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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday 18 July 2024

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Chairman)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Lynne Parsons

Councillor Nigel Simpson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Broad
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Barry Wood

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 14)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 12 March and 13 June 2024.

4. Chairman's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chairman.

5. Urgent Business

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

6. Performance Monitoring Report End of year 2023 - 2024 (Pages 15 - 56)

Report of Assistant Director – Customer Focus

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position at the end of the financial year 2023-2024.

Recommendations

Officers recommend the committee:

- 1.1 To note the Council's End of year performance report for 2023/24

7. Work Programme Planning for 2024-2025

The Chairman, Assistant Director – Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer and the Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead will facilitate a discussion on work programme planning for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year.

Committee members will have the opportunity to propose subjects for consideration, and should bear in mind the five roles of scrutiny:

- Performance Monitoring
- Policy Development
- Policy Review
- Holding the Executive to Account – the latest version of the Executive Forward Plan can be viewed via the [Cherwell District Council website](#)
- External Scrutiny

The Committee will also need to consider whether the following three working groups should continue in 2024-2025.

- Climate Action
- Food Insecurity
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (joint group with Personnel Committee)

Officers will also give details of suggested topics by service areas, for Committee consideration.

Meeting dates have been set for the remainder of the Municipal Year and are as follows (all 6:30pm):

Tuesday 10 September
Tuesday 15 October
Tuesday 26 November
Tuesday 28 January
Tuesday 11 March

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

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Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

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If you make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed by the council to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or joining virtually, you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

The council is obliged, by law, to allow members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record, and report on proceedings. The council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Emma Faulkner / Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections
democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221534

Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer

Published on Wednesday 10 July 2024

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 13 June 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Chairman)
Councillor Nigel Simpson (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill (In place of Councillor Lynne Parsons)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Lynne Parsons

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Appointment of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/2025

It was proposed by Councillor Crichton and seconded by Councillor Dr Thornhill that Councillor Dr Creed be elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Dr Isabel Creed be elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

The Monitoring Officer opened the meeting and dealt with agenda items 1, 2 and 3. Upon being appointed, Councillor Dr Creed then took the chair.

3 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/2025**

It was proposed by Councillor Chapman and seconded by Councillor Wood that Councillor Simpson be elected Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Nigel Simpson be elected Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

The meeting ended at 6.33 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 12 March 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor John Broad (Chairman)
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Patrick Clarke
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Dorothy Walker
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Bryn Williams

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Simon Holland

Also Present:

Councillor Phil Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Safe Communities
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing & Housing
Shona Ware, Assistant Director Customer Focus
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety

Tom Gubbins, Wellbeing Manager

65 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

66 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcement:

1. That current Committee members Councillors Clarke and Williams and previous Committee Chairman Councillor Donaldson would be standing down at the forthcoming elections. The Chairman thanked them for their hard work during their time on the Committee and the wider Council.

68 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

69 **Future Oxfordshire Partnership - Scrutiny Panel Update**

The Chairman provided an update on the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) Scrutiny Panel meeting of the 11 March 2024 that he had attended.

The Committee was advised that from the 31 March 2024 the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) would no longer exist and that the existing LEP functions would transfer to Oxfordshire County Council. The Chairman explained that this would lead to changes to the structure of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and to the FOP Scrutiny Panel going forward.

Councillor Broad also provided an update on the work of the FOP advisory groups including the Planning advisory group, Planning for Health Infrastructure advisory group and Joint working on Biodiversity Net Gain. The Committee was updated on the report regarding the Local Transport Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which had shown that the number of bus and cycle journeys were not as high as had been anticipated but it was believed that this was due to the fact that the data had been collected in the winter period.

The Committee was advised that due to the changes arising from the cessation of the LEPs, the work programme for the FOP Scrutiny Panel would need to be re-evaluated.

Resolved

- (1) That the update regarding the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) be noted.

70

Performance Outcomes Framework 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services introduced the update on the Performance Outcomes Framework 2024/25. The Committee was advised that the framework set out the basis of how the Council measured its performance against both the strategic priorities set out in its Business Plan and the corporate objectives that were recently agreed in the Annual Delivery Service Plan.

The Assistant Director - Customer Focus provided the Committee with an update on some of the targets that had not been available when the report was published as part of the agenda. These included:

- the yearly target of 1,142 for Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell's needs
- the percentage of Climate Action plan delivering to target had previously been a monitored measure but had now been changed to a target of 66%
- the amount of greenhouse gas emissions for the year which had been updated to 3,900 tonnes.

