversity Staff Network. A new Chair and Vice Chair have been elected for the EDSN and previously agreed support arrangements have been implemented including protected time for staff network leads, access to online training for those leads, and a budget to support network activities. This has led to the first in person event held in September 2023 for the EDSN since Covid. Staff Network leads meet regularly with HR, Comms, and the Chief Executive. The Neurodiversity Network is smaller and has a desire to be focussed on peer support, after the previous Chair of the network left the council in September 2023. Building on our learning, the proposal for the next year is to establish a general equality, diversity, and inclusion network to encourage all members of staff to engage in this agenda.

Appendix 1: Equality action plan 2022/23 - Priority 3: Build a diverse and engaged workforce

2	Inclusive strategies and policies	Review human resources policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive, robust, equality assessed and are being applied consistently & fairly	A Consultation Panel has been established to enable strong internal engagement and consultation with regard to workforce policies and initiatives, and help the production of robust equality impact assessments. This panel includes representatives from staff networks and unions, as well as representatives of each directorate drawn from the Corporate Works Council. An action to embed the panel into HR process included in next year's plan.
8	Workforce diversity and Inclusion	Use workforce data to inform actions to address underrepresentation at senior levels, including targeted development opportunities for underrepresented groups.	The annual workforce equality monitoring report has been produced in a revised format with an associated action plan, progress against which is reported to Corporate Leadership Team. The action plan includes a focus on recruitment processes & data collection, including an anonymised recruitment process to be piloted with one service area. Insight from the workforce equality monitoring report is reflected in the People Strategy EqIA, and planning is underway for elements of Leadership & Management training (once available) to be provided as part of an offer to aspiring managers, with staff networks to be engaged in targeting the promotion of this.

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Equality Plan 2021-25 & Annual Action Plan

1. Listen to and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone

- 1.Improve the collection of data about residents
- 1.Engage and communicate to strengthen collaboration in delivery
- 1.Use feedback from residents to identify barriers to equality

2. Act on our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion in the way we plan, deliver and shape our services

- 1.Embed commitments to equality in how we plan, purchase and deliver
- 1.Model leadership in tackling inequality and promoting co-production
- 1.Strenthen use of Equality Impact Assessments

3. Build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected

- 1.Equip staff with the right skills and tools to tackle inequality
- 1.Honor commitments in our Equality Workforce Monitoring report.

No.	Action (what are we going to do?)	Owner
1	Refresh the council's Equality Action Plan for 2026-30 in collaboration with stakeholders, establishing a 4-year action plan setting out a clear trajectory to 2030.	AD Corporate Services
2	Undertake an external assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government to inform the Equality Plan refresh.	AD Corporate Services

Equality Plan 2021-25 & Annual Action Plan

1. Listen to and learn from our communities and use this to deliver services that work well for everyone

- 1.Improve the collection of data about residents

- 1.Engage and communicate to strengthen collaboration in delivery

- 1.Use feedback from residents to identify barriers to equality

No.	Action	Accountable AD
3	Transition support of the Equality Forum from the Insight, Strategy, and Inclusion Service to the Community and Partnerships Service	AD Corporate Services & AD Customer and Change
4	Complete the Health Inequalities project and make the insight available to the council, partners, and communities.	Chief Operating Officer and Director of Public Health.
5	Embed an approach to supporting and promoting celebration of key awareness and cultural dates within our Arts and Culture programme, working with communities, the Wokingham Borough Equality Forum, and Staff Networks.	AD Corporate Services and AD Customer and Change and AD Economy and Housing
6	Undertake a six-monthly review of Gov Metrics equality data to identify if there are any disparities in satisfaction across protected characteristics, working with ECLT to inform service design and delivery.	AD Corporate Services
7	Undertake a needs assessment in relation to our community engagement service and use this to inform work to improve engagement with underrepresented or seldom heard groups and communities.	AD Customer & Change

Equality Plan 2021-25 & Annual Action Plan

2. Act on our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion in the way we plan, deliver and shape our services

1. Embed commitments to equality in how we plan, purchase and deliver

1. Model leadership in tackling inequality and promoting co-production

1. Strenthen use of Equality Impact Assessments

No.	Action	Accountable AD
8	Update the Service Planning template and guidance to improve recording of service level contributions to organisational equality objectives.	AD Corporate Services
9	Increase Equality SME support and guidance within the service planning process by facilitating DLT level discussions of service level equality objectives and actions.	AD Corporate Services
10	Amend the annual appraisal form template to include space to set an individual level equality objective that relates to service level equality objectives and amend guidance and training to encourage managers to prompt colleagues to complete the equality data return for the organisation.	AD Corporate Services
11	Prototype a combined impact assessment or decision-making checklist that incorporates equality and health requirements and signposts to other relevant impact assessments such as climate emergency and privacy impact assessments.	AD Corporate Services & Director of Public Health
12	Refresh the internal communications plan with focus on Equality Impact Assessments including raising awareness of requirements at Managers Network and ECLT sessions	AD Corporate Services
13	Develop a draft migration strategy which supports the organisation in responding to inward migration, including a focus on independence and integration and supporting community cohesion.	AD Corporate Services & AD Economy and Housing

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

Equality Plan 2021-25 & Annual Action Plan

3. Build a diverse and engaged workforce, where everyone is respected

1.Equip staff with the right skills and tools to tackle inequality

1.Honor commitments in our Equality Workforce Monitoring report.

No.	Action	Accountable AD
14	Ensure the People Strategy is informed by a robust equality impact assessment and sets out clear Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion related objectives across the employee life-cycle	AD Corporate Services
15	Develop a formal process to ensure that corporate workforce policies, training, data monitoring, and internal EDI initiatives are created, discussed and reviewed in collaboration with staff through the internal Consultation Panel and other means of staff engagement as appropriate.	AD Corporate Services
16	Develop and implement leadership and management training to enable managers to address issues of inequality or discrimination with confidence.	AD Corporate Services
17	Refresh the equality related questions in the staff survey to provide clear outcome measures against key EFLG workforce themes.	AD Corporate Services
18	Prototype a tool for staff to enable anonymous reporting of experiences of discrimination, victimisation, and bullying & harassment.	AD Corporate Services
19	Building on learning from the development and support of the Equality Forum, establish an internal Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion staff network that is open to all staff with an interest of creating and nurturing a culture of inclusion across the organisation.	Head of HR and OD

TITLE	**Economic Development Strategy**
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 6 March 2024
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco

OUTCOME / BENEFITS

To obtain Member oversight and input into the development of the Economic Development Strategy in line with the priorities outlined herein. Our current Economic Development Strategy was produced pre Covid and requires updating to reflect the current economic climate. Up to date analysis of local data will provide us with a body of evidence which can be used to support future funding applications and communicate our vision to potential investors and businesses. It is our hope that by producing this substantive report we are creating a road map for our future.

In recognition of the challenges facing our Town Centres we are updating the Committee on our initial proposals to develop a sub strategy focusing on our Town Centres, this will be developed in line with the overarching Economic Development Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to provide feedback on the progress and initial findings of the Economic Development Strategy, and the proposed development of a Town Centre Strategy.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Economic Development Strategy

The emerging Economic Development Strategy seeks to assess the economic landscape of Wokingham Borough and its place within the wider economy. It outlines a series of actions and interventions around the key themes of 'Economic Performance', 'Business Competitiveness', 'People, Work and Wellbeing' and 'Place, Infrastructure and Connectivity', which endeavour to improve upon Wokingham Borough's already strong offering as an excellent location to live, work and do business. A list of tasks related to this which have been undertaken to date can be found in the appendix of this report.

The Economic Development Strategy is proposed to be centred around four central themes and has identified the following key priorities:

Business competitiveness: *Encourage innovation and growth to build a competitive business environment*

Reverse the decline in Wokingham Borough's business stock over the last five years by ensuring that both the recent increase in number of business births continues, while also working to improve overall survival rates and bolster business competitiveness and resilience.

Economic performance: *Facilitate economic growth through targeted business support and inward investment*

Protect Wokingham Borough against losses of large, multinational businesses such as Microsoft and look to boost rates of foreign direct investment. Also, ensure that the Borough's key industries (digital technology, life sciences and healthcare) continue to grow, while supporting the creative industry within the area to play an important role in Berkshire's rapidly expanding screen sector.

People, work and wellbeing: *Ensure residents have the skills that businesses need and are able to obtain local, well-paid, secure employment*

Make certain that the strong skills profile of residents is maintained and continues to improve, being cognisant of the Borough's ageing population and projected decline in numbers of young workers.

Place, infrastructure and connectivity: *Promote Wokingham as an excellent location both to live and work*

Ensure that supply matches demand for both commercial and residential space. Work towards our net zero ambitions and retain the Borough's reputation as a prosperous and desirable place to live. Develop, in partnership with our Town and Parish Councils, a focused Town Centres Strategy to address the challenges our high streets are facing.

It is proposed that the strategy will outline these four central themes and will be accompanied by a more detailed action plan which will be reviewed on an annual basis. Data relevant to the Economic Development Strategy will be collected and analysed periodically in order to monitor trends. This data will be available either as a report or an interactive dashboard. The strategy sets out the Council's strategic direction to ensure we maintain our strong economic position with a reputation as a thriving place for business. The strategy is underlined by a strong commitment to partnership working with our Town and Parish Councils and external partners such as the Berkshire Growth Hub and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership in its new defined role from April 2024.

Our emerging Economic Development Strategy will also be developed at a similar time as a Berkshire wide economic strategy which is a requirement of Government following the transfer of local enterprise partnership core functions to local authorities. These two strategies would need to connect, complement, and support one another.

The establishment of a Berkshire Prosperity Board is also of note – with key themes around health and inequalities, education and skills, affordable housing, sector development, strategic infrastructure, and net zero. All of which impact on sustainable economic growth.

Town Centres Strategy
Our intention is to produce a sub strategy that provides support for our Town Centres. Over the last few years high streets nationally have struggled to bounce back from Covid due to high inflation, cost of living crisis and the growing shift towards online shopping. These impacts have been felt in our towns and have been compounded by the following local issues:

- Loss of anchor stores such as Marks and Spencers in Wokingham town centre and local bank branches such as NatWest in both Wokingham town centre and Woodley town centre in 2023.