The Corporate Director - Communities provided the Committee with an update on the proposed Economic and Regeneration indicators. It was explained that as part of the Enterprising economy priority, the success of the implementation of projects that were funded from the UK Prosperity fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (plan reference EEV1) would be measured by the number of businesses and local residents that the projects engaged.

In response to a question regarding the potential monitoring of the number of new businesses set up in the District, the Corporate Director – Communities advised the Committee that this was difficult to achieve due to the lag in time of obtaining the data from the Office of National Statistics. Other methods of reporting this metric were being investigated.

In response to a question seeking clarification on the milestones for Business Plan priority EV3 – to develop a plan for reimagining Bicester and ensure existing and new communities benefit from short and long term measures of the garden Town principles - in Quarter 3 and a possible conflict of finalising a design that was still under consultation, the Corporate Director – Communities advised that the draft masterplan was for Bicester as a whole whereas the Market Square Final scheme design was for that particular area only. The two milestones related to the two separate projects.

In response to a question of whether the target of a 1% reduction in the fleet fuel consumption was ambitious enough, the Corporate Director –

Communities explained that there whilst route optimisation helped to reduce fuel consumption, the increase in the size of the District meant that routes were getting longer and this limited the impact of efficiencies from optimisation. The Committee was also advised that the switch from combustion vehicles to electric ones was still some time away. The Assistant Director – Environmental Services provided more information on some of the other actions that had been taken to reduce fuel consumption such as monitoring driver behaviour and introducing systems for pre-heating vehicles in the winter months rather than leaving the engines running. The Committee was advised that the technology and price was not at a point where the Council could switch larger vehicles from diesel to electric.

In response to a question regarding the terminology used in the Business Plan and whether the 2030 climate target under 'supporting environmental sustainability' should be net zero rather than carbon neutral the Corporate Director – Communities agreed to check the wording with the Climate Action Manager.

In response to a question regarding the metrics for measuring the move to the Council's new offices in Castle Quay (plan reference SES3) and in particular the timescale for disposing of Bodicote House, the Assistant Director – Customer Focus advised that Committee had commented on the plan, including the measures and milestones, earlier in the year and it had now been approved by Executive. It was agreed that further discussion would take place outside of the meeting to clarify the wording of this particular measure.

In response to a question regarding whether the value of 66% was ambitious enough as the percentage of the Climate Action plan delivering to target, the Corporate Director – Communities advised the Committee that it was a realistic figure considering the resource challenges the Council faced but it was hoped that the target would be exceeded. It was explained that the progress on the delivery of the Climate Action Plan would be reported to the Committee through the quarterly performance review reports.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the approach to managing the council's performance for 2024/25 be noted.
- (2) That having given due consideration, no changes be recommended to Executive for consideration.

71

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans 2024-25

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services introduced the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan for 2024-25 and advised that this had been produced in consultation with the EDI working group. The Chairman of the working group, Councillor Coton, provided an update on the group's work over the last year and provided some examples of how the action plan had been delivered across the district. This included the Everybody's Wellbeing

strategy, the establishment of the Resettlement team to help support refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants and the production of updated Human Resource policies to reflect the key EDI principles.

Regarding the structure of the plan, the Committee was advised that the working group proposed to deliver nine actions to deliver Inclusive Communities with the focus on reaching out to underrepresented communities and vulnerable residents, eight actions as part of the Inclusive Services Action Plan to ensure services are accessible to all and seven actions to deliver Inclusive Workplace with the emphasis on training to support employees with different needs. The Inclusive Workplace action plan had been reviewed and agreed by the Personnel Committee at its meeting on the 7 February 2024.

Following a detailed discussion regarding action plan commitments EDI 1.03, Work directly with communities to identify inequality and tackle disadvantage and EDI 1.04 Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chain and strategic partnerships, it was agreed that the proposed actions for these two items, currently shown as “No actions for 2024/25” should be reconsidered and the plan updated accordingly. The Committee acknowledged that the plan was a starting point and further work would take place in the future to enhance and improve the plan.

The Committee thanked Councillor Coton and the rest of the Working Group for their hard work over the last year in producing the EDI action plan.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the following comments be referred to Executive for consideration at their 8 April meeting:
 - Inclusive Communities action plan Commitments EDI 1.03 and 1.04 – consideration be given to amending the wording in the ‘proposed action’ column to acknowledge the work undertaken so far and providing a commitment to build on that work going forward.
- (2) That Executive be recommended to delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Customer Focus to make minor amendments to the agreed Inclusive Communities and Services Actions Plans, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Chair of the EDI working group.

72 Community Safety Update and Brighter Future Initiatives Presentation

The Head of Regulatory Services provided the Committee with an update on Community Safety work in response to previous discussions that had taken place regarding performance indicator BP4.1.02 support community safety and anti-social behaviour prevention activities.

The presentation provided an overview of the Regulatory Services and Community Safety statutory functions which included environmental

protection enforcement, food hygiene inspections, premises licensing for the sale of alcohol and anti-social behaviour work carried out by the Community safety team.

The Committee was advised that the Regulatory Services team took an approach that balanced the needs of protecting the environment and local residents whilst also supporting business and the local economy. This was achieved by using a combination of monitoring and evaluating standards and compliance and where necessary taking enforcement action to address any issues that were identified.

The presentation also outlined the service activity that the Community safety team undertook in the District which included running the Community Safety partnership, dealing with anti-social behaviour witnessed on patrol and issuing fixed penalty notices within the prescribed powers. The team also worked in partnership with other agencies that had led to initiatives such as the Safer Streets project funded by Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner and Violence Against Women and Girls project funded by the Home Office.

The Wellbeing Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Brighter Futures Partnership. The Committee was advised that the Partnership has been active for over 12 years and worked with over 50 local community organisations across a range of disciplines including health, education, business and faith groups. The scheme focussed on the three most deprived wards in Banbury, Grimsbury, Ruscote and Neithrop.

The Committee was advised that the Partnership concentrated on six themes: Stronger communities and volunteering; Health, wellbeing and physical activity; Safer communities; Housing; Economy, education and skills; and Start well (early years development). These were underpinned by a structure of Stakeholder Steering Groups, Partnership events and Local networks.

The Committee was shown data that demonstrated the reasons for targeting the three wards in Banbury. In the Ruscote and Neithrop wards, eight out of 32 indicators were ranked worse than the England average and this included factors such as overall income deprivation, emergency hospital admissions. In Grimsbury 16 out of 32 indicators were ranked worse than the England average.

The Wellbeing Manager concluded the presentation with some examples of some of the success stories of the initiative which included the Safer Street Projects and Breakfast initiative located at The Hill.

In response to a question requesting more information on data by ethnic group, it was agreed that the Wellbeing Manager would provide the information after the meeting.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of extending the project to Kidlington and Bicester, the Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Housing advised that the Healthy Place Shaping team had implemented the K5 Better

Together initiative in Kidlington and Healthy Bicester in Bicester to provide help to residents in those areas. The Committee was also advised that a Local Area Coordinator had been identified for the Bicester East ward and that the work done as part of the Brighter Futures Initiative would now be introduced to the Bicester West ward.

The Chairman thanked the presenters and their respective teams for the good work that had been carried out by them to address the challenges faced in the Banbury wards.

Resolved

- (1) That the Community Safety update and Brighter Future Initiatives presentations be noted.

73 **Working Group Update - March 2024**

The Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead presented the update on the work of the Climate Action, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Food Insecurity working groups.

With regard to the Food Insecurity working group and the Cherwell Food action plan, the Committee were advised that Executive had approved the action plan at its meeting on 4 March 2024.

The Chairman thanked members of all working groups for their work throughout the year.

Resolved

- (1) That the working group updates be noted.

74 **Work Programme 2023-24**

The Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead advised the Committee that as it was the end of the Municipal year the current work programme had concluded. A new work programme would be produced once the Committee had been re-appointed following the Full Council meeting on 22 May.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their participation throughout the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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This report is public	
Performance Monitoring Report End of year 2023 - 2024	
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny
Date of Committee	18 July 2024
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Cllr Chris Brant - Portfolio Holder Corporate Services
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	10 June 2024
Report of	Assistant Director – Customer Focus

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position at the end of the financial year 2023-2024.

1. Recommendations

Officers recommend the committee:

- 1.1 To note the Council's End of year performance report for 2023/24

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The council performed well against its yearly objectives, which consisted of 34 Business Plan Measures (27 targeted and 7 monitoring only), 13 Peer Review Actions, 12 Annual Delivery Plan milestones and 18 Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans activities.
- 2.2 From the total of 70 targeted measures and activities, 69 reported Green, none reported Amber (slightly behind target) and one reported Red (behind target) by the end of the financial year 2023-24.