- Lack of diversity of businesses. Since Covid, we have seen an increase in service industries such as hospitality and the health and beauty sector, reflecting national trends. Residents and retailers would welcome more retail stores.
- Decreased numbers of people shopping in our towns as businesses have not returned to pre-covid baseline.
- Anti-social behaviour. Whilst our crime rates are low in comparison to other areas, we are seeing an increase in ASB and public concern.
- Issues around loading and unloading supplies to businesses premises in particular in Wokingham town centre.
- Some parts of Wokingham town centre (particularly Elms Field) can feel separate to the rest of the town. We need to consider ways to connect these areas with the rest of the town to create a more cohesive and joined-up town centre.
- Traffic congestion and lack of accessible and available parking are particular concerns for Twyford.

The current Local Plan sets out that the existing retail centres in Wokingham Borough are Lower Earley district centre, Twyford village centre together with Wokingham and Woodley town centres and these centres could form the focus for the initial strategy. It is our intention that the needs of the wider retail spaces are also acknowledged in the overall Economic Development Strategy.

A Town Centre Strategy would look to:

- Fully understand the national and local challenges that town centres are currently facing and forecasted trends.
- Identify the individual character of our towns and villages and work with Town and Parish Councils to encourage pride of place amongst businesses and residents alike.
- Clearly define the unique strengths and challenges of Lower Earley, Twyford, Wokingham and Woodley and set out a road map to strengthen their local economies.
- Work with Climate Emergency and Active Travel to support the Climate Emergency Action Plan by creating opportunities for businesses to shift towards Net Zero.
- Create vibrant and accessible town and village centres that support people's health and wellbeing, including the promotion of active travel solutions.
- Provide a summary of activities and interventions that have been undertaken to support the local economy.
- Provide a list of recommendations to strengthen the future of our town and village centres.

The Economy team are currently considering best practice and looking at costs and timescales to undertake this key piece of work. Consultation with stakeholders and local businesses is key to our understanding and successful delivery of any plan. As such, it is important to build in adequate consultation time to agreed timeframes.

The Council's strategic partnership with Reading University may well provide an opportunity to use their knowledge and skills to support the development of the town centres strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION
The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	-	-	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	-	-	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	-	-	

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
Producing a Town Centres Strategy will require a financial and resource commitment. Currently under consideration is a number of delivery options which includes externally commissioning a third party to produce the strategy across to producing the strategy fully in house. The report sets out that the strategic partnership with Reading University may also provide an opportunity to develop the strategy. These options will be developed and reported in due course with any funding requirements to a future Executive.

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
This strategy provides the strategic vision for the Council's approach to supporting and growing a thriving local economy. The strategy supports the wider Council strategies relating to Climate Emergency, Social Value, Transport, Community Safety, Traffic Management and Affordable Housing. An Officers workshop is planned for further consultation.

Public Sector Equality Duty
N/A

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

List of Background Papers
Appendix A Timeline for Economic Development Strategy Appendix B Background Data for Economic Development Strategy Appendix C Briefing note on Town Centre support already undertaken Appendix D Summary Report of Homeworking Study

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APPENDIX A:

Timeline for Economic Development Strategy

Task	November 1	2	3	4	December 1	2	3	4	January 1	2	3	4	February 1	2	3	4	March 1	2	3	4	April 1	2	3	4
Project requirements, scope, outputs and activities agreed	▉																							
Consultation preparation	▉																							
Primary research		▉	▉	▉	▉																			
Secondary research		▉	▉	▉	▉																			
Research analysis						▉	▉	▉																
Consultation events									▉	▉														
Consultation analysis									▉	▉														
Report drafting												▉	▉											
Draft report submitted														▉										
Internal review of draft															▉									
Internal feedback on draft																▉								
Amendments to draft																	▉	▉	▉					
Presentation to WBC																				▉				
Final version published																				▉				
WBC adoption process																					▉	▉	▉	
Strategy adoption																								▉

APPENDIX B:

Background Data for Economic Development Strategy

Outline of ED Strategy tasks undertaken to date
- Project requirements, scope, outputs and activities agreed.
- Consultations with Wokingham Borough-based businesses as well as our Executive Members arranged.
- Extensive suite of primary data collection undertaken across the four key themes of 'Economic Performance', 'Business Competitiveness', 'People, Work and Wellbeing' and 'Place, Infrastructure and Connectivity'. Data spanning four Excel workbooks, complete with accompanying graphs.
- Secondary research undertaken in the form of reading numerous existing Council documents with a view to them informing sections of the ED Strategy and to ensure consistency of messaging.
- Analysis of both primary and secondary data to synthesise preliminary findings – presented as 'findings from literature review' and 'findings from data analysis'.
- Creation and delivery of presentations outlining these preliminary findings, as well as to provide the initial background for the ED Strategy and next steps
- Structure for ED Strategy created and report drafting had begun

Preliminary findings to date

Literature review

- **Economic performance:**
  - Sectoral strengths
    - In keeping with the key industrial areas of Berkshire as a whole, the digital technology and life science sectors are the primary contributors to Wokingham Borough's strong economic performance.
    - It should be noted however, that these industries saw a decline in number of enterprises between 2018-22 of circa 14% – something which should be monitored given their contribution to the local economy.
  - EU/Rest of World organisations
    - Wokingham Borough has the lowest percentage of employment in EU firms across Berkshire at 2.28% and the second lowest percentage of turnover at 7.62% - thereby outlining the limited presence of EU firms in Wokingham's local economy.
    - However, the Borough has the second highest percentage of employment in Rest of World firms at 20.34% with 56.57% of turnover within Wokingham being within these Rest of World firms. This underlines both the appeal of Wokingham Borough as a location for international businesses to operate, as well as their crucial contribution to our local economy.

Business competitiveness:

- **Industrial landscape**

- o Wokingham has the second highest number of registered businesses within its Borough across Berkshire at 8,360 in 2023 – second to Windsor and Maidenhead with 9,070.
  - o The bulk of these are in the 'Professional, Scientific and Technical' and 'Information and Communication' industries, with 1,860 and 1,740 businesses respectively, which reflects Berkshire's wider strengths in both of these key sectors.
  - o The Borough is home to several highly significant filming studios including Shinfield Studios, Winnersh Film Studios and Arborfield Studios – all of which will be play a key role in the established and rapidly expanding pan-Berkshire film sector.
- **International and high growth business**
  - o Numerous high profile, international businesses are headquartered in the Borough such as Microsoft, Oracle and Hewlett Packard.
  - o As per the latest Business in Berkshire Report, Wokingham is home to 123 high growth/high growth potential firms – putting the Borough in fourth position within Berkshire behind Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Reading with 135, 129 and 127 respectively.

People, work and wellbeing

- **Employment space**
  - o According to a 2023 report commissioned by Wokingham Borough Council into home-working, over 67% of Wokingham Borough survey respondents reported that they work more from home since the pandemic.
  - o Over 88% of local survey respondents stated that they do not expect this to change in the next 12 months and this has led to larger companies downsizing/closing offices with only Category A+ commercial space being let easily.
  - o The updating of both commercial and industrial stock to reflect this shift will continue to be a priority if Wokingham is to remain competitive with neighbouring employment space locations.

- **Housing**
  - o Demand for housing in Wokingham remains high, as do the average prices, with Wokingham having the second highest average house price - household earnings ratio across Berkshire (second to Windsor and Maidenhead).
  - o Wokingham has a growing and ageing population which contributes to this increased need for housing, whilst challenges remain, such as constraints on land availability, local resistance and a need for much of this housing to be split across different market segments (affordable homes, low carbon homes, homes for older people etc).

Place, infrastructure and connectivity

- **Transport and infrastructure**
  - o Wokingham benefits significantly in economic terms from its strategic location at the heart of the Thames Valley. The Borough has excellent transport links to London and the wider South-East by both rail and road, as well as being in close proximity to the country's two primary airports.

- o Despite these positives, Wokingham's increasing population as well as its location near both the M3 and M4 poses an ongoing challenge for managing congestion in parts of the Borough.
  - o The way people access transport services has undergone some change over the last ten years or so, notably through a growing use of digital services.
- **Climate change/net zero**
  - o As per Wokingham Borough Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Borough is making good progress on facilitating increased use of EVs, having installed 230 accessible active Electric Vehicle (EV) sockets around the Borough.
  - o Wokingham also fares well regarding air quality and performs above the UK average on recycling with a rate of 53%.
  - o More needs to be done to decrease the number of residents commuting by car, instead, further increasing the take-up of public transport.

Data analysis

Economic performance

- o The change in Knowledge Economy business counts saw a significant decrease in IT services as well as smaller reduction in software businesses. In contrast, the main increases can be seen in creative content and other technical/consultancy services.
- o Wokingham has the second largest UK ownership of enterprises followed by Windsor and Maidenhead in Berkshire.
- o Wokingham has the highest GVA (Gross value added) per filled job and per hour worked in 2020, with an increase of 27.38% and 31.85% from 2016, respectively across Berkshire and Southeast reflecting the efficiency and productivity of workers.
- o The information and communication industry is the highest contributor to GVA (controlled for inflation) in Wokingham in 2021.
- o Industries with highest enterprise counts in Wokingham (2022) were 'Information & communication, 'Professional, scientific, and technical' and 'Construction'.

Business competitiveness

- o Wokingham has the highest rates of business survival when compared to the South East and Berkshire averages, with a five year survival rate of 46% for businesses born in 2016.
- o Across Berkshire, Wokingham observed the second largest decrease in business count (2018-2022) after Windsor and Maidenhead, standing at 0.35%. More positively, the decrease in business count was less in 2021-22 i.e., -1.17% as compared to 2020-2021 where it was -3.31%
- o Unlike both the South East and Berkshire, Wokingham saw an increase (28.57%) in the number of high growth businesses operating within the area between 2017 – 21. During this same period, the South East and Berkshire saw percentage changes of -23.24 and -13.73, thereby highlighting Wokingham as an excellent environment for high growth business, as well as having been resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic.