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance 10 June 2024
Legal	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. Shahin Ismail, Interim Head of Legal Services, 10 June 2024
Risk Management	End of year 2023-24 Risk monitoring report was presented to the Executive committee on 10 June 2024, and will be presented to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on 17 July 2024. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 10 June 2024

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no direct equalities and inclusion implications as a consequence of this report. The report includes a summary on our performance against the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Action plans 2023/24 Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 04 July 2024
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		N/A
ICT & Digital Impact		x		N/A
Data Impact		x		N/A
Procurement & subsidy		x		N/A
Council Priorities	This report links to all council's priorities, as it summarises our progress against them during 2023/24			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its performance to ensure it delivers its priorities for the year ahead which are set out in its Outcomes Framework as agreed by the Executive on 3 April 2023.
- 3.2 This report aims to update the committee on how well the council performed against the targets and milestones for the financial year 2023-24.

4. Details

4.1 Performance Summary

During a year full of changes and challenges, our overall performance in 2023-24 remained strong, confirming our commitment to being a high performing council, working hard to embed a culture of continuous improvement, providing excellent services, keeping our residents at the heart of all we do.

4.2 Business Plan Measures

All but one of the 27 Business Plan measures achieved their year-end target or within the agreed tolerance.

The measure that missed its target for 2023-24 was “Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell Needs” with a final figure of 792 completions, achieving 70% of the set target; this result has been heavily affected by the national context, circumstances such as inflation, high building costs, and high interest rates resulting in lower than expected completions.

See Appendix 1 for the full list of targeted measures.

- 4.3 There are also seven measures that the council monitors for trend analysis to identify any emerging trends that might require early intervention from us or partners. There are no targets for these measures as they are dependent on external factors.

See Appendix 2 for the end of year data for these seven monitoring measures.

4.4 Annual Delivery Plan Priorities

Of the 12 actions identified for 2023/24, six have been completed and six are ongoing activities, continuing into 2024-25.

See Appendix 3 for end of year updates on the Annual delivery plan.

4.5 Peer Review Action

Of the nine actions for the 2023/24 financial year, one was completed during Quarter 4, and 8 are ongoing activities, on track to be completed during 2024-25.

See Appendix 4 for end of year updates for the Peer Review Action Plan

4.6 Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Action plans

Please see Appendix 5 to review our progress against the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion action plans as of end of year 2023-24.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: This report summarises the council's position up to the end of the financial year 2023-24, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the contents of the report are noted.

Decision Information

Key Decision	No
Subject to Call in	Yes
If not, why not subject to call in	
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Appendix 1 – Business Plan Performance 2023-24 Appendix 2 – Business Plan Monitoring measures 2023-24 Appendix 3 – Annual Delivery Plan 2023-24 Appendix 4 – Peer Review Action Plan 2023-24 Appendix 5 – EDI Action Plans 2023-24 Appendix 6 – Annual Report 2023-24
Background Papers	N/A
Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Celia Prado-Teeling - Performance & Insight Team Leader
Report Author contact details	Celia.prado-teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221556

Appendix 1 - Business Plan End of year 2023_24

Housing that meets your needs					
Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.01 Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation (TA)	Cllr N Mawer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gordon Stewart ■ Nicola Riley 	40	40	★
<p>Commentary We continue to progress cases well and in a timely manner, reporting within the tolerance agreed against our yearly target.</p>					
BP1.2.04 No of affordable homes delivered	Cllr N Mawer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gordon Stewart ■ Nicola Riley 	266	190	★
<p>Commentary The number of affordable homes delivered is comfortably above the targeted level. The breakdown for this year is 174 Affordable Rent, 81 Shared Ownership and 11 in Social Rent. The number of homes for social rent remains a concern in order to ease the demands that we have in other areas of the service, such as homelessness. This has however increased to 11 from 5 in the previous reporting year, which is positive, but is still a very small proportion of the overall homes being delivered. The trend is for more homes for rent being delivered as part of affordable housing delivery and away from shared ownership, which is a potential reflection of market conditions.</p>					

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.06 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims and council tax reduction (Days)	Cllr A Nell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Michael Furness ■ Stephen Hinds 	16.1	18.0	★
<p>Commentary The in month performance for March is 10.43 days for new claims against a target of 18 days. We have achieved the year to date performance for new claims for 2023 -24 processing new claims within 16.1 days against a target of 18 days, we will continue to work and support vulnerable residents in 2024-25.</p>					
BP1.2.07 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit Change Events & council tax reduction (Days)	Cllr A Nell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Michael Furness ■ Stephen Hinds 	3.5	8.0	★
<p>Commentary The in month performance for March is 1.22 days for changes in circumstance against a target of 8 days. We have achieved the year to date performance for changes for 2023-24 processing changes within 3.5 days against a target of 8 days, we will continue to work and support vulnerable residents in 2024-25.</p>					
BP1.2.08 % of Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ David Peckford ■ Ian Boll 	84.1%	60.0%	★
<p>Commentary</p>					
BP1.2.09 % of Non-Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ David Peckford ■ Ian Boll 	88.0%	70.0%	★
<p>Commentary</p>					

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.10 % of Major Applications overturned at appeal	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ David Peckford ▪ Ian Boll 	6.4%	10.0%	★
BP1.2.11 % of Non-Major Applications overturned at appeal	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ David Peckford ▪ Ian Boll 	0.7%	10.0%	★
BP1.2.12 Maintain 5 year land supply	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ David Peckford ▪ Ian Boll 	5.80	5.00	★
<p>Page 21</p> <p>Commentary The council published a housing land supply position of 5.8 years in January 2024 for Cherwell which exceeds the 5 year requirement. At a recent appeal an Inspector concluded that the Council had under a 4 year supply of housing when combining the district housing land supply figure with the housing land supply for Oxford's unmet housing need. The council is preparing for a legal challenge to that appeal decision.</p>					
BP1.2.13 Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ David Peckford ▪ Ian Boll 	792	1,142	▲
<p>Commentary This result has been heavily affected by the national context, circumstances such as inflation, high building costs, and high interest rates resulting in lower than expected completions.</p>					

Supporting environmental sustainability

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP2.2.01 % Waste Recycled & Composted	Cllr A McHugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ed Potter ■ Ian Boll 	52.17%	55.00%	★
<p>Commentary Our recycling rate at the end of last year was 52.5%. The figure shown as our YTD is the result so far this Year but not the final Year End figure, as we are still awaiting confirmation on the final tonnage. However, based on our internal calculations the predicted outturn will be 53%, an increase of 0.5% this is mainly due to a better growing season for garden waste. Dry recycling and glass have continued to fall due to the cost of living giving residents less income.</p>					
BP2.2.02 % of electric vehicles in the fleet	Cllr A McHugh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ed Potter ■ Ian Boll 	15.05%	15.00%	★
<p>Commentary We now have 14 electric vehicles in the fleet. We are still looking to increase when the size of vehicles we need become available. We currently have orders placed for another 3 electric vehicles to which delivery keeps getting pushed back by the suppliers. We also have to be mindful of depot infrastructure with regards to charging facilities.</p>					

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP3.2.01 % of Council Tax collected, increase Council Tax Base	Cllr A Nell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Michael Furness ■ Stephen Hinds 	98.02%	97.00%	★
<p>Commentary The end of year collection rate was 98.02% which exceeded the end of year target of 97.00%. We collected in over £131m in respect of 2023/24 which is distributed to the preceptors who provide vital services to our residents. We will continue to pursue any outstanding balances. Achieving a high in-year collection rate benefits the Council's overall cash flow, minimising the level of arrears also benefits council tax payers generally by reducing the allowance made for non-collection allowed in determining the council tax base for future bills.</p>					
BP3.2.02 % of Business Rates collected, increasing NNDR Base	Cllr A Nell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Michael Furness ■ Stephen Hinds 	98.63%	97.00%	★
<p>Commentary The end of year collection rate was 98.63% which exceeded the end of year target of 97.00%. We collected in over £105m in respect of Business Rates due in 2023/24, we will continue to pursue any outstanding balances for Business Rates to contribute to the overall budget for Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.</p>					
BP3.2.03 % of Building Regulations Applications acknowledged to within 3 working days of deposit	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ David Peckford ■ Ian Boll 	92.66%	80.00%	★
<p>Commentary The start of the year experienced a dip in performance due to resource shortages which were addressed, and the year end performance is above target.</p>					

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP3.2.04 % of valid Full Plan Applications determined or checked within 25 working days of deposit	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ David Peckford ■ Ian Boll 	100.00%	100.00%	★

Commentary
This result includes where extensions of time allowed under the legislation have been agreed. This measure has reached 100% Year End Result and therefore fully met its target.