People, work and wellbeing

- o We have the highest percentage of working age population (16-64) qualified at NVQ1 & above and NVQ2 & above in Berkshire. It also has the second highest percentage of working age population (16-64) qualified at NVQ3 & above and NVQ4 & above in 2021 in Berkshire.
- o Job Density in Wokingham (0.90) is higher than in the Southeast (0.85) for period (2018-2021) and similar to Windsor and Maidenhead (0.94). Wokingham's overall employment rate was the highest (83%) and the Self-employment rate is the second highest (9.3%) in Berkshire in 2022.
- o Wokingham has seen the lowest % change in gross disposable household income per head at circa 6% (2016-2020) across Berkshire and the Southeast.
- o Housing affordability is increasingly challenging in Wokingham, observing an increase of 6.65% in average house prices for the period of 2018-2022

Place, infrastructure and connectivity

- Wokingham has recorded decreasing greenhouse gas emissions year on year between 2018-2020 (falling from 4.5 kt CO_2e in 2018, to 4.3 and then 3.7 in 2019 and 2020 respectively. The emissions are lower than the Berkshire average (7.9), but greater than the average for the Southeast (2.1).
- The most common distance for Wokingham residents aged 16-64 to travel to work is between 5km and 10km, (this is further than the averages for both Berkshire and the South East where the most common distance to travel to work is less than 5km.)
- 50.7% of residents in Wokingham are working from home in 2021 which is an increase of 37.4% point from 2011. This is second highest number across Berkshire behind Reading.
- Driving a car or van (19%) is the prominent means of transport to work as % of usual residents in 2021, and this trend is also observed across Berkshire and the Southeast
- Wokingham has the lowest full fibre availability as a percentage of premises standing at 22.2%. However, the area has similar availability rates for SFFB, UFFB and Gigabit when compared to the averages for both Berkshire and the South East (2019-2023).

APPENDIX C:

Overview of work undertaken to support the local economy of our towns

Strategic support
May 2023 – Town Centre Development Officer
- As part of our UKSPF allocation we recruited a Town Centre Development Officer to work directly with businesses to connect them to support and deliver town centre projects.

December 2023 – Homeworking Study
- We commissioned a study into the impact of homeworking on our economy (summary of findings included as enclosure 3).

January 2024 – Footfall data
- We procured a new footfall data system, that covers not just Wokingham town centre but also Twyford village centre and Woodley town centre to ensure we can accurately track trends.

Events we have run since September
September 2023 - Job Fair
- Wokingham Town Hall - 17 businesses and 250 + residents attended. Newbury Building Society based in Wokingham Town Centre have recruited a local person as a direct result of the job fair.

November 2023 - Small Business drop-in session
- Delivered from the Salty Olive (used a town centre business as a venue to help showcase them as a venue and bring people into the town). The event itself was in partnership with FSB and the Berkshire Growth Hub, offering small businesses the chance to gain advice and support on how to grow their businesses.

December 2023 - Best Dressed Window Competition
- 37 businesses entered over 800 residents voted. Raising the profile of our Town Centre businesses as anyone voting was directed to a Wokingham Borough Council webpage on the Engage platform showcasing all the entries.   Press release announced in time to maximise shopping in the last weekend before Christmas.

December 2023 – utilised the reach of the council's Facebook page to promote Christmas offers in our towns.

January 2024 – Job Fair
- Woodley Oakwood Centre – 12 businesses and over 200 residents attended. Greggs based in Woodley Town Centre have recruited at least one person as a direct result of the job fair.

February 2024 – Apprenticeship support for employers drop in session
- Delivered from the Town Hall, in partnership with local apprenticeship providers, and Wokingham HR team.

Financial Support
£10,070 UKSPF grant funding allocated to each of Twyford Parish Council, Woodley Town Council and Wokingham Town Council to support the development of town centre markets:
- Twyford – gazebos, PA system and match funding refurbishment of community kitchen to add a café dimension to their market.
- Woodley – new Christmas lights and better signage for the market.
- Wokingham – upgrading electrical points for their traders and better signage for the market.

Fund Woodley Town Centre Partnership

- £15,000 to support the Town Centre Manager post.

Funded free parking
- For visitors to Wokingham and Woodley town centres for their festive events.

Free bus journeys
- Grant secured by Transport team to provide free bus travel around the borough in the run up to Christmas.

Funded support programmes for businesses:
- Using UKSPF money we have funded Berkshire Growth Hub to deliver one on one support programmes to Wokingham businesses. We have two programmes currently running:
- Start-up (20 completed, 11 currently enrolled)
- High Growth (7 completed, 8 currently enrolled)

Planning ahead for 2024

In addition to our intention to undertake a Town Centre Strategy we will continue to work with our Town and Parish Councils to deliver support.

We are currently:
- Supporting the Highways team to implement new wayfinding infrastructure in Wokingham Town Centre, ensuring that the needs of the business community are represented. Currently exploring possibility of a digital map for residents to navigate their way through the town and discover local businesses.
- Continuing to deliver promotional campaigns to raise the profile of local businesses and encourage shop local.
- Working with the Arts and Culture Forum to bring more events and engagement into our town centres.
- Investigating options around empty units in our towns, including the possibility of pop-up shops.
- Through our strategic partnership with the University of Reading, exploring research and theoretical support from Henley Business School.

Appendix D:

Executive Summary Homeworking Report

Background:

With a focus on the impact of remote working, the report aims to understand how services, infrastructure, and local economic development of the borough are affected. The Council will use data for planning town centre development and enhancing business park efficiency. Furthermore, it will inform transport and green policies as well as the Economic Development Strategy.

Findings:

Work from home:
- 68% of survey respondents in Wokingham work from home on four or more days per week in comparison to national average of 2-3 days per week.
- In Wokingham, survey respondents continued to prefer either a hybrid or work-from-home option, with the minority of only 6% stating the workplace as their preferred choice.
- The trend towards flexible working is not new but is accelerating. Fighting against it is unlikely to yield any benefits; rather it needs to be embraced, supported, and facilitated.

Impact on town centres and High Streets:
- In the UK, average retail footfall on weekdays in 2022 was reported to be 18% below the 2019 level, compared to 12% on weekends.
- Reduction in the evening economy: During the pandemic, evening/night footfall dropped by nearly 6% nationally, impacted by restrictions and fewer events. Even post-pandemic, there are challenges across the UK in reviving the nighttime economy.
- Increased home working means lower footfall in Wokingham town centre which impacts on local businesses. Footfall estimates for the greater Reading area, which includes the Wokingham borough, sits at 51% of pre-pandemic levels, compared to the national average of 43%.
- Residents now seek additional shops, affordable transport links, and improved travel options for a successful return to working in town centres.

Economic Impact and Spending Habits:
- Hybrid working in Wokingham Borough sees commuters overall spend drop by 40%. We have also seen a decrease of £25 per person in weekly spending.
- 80% of Wokingham residents are spending less on travel to work
- Majority of residents are using these savings for living costs; 22% to boost their leisure spending (include holidays, gym, and sports).
- Urban centres adapt: 21% of survey respondents (local) increase their spend on online shopping. We need to repurpose retail space for homes and workspaces; focus on authentic, unique high streets appeals to Gen Z.

Commercial Real Estate
- Town centres shift to community focused and mixed-use spaces. Reduced office demand impacts commercial real estate. Remote work may drive migration to rural areas, rejuvenating smaller towns.
- This could benefit towns and villages in the Wokingham Borough, as people working from home are more likely to access their local high street during the week rather than larger urban centres, such as Reading.

Decline in Retail Spaces
- Wokingham town centre in particular faces challenges: retail closures cause job losses and reduced spending; decline in vibrancy and independent stores. Twyford village centre and Woodley town centre have been more stable in the number of businesses opening/closing.
- Engage Wokingham 2023 survey: 43% interested in co-working hubs, 21% in collaboration spaces. Hybrid work models reduce large office demand, boost demand for local services like cafes, restaurants, and leisure facilities in town centres.

Community Impact and Wellbeing
- Challenges of remote work: Mental wellbeing concerns due to social isolation and blurred work-life boundaries. Residents miss socializing with colleagues and team interactions.
- Support mechanisms like co-working hubs, networking events, and mental health services crucial for healthy, engaged remote workforce and combating isolation.

Recommendations:

Future Service Provision and Business Innovation
- Offer tailored support programmes for digital transformation and e-commerce adoption.
- Foster collaboration among retailers and community for collective strategies and partnerships.
- Improve digital infrastructure and provide training; consider creating a local business platform or app.

Urban Planning
- Explore the feasibility of further town centre regeneration.
- Work in partnership with Town and Parish Councils to boost local markets and host events to increase footfall.
- Launch local shopping campaigns; offer loyalty programmes and incentives for residents to shop locally.
- Encourage hybrid retail models; provide digital skills workshops.
- Support innovative use of vacant spaces; explore funding schemes like Repurposing Our High Streets.

Use of Businesses and Offices
- Encourage uptake of local co-working spaces; repurpose unused offices; partner with chains or entrepreneurs for wider access.
- Convert underused spaces into event venues or galleries; continue town centre regeneration for improved physical environment.
- Support female entrepreneurs with on-site childcare, foster community, and collaboration for joint ventures.
- Establish business incubators in vacant buildings; tailor support for sectors; utilize council premises to increase footfall.
- Review tax breaks, rate relief, loans, or grants to encourage businesses to fill vacant spaces or with innovative solutions.

Contacting Businesses
- Produce fortnightly 'Business Matters' bulletin updates on council services. Host webinars covering funding, hybrid work, and tech tools. Promote through trusted organisations. Consider creating online portal for borough businesses where local businesses can list their services, seek partnerships, or find local talent.

- Assign team for SME outreach. Collaborate with local networks to host joint events. Organise industry networking events including hybrid events and collaborate for sponsorships and seasonal planning.
- Effective communication via surveys, feedback, and CRM updates. Regular messaging to businesses, associations, and partners ensures alignment with preferences

Skills Development
- Collaborate with local institutions for skills development aligned with future job requirements. Offer workshops on advertising, social media marketing, and promotional strategies.
- Host a jobs fair to support hospitality and retail sectors.
- Establish training centres for digital tools and hybrid work models.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees

**Annual Reports
2023/24**

Produced: February 2024
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Foreword by Councillor Al Neal, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Welcome to the Annual Reports of Wokingham Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2023/24. The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold both internal and external decision makers to account. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees provide independent "critical friend" challenge to the Council and other public service providers. The Committees also play a role in developing and reviewing policy and ensuring that the Council and its partners are working effectively to improve services for residents, businesses and visitors. Effective scrutiny is an important element of the successful functioning of local democracy.

When thinking of the impact of Overview and Scrutiny I am reminded of those Manc legends, The Smiths, specifically their third single: What Difference Does It Make? In my view, effective Scrutiny has to make a difference and add value to the Council's decision making process by challenging in a constructive way and ensuring that the voice of residents is heard. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny identifies a number of factors which underpin effective Scrutiny, factors we have focused on over the past year, viz:

- A positive relationship between Overview and Scrutiny and the Executive;
- Timely access to proportionate, high quality information;
- High quality Member training which is incorporated into ongoing Member roles;
- Cross-party chairing or, at least, good cross-party relationships;
- Dedicated officer resourcing.

As we move into 2024/25, we can all see the serious challenges facing the Council and the Borough. The cost of living crisis, high inflation, increasing (often complex) demand for key services, recruitment and retention of key staff, climate emergency and pressure for new development in the Borough have created significant challenges. Across the country, a growing number of councils are struggling to set safe budgets. It is vital, therefore, that Overview and Scrutiny provides effective challenge to ensure that public money is spent wisely on key priorities, that the Council continues to innovate and develop strong partnerships and that our most vulnerable residents receive the support and quality services they need.

The Annual Reports for 2023/24 demonstrate the wide range of issues considered during the year, the range of Scrutiny recommendations made to the Executive and the outcomes for residents across the Borough. The reports reflect the hard work and commitment of residents, community groups, partners, Members and officers who contributed during the year. My thanks go to everyone who made a contribution.
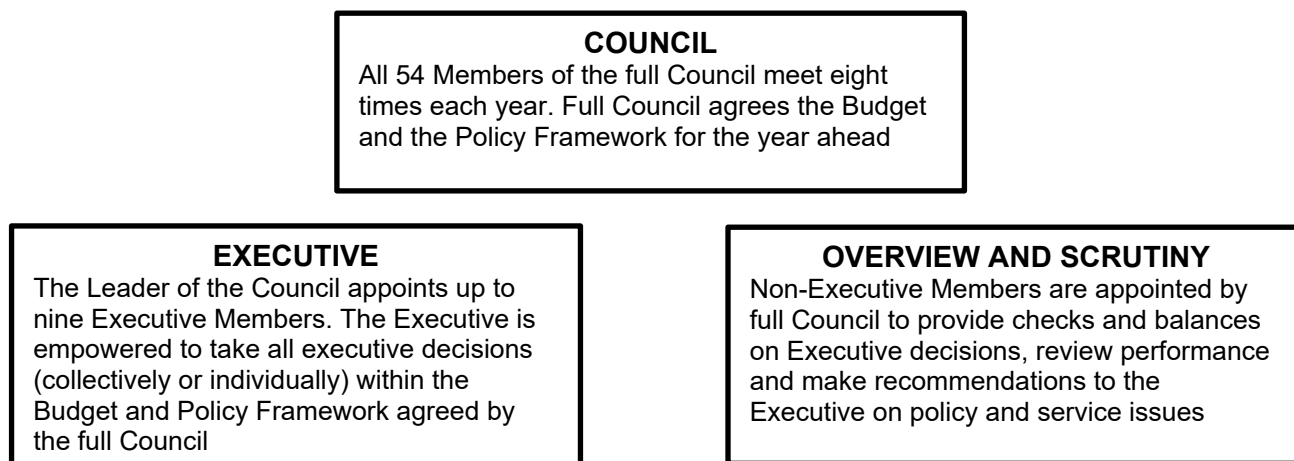
Al Neal

SECTION 1 – WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY?

Wokingham Borough Council is a large, complex organisation with over a thousand employees and an annual budget of £154m. The Borough's Community Vision (due to be updated in 2024) is to make the Borough "a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business". The Council makes major strategic decisions which affect the long-term future of the area and its communities. It also makes decisions on a daily basis which affect the lives of some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents. Other public service providers such as the NHS, Thames Valley Police and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service also make key decisions which affect the residents of the Borough. In order to ensure that the Council and other service providers spend public money wisely and make well-informed decisions about key services, it is essential that an effective system of checks and balances is in place.

A distinction is drawn between "Overview" which focuses on the development of policy and "Scrutiny" which looks at decisions that have been made, or are about to be made, to ensure that they are fit for purpose. In this document "Scrutiny" refers to both Overview and Scrutiny. Scrutiny is based on the Parliamentary select committee model of governance where MPs, who are not part of the Government, hold inquiries into issues of public interest and make recommendations for change. In the Council model, the Scrutiny Committees make recommendations for change to the Executive. Scrutiny meetings are held in public. Residents and community groups are encouraged to participate by asking questions and raising issues of community interest for investigation and debate.

The Council's Executive takes decisions within the financial and policy framework set by the full Council. Non-Executive Members of the Council (representing each of the political groups) are appointed to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review those decisions and the performance of key services. The relationship between Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny is illustrated in the diagram below:

COUNCIL
All 54 Members of the full Council meet eight times each year. Full Council agrees the Budget and the Policy Framework for the year ahead

EXECUTIVE
The Leader of the Council appoints up to nine Executive Members. The Executive is empowered to take all executive decisions (collectively or individually) within the Budget and Policy Framework agreed by the full Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
Non-Executive Members are appointed by full Council to provide checks and balances on Executive decisions, review performance and make recommendations to the Executive on policy and service issues

In order to deliver the Overview and Scrutiny function the Council has established the following Committees:

- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – responsible for overseeing the Scrutiny function and developing an annual work programme for each of the Committees.
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of services relating to schools, safeguarding and child protection, looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee – responsible for scrutiny of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and the ambition to achieve "net zero" by 2030.
- Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - responsible for scrutiny of Council services, crime reduction and community safety and flood risk management.
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) – responsible for scrutiny of local NHS bodies, public health arrangements and the work of the Local Healthwatch service.

The Committees consider issues at their regular meetings or by setting up time-limited Task and Finish Groups. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny structure is illustrated below:

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

| Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee |

Task and Finish Groups
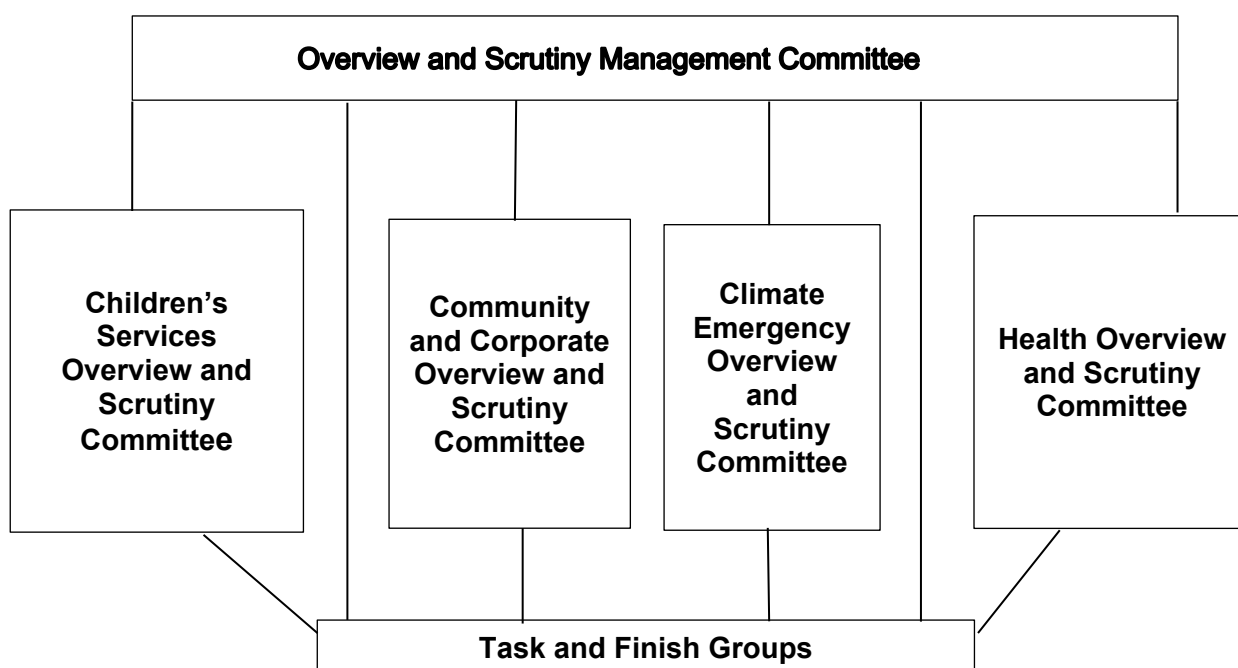
Four Principles of Effective Scrutiny
- Constructive "critical friend" challenge to the Executive and external service providers;
- Channelling the "voice" of the public and representing all the Borough's residents;
- Members reaching bipartisan conclusions based on the weight of evidence;
- Driving continuous improvement which promotes community wellbeing and quality of life.

Limitations
Scrutiny is not about the investigation of minor matters or individual complaints. The Council has a separate corporate complaints procedure which is used to investigate individual complaints about services. Similarly, Scrutiny does not look at quasi-judicial matters such as planning or licensing issues. Finally, Overview and Scrutiny is not used for raising issues of a party political nature. These matters can be addressed through debate at full Council meetings.

SECTION 2

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Al Neal, Chair of the
Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has three important roles. Firstly, to develop, oversee and monitor the annual work programmes of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Secondly to scrutinise a range of issues within its own work programme. Thirdly, to ensure that Scrutiny Members have the relevant skills, training and support to enable them to carry out their important role as scrutineers.

During 2023/24, the Committee scrutinised a number of important issues end emerging policies affecting residents of the Borough. The Committee has now established bi-annual discussions with the Council Leader and Chief Executive to discuss priorities and challenges facing the Council. The Committee also considered the quarterly corporate performance management report on key services, the Council's approach to business change and customer excellence changes to the waste service, consultation and engagement and the implementation and monitoring of Motions approved by Council. In light of significant public concern, the Committee held two sessions with Thames Water representatives, supplemented by a site visit to the treatment plant in Wargrave. The Committee will seek to develop and extend the scrutiny of key external service providers, such as energy providers, in the year ahead.

Looking ahead, the Management Committee will continue to focus on strengthening the Overview and Scrutiny process with further emphasis on work programming, pre-decision scrutiny and policy development. The Committee has recognised the importance of training for Members to enable them to carry out their Scrutiny roles and will seek to ensure that the Member training budget is sufficient, especially as the Council may be inducting a raft of new Members following the all-out elections in May 2024. Members have also recognised the importance of engagement with residents and community groups and will be seeking to generate greater public involvement in Scrutiny. Finally, regular meetings have been set up between the Scrutiny Chairs, Executive Members and Directors in order to ensure that the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny are working together effectively.

I would like to thank the Members, officers, residents, community groups and external experts who contributed their time, effort and insights during the year.

Al Neal

Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee oversees the Council's Scrutiny function and is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the work programmes and support for the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Committee also has its own extensive work programme, focussing on key strategic issues and the work of key partners.

Membership
Councillor Al Neal (Chair).
Councillors Andrew Mickleburgh (Vice-Chair), Andy Croy, Catherine Glover, Chris Johnson, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Adrian Mather, Stuart Munro, Caroline Smith and Alison Swaddle.

Substitute Members: Jane Ainslie, Phil Cunnington, Peter Dennis, Graham Howe, Clive Jones, Morag Malvern, Charles Margetts, Ian Pittock, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Bill Soane and Marie-Louise Weighill.

Officer contact: Neil Carr   neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Leader and Chief Executive
The Committee has established six-monthly discussions with the Council Leader and Chief Executive. The discussions allow scrutiny of key challenges facing the Council and an opportunity to "horizon scan" in order to identify emerging issues which would benefit from early scrutiny. Issues discussed included the ongoing financial challenges (exacerbated by inflation and the cost of living crisis), increasing levels of demand and complexity in key service areas (especially children's, adults and housing) and inconsistency in partnership working which led to missed opportunities for collaboration and joint funding. Members scrutinised issues such as the new strategic partnership with Reading University, ideas for better partnership working with Town and Parish Councils and the development of an evidence-based approach to lobbying for a fairer funding settlement from the Government.

Performance Management
The Committee received quarterly Performance Management reports setting out details of the Council's performance against a number of financial and operational indicators. Members used the quarterly data to probe on areas of underperformance and select issues for more in-depth scrutiny. The importance of genuinely SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) was stressed. Executive Members were invited to attend the meetings in order to provide evidence on recent service issues based on the most up-to-date information. Performance indicators relating to children's services, health and social care were considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Thames Water
The Committee held two sessions with Thames Water representatives during the year. Thames Water outlined the challenges facing the company in light of public criticism about the discharge of sewage into rivers and waterways, water leakage, the handling of customer

complaints and future investment plans. A number of action points were agreed including the sharing of information on leakages, investment plans and the roll-out of smart meters in the Borough. Opportunities for joint working were also agreed such as lobbying on the implementation of the section of the Flood and Water Management Act relating to the responsibility of developers to implement sustainable drainage systems in new housing developments. Members also attended a site visit at the Wargrave sewage treatment plant which provided an insight into some of the challenges facing the company.

Affordable Housing

The Committee scrutinised the draft Affordable Housing Strategy prior to its submission to the Executive. The strategy focussed on identifying need, providing suitable accommodation for vulnerable residents, delivering healthy and safe homes and promoting the development of thriving communities. The aim was to improve housing outcomes whilst helping to address the significant financial challenges facing the Council. Member comments and feedback, including support for changes for key workers in allocations, were fed into the final version.

Waste Collection

The Committee scrutinised proposed changes to waste collection service in the Borough. From the summer of 2024, most households would put out waste in 180 litre black wheeled bins which would be emptied every two weeks. Changes to the service were projected to boost recycling rates from 54% to 64% whilst delivering a revenue saving of c£1m. Members asked a range of questions on issues such as limited access properties, glass recycling, communication with residents and key stakeholders, lost or damaged bins, fly tipping and the factors underpinning the estimated £1m savings. The Committee requested a further briefing in early summer 2024, as the project was nearing full implementation (August 2024).

Member Training

In line with best practice across the country, the Committee recognises the importance of ongoing training and development to ensure that Members' skills and knowledge are constantly upgraded. Members need a sound understanding of key services such as children's, adults, housing and highways in order to carry out effective scrutiny. Due to Budget constraints, only one Member training session was held during the year (Budget Scrutiny) which assisted Members involved in Scrutiny of the Council's Budget process and procedures. Member training will be especially important in the year ahead as it is likely that a number of new Members will be joining the Council following the all-out elections in May 2024.

Scrutiny Impacts

Effective Scrutiny should have a defined impact on the ground, with the Committees making recommendations that make a tangible difference to the work of the Council and other public service providers. Over the past year the following impacts are highlighted:

- Leader and Chief Executive – discussion on key challenges identified opportunities for scrutiny involvement on issues of public interest and helped to ensure that the Executive and Scrutiny are working together in a complementary way.
- Input into service changes – scrutiny of service/policy changes, e.g. waste and affordable housing – the Scrutiny process challenged emerging thinking, leading to better outcomes.
- Thames Water – Scrutiny of an external service provider – an opportunity to provide feedback from residents and explore opportunities for joint working for community benefit.

SECTION 3

REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Andrew Mickleburgh, Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee's work is split almost equally between children's social work and educational attainment. As well as monitoring all the recommendations put in place by earlier Committees, the new work that has been carried out is outlined below. This keeps the Committee in touch with how the Service and schools are performing.

During March 2023 the Service received an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). The Committee was keen to monitor and support the Council's Improvement Plan. The Committee was also involved in the development of policies prior to their adoption by the Executive.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee, and the substitutes for their commitment to and interest in the work that we do, and for all the positive and genuinely useful contributions that they have made.

Andrew Mickleburgh

Remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutiny and policy development in relation to services for children and young people. This includes schools, early years' settings and children's centres, safeguarding and child protection, children in care, care leavers and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Membership:
Councillors: Andrew Mickleburgh (Chairman), Ian Pittock (Vice-Chairman), Jane Ainslie, Anne Chadwick, Phil Cunnington, Graham Howe and Andrew Gray.

Substitute Members:
Councillors: Pauline Helliar-Symons, Morag Malvern, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Chris Johnson, Alison Swaddle, Tony Skuse and Michael Firmager.

Church of England Representative
Fr Richard Lamey

Community Representative
Sarah Clarke – Wokingham SEND Voices

Roman Catholic Representative – one vacancy

Parent Governor - two vacancies

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Highlights from the Year

Key Performance Indicators
The Committee received reports outlining the KPI's for the Service and regularly monitored their performance. Wokingham has high aspirations and Members have challenged the Service to achieve a high level of performance in all areas of work. Where improvement was needed, the Committee sought to monitor the implementation and development of improvement plans.

Education Updates
The Committee continued to closely monitor the performance of schools and children's educational attainment.

The Committee has been closely monitoring the development of the Safety Valve Programme. The programme has evolved, and many strands of work are underway. The programme is currently on track to deliver a balanced budget by 2028/29.

The Committee receives regular updates on schools causing concern. Local Ward Members are invited to attend these sessions and take part in the discussions about improvement plans.

The Committee received information about the Ofsted school inspections that took place during the year. The Borough continues to provide an excellent level of education for children and young people attending schools in the Borough. Of particular note is the 'outstanding' Ofsted result achieved by Chiltern Way School. The Committee also closely monitors school places sufficiency across the Borough.

Updates from the Executive Member for Children's Services
The Executive Member for Children's Services, Councillor Prue Bray, was invited and in attendance at most meetings. This gave the Committee an opportunity to be informed of the new trends of work and current priorities. The Committee was therefore able to express its views, early on, in the development of strategies and policies.

Youth Council and SEND Youth Council
The Committee received the SEND Youth Council, who were able to tell the Committee directly about their aspirations and challenges. The Committee valued their representations and invited them to attend on an annual basis.

Overview and Scrutiny of Policies and Strategies
The Committee had an early overview of the following policies: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Strategy (UASC); Home to School Transport Policy; Young People Housing Strategy and SEND Strategy. Robust, constructive discussions took place, with many recommendations being produced for the Executive's consideration. This approach to overview has been encouraged and supported by the Executive, in recognition of the value that it adds to the work of the Executive.

The Committee reviewed and challenged the following items: Social Worker Recruitment and Retention Strategy; Complaints Review, Impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, and the Holidays, Activities and Food Programme.

Action Tracker
The introduction of a regular Action Tracker item to monitor actions arising from discussions has provided much more clarity and accountability.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Improved transparency and accountability across all services.
- Strengthened the Council's lobbying efforts to bid for better funding.
- Helped to shape and influence policies.
- Challenge and support the service to continue improving the outcomes for children and young people in the Borough.

SECTION 4

REPORT OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Andy Croy, Chair of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency. The amended Motion to declare the Emergency was passed unanimously by the Members present. The Council committed to "playing as full a role as possible in achieving a net carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030". The Council pledged to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) and to submit annual updates showing progress on individual carbon reduction targets.

The CEAP (published in January 2020) focussed on priority areas for carbon emission reductions, including transport, homes, businesses, waste and behaviour change. The CEAP also set out proposals to generate renewable energy, increase carbon sequestration and strengthen the planning process to deliver carbon neutral construction and infrastructure. Finally, the CEAP included proposals for engagement with residents, schools, businesses and local stakeholders.

After some unnecessary delay which limited the work of the Committee in 2022/23, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee finally decided to establish a stand-alone Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee which met for the first time in January 2023. The aim of the Committee is to act as a "critical friend" to scrutinise and support the delivery of the CEAP. In so doing, the Committee draws upon the knowledge and experience of Members, officers and external experts in order to develop recommendations which strengthen the Council's response to the Climate Emergency and ensure progress towards the "net zero" ambition. A summary of the Committee's work in 2023/24 is set out below.

The CEAP is clear that there is a massive gap between where we are now and achieving carbon neutrality in Wokingham by 2030. This remains true even if every action in the CEAP were actioned this year. It is also clear that the Borough's limited resources make achieving all the aims of the plan by 2030 highly unlikely, but this has always been the case. However, the Borough is certainly more likely to deliver on some of the promise of the CEAP than it has been in the past.

I would like to thank the Members, officers, partners and other stakeholders who contributed their time, effort and insights during the year.

Andy Croy

Remit of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The role of the Climate Emergency Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise and assist with policy development relating to the Council's commitment to play as full a role as possible to reduce the Borough's carbon footprint to be Net Zero by 2030. This involves monitoring the implementation of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) including the examples of Climate Emergency "best practice" from other public or private sector organisations.

Membership
Councillor Andy Croy (Chair).
Councillors Chris Johnson (Vice-Chair), Michael Firmager, Catherine Glover, Graham Howe, Norman Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Al Neal and Ian Pittock,

Substitute Members: Councillors Jane Ainslie, Laura Blumenthal, Anne Chadwick, Andrew Gray, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Clive Jones, Andrew Mickleburgh, Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey and Shahid Younis

Officer contact: Neil Carr   neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

CEAP 4th Progress Report
The Committee scrutinised the fourth update of the Council's CEAP, reviewing the 10 key priority areas for carbon reduction together with the 100+ actions in the plan. The latest assessment stated that the Borough's carbon footprint was 505 ktCO2e, with a current projected shortfall in 2030 (after all the actions had been delivered) of 240ktCO2e. Consequently, in order to meet the 2030 carbon neutral goal, further actions and resources, as well as strategic embedding of Climate Emergency considerations, would be needed. The Executive Member attended the meeting and informed Members that, for the first time, an action plan had been included in the CEAP to support the development of an Adaptation Plan for the Borough. The CEAP would also be improved to make it more accessible for residents with visual impairments. Members commended the significant progress made on the CEAP whilst noting the challenges ahead.

Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group
The Committee reviewed progress against the recommendations of the Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group which produced reports, with recommendations, to the Executive in 2020 and 2021. In July 2020, the Group proposed 14 recommendations to strengthen the CEAP and make the reporting process more transparent. The 2021 review focused on four key elements of the CEAP: transport, homes, renewable energy and behaviour change. The Group received evidence from internal and external individuals representing the Council, Imperial College London, University of Leeds, National Grid, Giki Zero, University of Reading, Reading Buses, and the Executive Member for Climate Emergency. The results of the 2021 review, including 25 recommendations, were presented to the O&S Management Committee in July 2021. The Committee concluded that all of the Task and Finish Group recommendations were still relevant to the delivery of the current CEAP. The Committee

recommended that the Council work with partners to lobby the Government on issues such as "green skills" shortages and the appropriate strategies and funding needed to address them.

CEAP and the Local Plan Update

The Committee scrutinised progress on the update to the Council's Local Plan. The update was being prepared in the context of existing national planning policy, guidance and legislation. Its principal aim was to set out the strategy and associated policies for managing future development in the Borough. Members noted that the emerging spatial strategy had been influenced by the CEAP. Officers from the Planning Policy and Climate Emergency teams collaborated to share best practice and monitor progress towards achievement of the CEAP's goals. The Committee recommended that training be provided for all Members on the links between the Local Plan Update and the CEAP and that the new Local Plan include provisions relating to the delivery of high speed broadband as this would help to reduce travel across the Borough with consequent reductions in carbon emissions.

Barkham Solar Farm

The Committee received regular updates on progress in delivering the Barkham Solar Farm Project. In March of 2023, SSEN had advised that the connection date for the Barkham Solar Farm had been pushed back from 2026 to 2037. Following intense negotiations, SSEN subsequently agreed to a connection date of August 2026. The revised connection offer represented a significant and positive step in the delivery of the solar farm project. An updated business case for the solar farm project was due to be reported to the Committee in February 2024. Members congratulated the Executive Members and officers for the achievement of a 2026 connection date as the solar farm was an important part of achieving the CEAP targets.

CEAP Communications Plan

The Committee scrutinised the draft Climate Emergency Engagement and Communications Plan. The Plan would sit alongside the CEAP and would be used as a guide to work with stakeholders, share ideas and collaborate on communication and engagement initiatives. The plan would also help WBC to consider and develop actions for inclusion in the CEAP that would have the most impact in shifting behavioural change. The Plan aimed to raise the profile of the CEAP, promote dialogue with stakeholders, empower residents and businesses and promote engagement with under-represented groups. Officers confirmed that the Committee's comments and suggestions would be fed into the final version of the Engagement and Communications Plan.

Scrutiny Impacts

- CEAP – following on from the work of the Climate Emergency Task & Finish Group, the Committee scrutinised key elements of the CEAP (including procurement, planning and highways) testing assumptions and progress against the targets in the key priority areas.
- Communications and Engagement – the Committee emphasised the importance of engagement with all sectors of the community in order to promote understanding and behaviour change which was crucial to the success of the CEAP.
- Solar Farm – constructive challenge and support for the delivery of the Barkham Solar Farm as an important step in the generation of renewable energy in the Borough and an additional income stream for the Council.

SECTION 5

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chris Johnson, Chair of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During the past year, the Committee has continued its focus on the effective delivery of Council services to ensure that they provide value for money for the Borough's Council Taxpayers. Executive Members and officers were invited to attend meetings of the Committee to give evidence and answer questions on priorities and performance.

This year marked the fifth consecutive year that the Committee had looked at the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in detail, prior to its submission to the Executive and Budget Council meetings. This exercise has continued to add value to the Budget setting process by challenging Executive Members and Directors to explain the rationale for spending proposals in a clear and understandable way. The backdrop to this year's Budget Scrutiny process was the enormous financial challenges facing the Council along with many other councils across the country. Members echoed calls for Government reform to core funding mechanisms to ensure that the levels of demand and cost pressures facing local authorities are considered adequately in determining their levels of funding.

The Committee considered a range of other issues during the year including the annual update from the Community Safety Partnership, proposals to close and repurpose the St. Crispin's leisure centre and progress against the Violence against Women and Girls Action Plan. The Committee established a Task and Finish Group relating to the provision and management of litter bins and noted progress made by the Active Travel Task and Finish Group.

In developing its work programme the Committee is keen to ensure that the "voice" of local residents and community groups plays a bigger part in its deliberations. The Committee recognises that involving residents, community groups and local "experts" in Overview and Scrutiny reduces the risk of a partisan approach as Members are able to hear directly from those stakeholders whose interests they are representing. The Committee will continue to promote greater public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny over the coming year and will share any relevant learning with the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

My thanks go to the Members, officers, residents and other stakeholders who took part in our meetings and made valuable contributions during the year.

Chris Johnson

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Remit of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of internal Council operations (including the Budget setting process) and partnership working across the Borough. It also has responsibilities under the Police and Justice Act 2006 which involves oversight of the operation of the Borough's Community Safety Partnership. The Committee is also responsible for the scrutiny of flood risk management.

Membership
Councillor Chris Johnson (Chair).
Councillors Peter Dennis (Vice-Chair), Laura Blumenthal, David Cornish (part year), Catherine Glover, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Alistair Neal and Marie-Louise Weighill.

Substitute Members: Councillors Jane Ainslie, Andy Croy, Phil Cunnington, Clive Jones, Stuart Munro, Caroline Smith and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Officer contact: Liam Oliff: liam.oliff@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024/27
The Committee undertook a detailed review of the Budget process and the emerging 2024/27 MTFP. Executive Members and Directors were invited to attend the meetings to present their Revenue and Capital bids and to explain in detail how the requested funding would be used to support key services. The role of the Committee was to challenge assumptions within the Budget setting process and to encourage key decision makers to think about their proposals from a different perspective. The Committee scrutinised key risks, the modelling of future demand patterns, the achievability of income and savings targets and the evidence supporting key assumptions in the MTFP. The Committee produced a report on its findings which was submitted to the Budget Executive and Council meetings in February 2024. Members also requested an in-year update on the various financial reserves held by the Council.

St Crispin's Leisure Centre
The Committee scrutinised the business case for the proposal to close the St Crispin's Leisure Centre and transfer the asset to the school (the Circle Trust) in order to support the delivery of additional school places. Members asked for greater assurance in relation to protection of the Council's assets, future demand for school places, clarity on operating arrangements and protection for community use in the future. After detailed scrutiny at two meetings, the Committee recommended that the proposals be accepted. The Committee also requested a follow-up report on arrangements at St Crispin's and all other agreements involving schools and leisure facilities in the Borough.

Local Transport Plan 4
The Committee scrutinised the emerging Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). Members noted that the key drivers in the plan were to reduce environmental impacts from transport, grow the local economy and create healthy and safe places across the Borough. The Committee also

noted the concerns raised by residents as part of the consultation on the plan. These included the safety of children walking to school, maintenance of roads and footpaths, a lack of travel options and the perception that highways infrastructure was not cycle-friendly. The Committee raised a number of questions and comments which were fed into the development of the LTP4 prior to its submission to the Executive.

Arts and Culture Strategy
The Committee scrutinised the Council's emerging Arts and Culture Strategy. Members noted the priorities in the strategy, including enhancing cultural identity and sense of 'place', developing opportunities for children and young people, supporting economic growth and maximising partnerships and collaboration. The Committee commended officers on developing the strategy and requested that future reports identify which funding bids were in progress, finished, delayed or cancelled. Members also suggested that additional effort be made to advertise ongoing and future engagement with young adults.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
The Committee considered an update on the Council's VAWG Strategy and the supporting action plan. Members noted the key priorities in the strategy including putting victims at the centre of the process, holding perpetrators to account, safeguarding and supporting victims at every stage and raising local awareness of the issues. Members emphasised the importance of timely data and benchmarking showing progress and requested the inclusion of smart outcomes in the next iteration of the VAWG update. The next update should also provide details of progress against the Anti-Abuse Charter.

Council Housing Companies
The Committee considered a review of the Council's housing companies – Berry Brook Homes, Loddon Homes and Wokingham Housing Ltd. Members scrutinised strategic options for the future development of the companies including the proposal that a Shareholder Committee be established. Members requested a further report giving further details of the structure and timeline for the Shareholder Committee.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Budget setting and the MTFP – the Budget setting process was scrutinised by the Committee in the context of the huge financial challenges facing the Council. Transparency around crucial issues such as the emerging Budget forms an essential part of the checks and balances that Overview and Scrutiny provides. The Committee noted the significant growth pressures in Children's Services and committed to ongoing scrutiny of the service during 2024/25, in conjunction with the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- Developing positive working relationships with Executive Members and Directors – Executive Members and Directors were invited to attend the Committee's meetings. Answers to Member queries were frank and detailed, providing a solid foundation for transparent Overview and Scrutiny.

- Oversight of key Council services – continued scrutiny and monitoring of key Council services, such as highways, grounds maintenance and the Council's housing companies, to ensure that they are delivering value for money and engaging with residents.

SECTION 6

REPORT OF THE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Adrian Mather, Chair of the
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

The new setup of the joint Berkshire West, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire (BOB) Integrated Care System (ICS), with its board (ICB) and partners (ICP) is now in place. Through a joint BOB HOSC, we are participating in the review of the Strategy created by the BOB ICB. Whilst the BOB ICB is still maturing, we want to continue to review its Strategy and the implications for the delivery of health services to our residents in Wokingham Borough.

In addition, the Committee wants to be forward looking. We also want to engage and where possible, support the initiatives from the ICS with its objectives, e.g. to improve outcomes in the population's health, tackle inequalities in health outcomes, experience and patient access.

During the year we have focused on our primary responsibility of scrutinising local health service delivery, including the delivery of social care to our residents, NHS Dental provision, GP practices, GP services and Pharmacy services. There is significant stress on all services, however, we must continue to scrutinize these services.

We continue to work well with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough, the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of residents and have been kept informed of their work and issues of resident concern, at most meetings. We have engaged with one GP Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) and we would like to engage with more PPG's.

All members of the Committee and their substitutes are invited to attend training to keep up to date with any new legislation and service developments. Training is also arranged during the year should a specific need arise.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee, substitutes, Officers, and other partners who took part in meetings for their contribution throughout the year.

Adrian Mather

Remit of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) scrutinises issues which relate to the planning, provision and operation of health and wellbeing services in the Wokingham Borough. This includes acute and community health services, adult social care services, family and public health services and health related services commissioned jointly by the Council, health bodies and the voluntary sector.

Membership
Councillor Adrian Mather (Chairman).
Councillors Rachelle Shepherd Dubey, (Vice Chairman), Phil Cunnington, Rebecca Margetts, Alistair Neal, Jackie Rance, Beth Rowland, Tony Skuse, and Shahid Younis

Substitute Members: Jane Ainslie, Andy Croy, Graham Howe, Chris Johnson, Pauline Jorgensen, Morag Malvern, Caroline Smith, Bill Soane, and Alison Swaddle

All attendees at HOSC meetings, including members of the public, may ask questions after each report or presentation is presented.

Officer contact: Madeleine Shopland   madeleine.shopland@wokingham.gov.uk

Highlights from the Year

Healthwatch
The Committee are updated at each meeting on the work of the consumer champions, Healthwatch Wokingham Borough. Issues on their 'local watch list' include * Asylum seekers * Accessing GP and NHS dentist appointments; * Dentistry and patients with learning disabilities * Mental health support for children and young people; and * Cost of living crisis.

Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators
The Committee monitored performance achieved against the Adult Social Care Key Performance Indicators and sought further information about areas of underperformance.

Dental Services
The Committee scrutinised dental services, which continued to be a key concern to residents. At its September meeting, the Committee was updated on dental services in the Borough and in particular, progress being made to improve access to dental services. The Committee asked about access challenges, flexible commissioning and budgets, and workforce.

Building Berkshire Together
Since 2019 the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBFT) has been placed on the New Hospital Programme as part of the Government commitment to deliver 40 new hospitals by 2030. The Committee has been kept updated on the progress of the Building Berkshire Together project, the options under consideration and the potential challenges and opportunities.

Seasonal vaccinations

At its November meeting the Committee received an update on flu and Covid vaccinations take up. Members sought to better understand the variation in uptake amongst different areas of the community and highlighted the Borough's large Hong Kong population. Members were updated on the communication and engagement work being undertaken to improve take up, particularly amongst harder to reach groups. The Committee requested a breakdown of information at a Borough level to give a clearer picture of vaccination take up amongst Borough residents.

GP contracts
Residents continue to be concerned about access to GP services. Sarah Webster, Executive Director for Berkshire West Place, Abid Irfan, Director of Primary Care, ICB, and Helen Clark, Head of Primary Care, BOB ICB, updated the Committee on the GP 2023/24 contracts and what this meant for Wokingham Borough residents. The Committee was informed of action being taken to improve workforce recruitment and retention, and increased access to appointments. Members expressed concern about access to health facilities for residents in new estates.

Pharmaceutical Services
In July the Committee were briefed by Karen Buckley, Consultant in Public Health, and David Dean, Chief Officer, Community Pharmacy Thames Valley, on local pharmacy services and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. Members probed a number of issues including medication supply and demand, the criteria used to assess the level of need, and enhanced services.

Adult Social Care specialist accommodation
The Committee received a briefing about the successful Adult Social Care Specialist Accommodation project, one of the aims of which was to reduce residential care placements, especially for those with learning disabilities.

Domiciliary care
The Council has a duty to maintain the domiciliary care market and to ensure that care provided is safe and affordable and that there is sufficient choice in the local area. The Committee received an update about domiciliary care services within the Borough at its September meeting.

Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy
The Committee scrutinised the Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy at its November meeting. Members sought information on how recruitment and retention were being addressed, different ways of working and apprenticeships.

Social Care Futures
At its November meeting the Committee received a presentation from social care users regarding how the Council was working with service users to rethink, redesign and reorientate care by adopting the Social Care Futures Charter. Members supported the Council's adoption of the Charter.

Berkshire Coroners Service

The Council contributes financially to the Berkshire Coroner Service. The Committee received a presentation at its January meeting on the service provided and future initiatives.

BOB ICS Transforming Primary Care Executive Summary.

At its January meeting, the Committee engaged with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System and considered its draft Transforming Primary Care Executive Summary. The Committee highlighted the need for different ways of engaging with the community, and for the document to be easily accessible. It was suggested that reference be made to the Council's Marmot ambitions.

Scrutiny Impacts

- Gaining an insight into the key health and social care services that serve the Borough.
- Ensuring that residents' needs are considered as part of the commissioning and delivery of local health services.
- Continuing to work with Healthwatch Wokingham Borough to raise the profile of matters raised by residents.

SECTION 7

GETTING INVOLVED IN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Council is committed to making Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings accessible to all residents of the Borough. A key aim is to increase public involvement in the process and to remove barriers to participation.

Residents can get involved in Overview and Scrutiny by attending meetings - all Overview and Scrutiny meetings are open to the public and are held in the early evening to make attendance easier. In addition, copies of Agenda including reports to be considered are published five working days before each meeting and can be accessed on the Council's website:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/council-and-meetings

During the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. These meetings are accessed via a You Tube link set out on the meeting Agenda. Residents are now able to attend in person or view the meetings on line.

Residents can also elect to receive automatic notification when new Overview and Scrutiny Agenda and Minutes are published.

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting includes a Public Question Time session which allows residents to raise issues of general interest and/or specific issues relating to the items under consideration. Public questioners are allowed to ask a supplementary question to develop the theme of the original question or react to the initial answer given.

Members of the public are also able to contribute to Scrutiny reviews by giving evidence either as an individual or as part of a community group. Residents can also request that a specific item is considered by Overview and Scrutiny as a review item.

During 2024/25 the Council will continue to use local and social media to raise awareness of issues coming before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to allow residents to provide comments and feedback.

The Council's Twitter feed is accessible here: WokinghamBorough@WokinghamBC

If you want to learn more about Overview and Scrutiny or want to discuss a specific issue, please contact Neil Carr, the Council's Scrutiny Officer:

- by telephone: 07889 669359, or

- by email: neil.carr@wokingham.gov.uk or by post:

Democratic Services, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1BN.

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE FORWARD PROGRAMME

**THIS DOCUMENT IS A "NOTICE" IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS)(MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION)(ENGLAND)
REGULATIONS 2012**

Executive Forward Programme 2023-24 (February 2024)

Updated 12 February 2024

Ref No.	Subject for Decision	Decision to be taken by	List of Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker for consideration and Background Documents	Contact Details (Director/ Author)	Responsible Lead Member	Statement as to whether the item is likely to be considered in private and if so the reasons why / Explanation for any deferment of item
**EXECUTIVE MEETING – 22 FEBRUARY 2024**
WBC 1366	**Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024/25** Purpose: The revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25 are set and tenants rent levels are set for 2024/25 to ensure sound finances and value for money in providing housing services for council tenants.	Executive	Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024/25	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ Mark Thompson	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	N/A
WBC 1367	**Treasury Management Strategy 2024-2027** Purpose: Note the treasury management procedures, limits, and objectives for 2024/25. Effective and safe use of our resources to deliver service improvements and service continuity through the management of the council's cash flow and investments while funding the capital programme.	Executive	Treasury Management Strategy 2024-2027	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ Mark Thompson	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	N/A

Ref No.	Subject for Decision	Decision to be taken by	List of Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker for consideration and Background Documents	Contact Details (Director/ Author)	Responsible Lead Member	Statement as to whether the item is likely to be considered in private and if so the reasons why
WBC 1368	**Capital Programme and Strategy 2024-2027** Purpose: The capital programme and strategy 2024 – 2027 sets out the capital investment for the benefit of the community and how this is funded.	Executive	Capital Programme and Strategy 2024-2027	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ Mark Thompson	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	N/A
WBC 1369	**Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2027 Including Revenue Budget Submission 2024/25** Purpose: To provide the Executive with the key revenue budget extract for 2024/25 of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024-2027 for submission to Council.	Executive	Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2027 Including Revenue Budget Submission 2024/25	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ Mark Thompson	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	N/A
WBC1406	**Housing Responsive Repairs & Maintenance Contract** Purpose: The purpose of this report is to seek Executive approval to procure a new term contract for responsive repairs and maintenance services as is required to repair and maintain the housing stock owned and managed by the Council and the Council's housing companies.	Executive	Procurement strategy options appraisal report.	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco/ Rodney Coyle	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	N/A
WBC 1413	**Establishment of a Joint Committee – The Berkshire Prosperity Board** Purpose: To set up a Joint Committee in partnership with the other five	Executive	Cover report Supporting papers describing the constitution and governance of the Prosperity Board	Chief Executive - Susan Parsonage/ Rhian Hayes	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	N/A

Ref No.	Subject for Decision	Decision to be taken by	List of Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker for consideration and Background Documents	Contact Details (Director/ Author)	Responsible Lead Member	Statement as to whether the item is likely to be considered in private and if so the reasons why
	Berkshire Local Authorities to provide the governance for running the Berkshire Prosperity Board					
EXECUTIVE MEETING – 14 MARCH 2024						
WBC 1397	**Young People's Housing Strategy** Purpose: To agree to the publish the Young People's Housing Strategy.	Executive	Young People's Housing Strategy 2024-2028 EQIA	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco/ Samuel Watt	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	N/A
WBC1407	**Affordable Housing Strategy 2024 - 2028** Purpose: To obtain Council approval to adopt the proposed Affordable Housing Strategy 2024 - 2028.	Executive	Strategy Document, Equalities Impact Assessment	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco/ Frances Haywood	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	N/A
WBC 1414	**Barkham Solar Farm Update** Purpose: To provide an update on the business case and progress report to the Executive	Executive		Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ David Smith	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	By Virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
WBC 1415	**Statement of Community Involvement (adoption)** Purpose: To consider representations made on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2023 and subsequent adoption.	Executive	Report. Enclosure 1: Consultation statement. Enclosure 2: Statement of Community Involvement.	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco/ Ian Bellinger	Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan - Lindsay Ferris	N/A
WBC 1416	**Building Control Partnership** Purpose: Seek agreement to sign Building	Executive		Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco/	Executive Member for Planning and Local Plan -	N/A

Ref No.	Subject for Decision	Decision to be taken by	List of Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker for consideration and Background Documents	Contact Details (Director/ Author)	Responsible Lead Member	Statement as to whether the item is likely to be considered in private and if so the reasons why
	Control partnership arrangement with West Berkshire Council			Roger Paine	Lindsay Ferris	
WBC1408	**Tackling Poverty Strategy Refresh** Purpose: A mid-point review of the Tackling Poverty Strategy to take account of changing national and local context and improved data and insight.	Executive		Chief Executive - Susan Parsonage/ Emily Higson	Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty - Rachel Bishop-Firth	N/A
WBC1409	**Strategic Asset Review** Purpose: A review of the Council's approach to strategic asset management and future asset opportunities.	Executive		Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ Sarah Morgan	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	Particular information relating to financial performance or values of assets may be commercially sensitive.
WBC1410	**Responsible body status (Biodiversity Net Gain)** Purpose: To secure approval for officer to make an application to DEFRA for responsible body status in relation to biodiversity net gain	Executive		Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framalicco/ Laura Buck, Andy Glencross	Executive Member for Environment, Sport and Leisure - Ian Shenton	N/A
WBC 1417	**Shareholders Committee** Purpose: To consider the establishment of a Shareholder Committee as a committee of the Executive with effect from 2024/25.	Executive		Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers/ Andrew Moulton	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway	N/A
EXECUTIVE MEETING – 27 JUNE 2024						
WBC 1411	**SEND Strategy** Purpose: To consider the revised SEND Strategy incorporating the Safety	Executive		Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson/ Jonathan Wilding	Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Children's	N/A

Ref No.	Subject for Decision	Decision to be taken by	List of Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker for consideration and Background Documents	Contact Details (Director/ Author)	Responsible Lead Member	Statement as to whether the item is likely to be considered in private and if so the reasons why
	Valve agreement with the DfE and recent changes to the SEND Local Area Inspection Framework.				Services - Prue Bray	

Members of the Executive:-

Stephen Conway	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing
Prue Bray	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Children's Services
Rachel Bishop-Firth	Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty
David Cornish	Business and Economic Development
Paul Fishwick	Active Travel, Transport and Highways
Lindsay Ferris	Planning and Local Plan
David Hare	Health & Wellbeing and Adult Services
Ian Shenton	Environment, Sport and Leisure
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey	Finance

Note:

Unless the matter has been listed as being likely to be discussed in private, copies of the reports associated with the above decisions will be available no earlier than five days before the meeting at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham; on the Council's website; by contacting a member of the Democratic Services Team: democratic.services@wokingham.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Action Tracker 2023/24

O&S Management Committee – 12 June 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Thames Water	• Letter from Chair to Thames Water summarising issues discussed • Members to attend site visits at STWs • Notify Town/Parish Councils about opportunities for Thames Water briefings • Arrange discussion with Members on sinkholes in Borough • Thames Water – WBC discussions on cost of living measures, smart meters, adoption of infrastructure and water efficient homes	• Completed • Completed • Completed • Completed • Completed
Q4 Corporate Performance Report	• Review layout and content of pie charts in report • Director and Executive Member review targets in leisure centre KPI • Further report on performance of leisure centres • Officers consider inclusion of assets values in KPI on investment portfolio	• Completed • Completed • C/F 2024/25 • Completed
O&S Work Programmes	• Allocate resident/Town/Parish suggestions to O&S Committees • All reports/presentations to be submitted in advance of O&S meetings	• Completed • Completed

O&S Management Committee – 18 July 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Leader of the Council – Stephen Conway	• Improving the "Overview" aspect of O&S – discussions with Leader and O&S Chairs • All-Member briefing on the "Safety Valve" agreement with the DfE	• Completed • Completed

Agenda Item	Action	Update
	• Specific focus on improving partnership working with Thames Valley Police	• Completed
Annual Complaints Report 2022/23	• Future reports to include data on response times for each stage of the complaints process • The term "customer" to be reviewed as part of the emerging Customer Excellence Strategy • Any policy updates to be submitted to the appropriate O&S Committee • Future complaints reports include more detailed equality monitoring data	• Completed • Completed • Completed • Completed
Bus Enhanced Partnership & Scheme	• Progress on implementation to be submitted to O&S annually • Officers check legislation re inclusion of an exit clause to the agreement • Report to Executive to include clarification on WBC's financial commitment after 2026/27	• Completed • Completed • Completed
O&S Work Programmes	• Add OSMC item on Sports Pitch Strategy • Add OSMC item on WBC Recruitment and Retention • Approach SSEN re attendance at OSMC • Add C&C item on 2023 grass cutting	• Completed • Completed • Completed • C/F to 2024/25

O&S Management Committee – 11 September 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Q1 2023/24 Performance Report	• Provide further information on points raised by Members	• Completed
Estate Infrastructure Task & Finish Group	• Original 12 recommendations endorsed and updated as agreed by Members • Further update to the Committee in 2024/25	• Completed • Completed

Scrutiny Improvement Review Action Plan	• Update Action Plan to reflect Member discussion • O&S reports to include sections agreed by the Committee • SIR feedback session with Centre for Governance and Scrutiny noted	• Completed • Completed • Completed
O&S Work Programmes	• Add OSMC item on Sports Pitch Strategy • Add OSMC item on WBC Recruitment and Retention • Approach SSEN re attendance at OSMC	• Completed • Completed • Completed

O&S Management Committee – 4 October 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Vision for Our Borough	• Further update report in early 2024	• Completed
WBC Future Office Provision	• Recommendation to the Executive that other options across the Borough be included in feasibility work, including improvements to Shute End • Officers to produce timeline for further "gateway" reports to O&S • Financial implications to be scrutinised through Budget Scrutiny process	• Completed • Completed • Completed
Unauthorised Encampments	• Circulate further info in response to Member questions • Further update report in 2024/25	• Completed • 2024/25
O&S Work Programmes	• St Crispin's Leisure Centre to Community & Corporate on 14 November • Barkham Solar Farm – all elements to be scrutinised by Climate Emergency O&S • Community & Corporate to scrutinise transport plans for new developments in Barkham area	• Completed • Completed • 28 February 2024

O&S Management Committee – 15 November 2023

Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Waste Collection Changes Project	• Progress on the project noted; • Member comments and questions to inform the project; • Executive Member and Director to review KPIs and report back to the Committee; • Further update report in June 2024; • Member briefings on project after May 2024 elections	• Completed • Completed • Ongoing • Ongoing • TBC
Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy	• Member comments and questions to be fed into development of the policy; • Committee to receive feedback of any changes prior to submission to Executive	• Completed • Completed
Council Motions	• Update schedule of progress following Member comments • Circulate finalised schedule to all Members; • Officers to consider process for updating Members who sponsor Council Motions	• Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing
O&S Work Programmes	• O&S section of new Constitution to be submitted to the Committee for comment	• Ongoing

O&S Management Committee – 16 January 2024

Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Thames Water	• WBC Comms team to provide info to residents, e.g. on the Priority Service • Support Thames Water on lobbying re Schedule 3 of the Flood Water Management Act	• Ongoing • Ongoing

	• WBC officers to explore potential support to Thames Water, e.g. delivering bottled water	• Ongoing
	• Request Executive Member/officers to pursue more effective water management through the LPU	• Ongoing
Leader and Chief Executive	• Support evidence-based approach to lobbying on Council funding	• Completed
	• Invite to meeting in six months	• Ongoing
Q2 Corporate Performance Report	• KPI Updates noted	• Completed
	• Further information requested to be circulated to Members	• Ongoing
Affordable Housing Strategy	• Member comments to be fed into the Strategy	• Completed
	• Reference to "creative industries" as a key sector be removed from the strategy	• Completed
O&S Work Programmes	• Noted	• Completed

O&S Management Committee – 6 February 2024		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	• Agreed	• Completed
Recruitment and Retention Update	• Committee supports initiatives for working people with caring responsibilities.	• Completed
	• Committee supports greater use of data, e.g. cost per hire, in reports to the Personnel Board	• Completed
Air Quality	• Note that two out of three AQMAs will be revoked and one (Wokingham Town Centre) will remain	• Completed
	• Further update on Air Quality in late summer/early autumn 2024	• Ongoing
	• Recommend a Comms Strategy to update stakeholders in AQMAs	• Ongoing

	• Recommend a mechanism for identifying potential new locations for Air Quality monitoring	• Ongoing
O&S Work Programmes 2024/25	• Process for developing work programmes approved • Report to 6 March 2024 meeting for final approval	• Completed • Completed
O&S Work Programmes	• Consider introduction of in-year Budget Scrutiny for 2024/25 • Draft update of Council Constitution to circulated to the Committee for comment	• Completed • Ongoing