Healthy, resilient and engaged communities

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP4.2.01 Number of Visits/Usage of contracted & directly managed sports facilities	Cllr N Simpson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gordon Stewart ■ Nicola Riley 	1,395,640	1,348,666	★

Commentary
This year we have achieved our target, final usage figures for this year being 1,395,640 against a target of 1,348,666

BP4.2.04 % of due high risk food inspections completed	Cllr P Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Tim Hughes 	100.00%	100.00%	★
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Commentary
100% of A and B's completed on target for year.

Supporting environmental sustainability

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP2.1.01 Work with partners to deliver initiatives to improve air quality in the District	Cllr P Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Tim Hughes 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary</p> <p>At its meeting on the 4 March 2024 the Executive approved the Air Quality Action Plan 2024, and the revocation of two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs); AQMA No.2 at Horsefair/North Bar in Banbury, and AQMA No.3 at Bicester Road in Kidlington.</p> <p>Work is starting on the 2024 Annual Status Report which will report on the air quality monitoring undertaken across the district in 2023. This report must be submitted to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs by 30 June.</p>					
BP2.1.02 Promote the green economy	Cllr P Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ed Potter ■ Ian Boll 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary</p> <p>We held the first climate community event in January to raise awareness of the climate agenda and to engage with communities, this was followed by an economic forum in March and the delivery of a programme of activity to promote green economy to businesses and raising of awareness of customer values through the UK Shared Prosperity Funding and work such as the Banbury Vision 2050 survey to engage and understand drivers for future town centre retail and regeneration.</p>					

An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP3.1.01 Monitor Cherwell elements of Future Oxfordshire Partnership Homes from Infrastructure work	Cllr D Ford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Robert Jolley 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary The Future Oxfordshire Partnership's Homes from Infrastructure programme has been delivered to schedule and continues to be managed by Oxfordshire County Council, in consultation with the districts to ensure that projects are delivered by 31st March 2025.</p>					
BP3.1.02 Develop and adopt the Banbury Vision 2050 Programme	Cllr D Ford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Robert Jolley 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary We received 2,729 responses to the Banbury Vision 2050 survey which closed on 15th January. Workshops were attended by 150 people from local schools, businesses, and community groups also formed part of the engagement. The feedback received will help inform and contribute to the new vision to support the town's future. The consultants' report and analysis of the survey is due in Q1 2024/25.</p>					
BP3.1.03 Transform Bicester Market Square through Public Realm & Environmental Improvement Project	Cllr D Ford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Robert Jolley 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary We undertook informal engagement with residents and businesses on the project by taking a stall at Bicester's Friday market for several weeks, with some 296 people in total visiting the stall. The procurement process to contract project consultants concluded with the appointment of WSP, an expert in town centre regeneration. WSP will study the town centre – in particular, its traffic flows, parking, and pedestrian-friendly elements - in order to develop designs and conduct a formal consultation programme.</p>					

Healthy, resilient and engaged communities

Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP4.1.02 Support Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Prevention Activities	Cllr P Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Tim Hughes 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Wardens addressed ASB complaints, intervened to reduce impact, and collaborated with TVP on operations like Op. Jin, to deal with ASB associated with street drinking in Banbury Town Centre. A further ASB operation was carried out with TVP colleagues to address ASB in Bicester. - The Community Safety Team engaged in events at Grimsbury Community Forum, Hardwick Community Hall, Healthy Bicester, and a Schools event. - Oxfordshire Youth provided Exploitation and Gang Associated Harms Training to professionals, including our Community Safety Team at Bodicote House. - Our Youth Activators focused on mental well-being and youth engagement programs. - Our Castle Quay Community Space raised awareness about resident protection schemes with partners like TVP and OCC Trading Standards. 					
BP4.1.04 Improve Leisure & Community Facilities in line with agreed Capital Programme	Cllr N Simpson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gordon Stewart ■ Nicola Riley 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
<p>Commentary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During January we completed the installation of the new lift at Whitelands Farm Sports Ground in Bicester giving ease of access to 1st floor facilities. Also, during the early part of 2024 we got confirmation of the Floodlighting Contractor appointed to the installation at Whitelands Farm Sports Ground to assist with Bicester Rugby Club match/training facilities. The wet ground conditions meant that works were not carried out in February/March as planned but will be held over to April 2024. - Fencing improvements were carried out at the Stratfield Brake Sports Ground with a view to improving playing conditions for the resident clubs that use the facilities 					

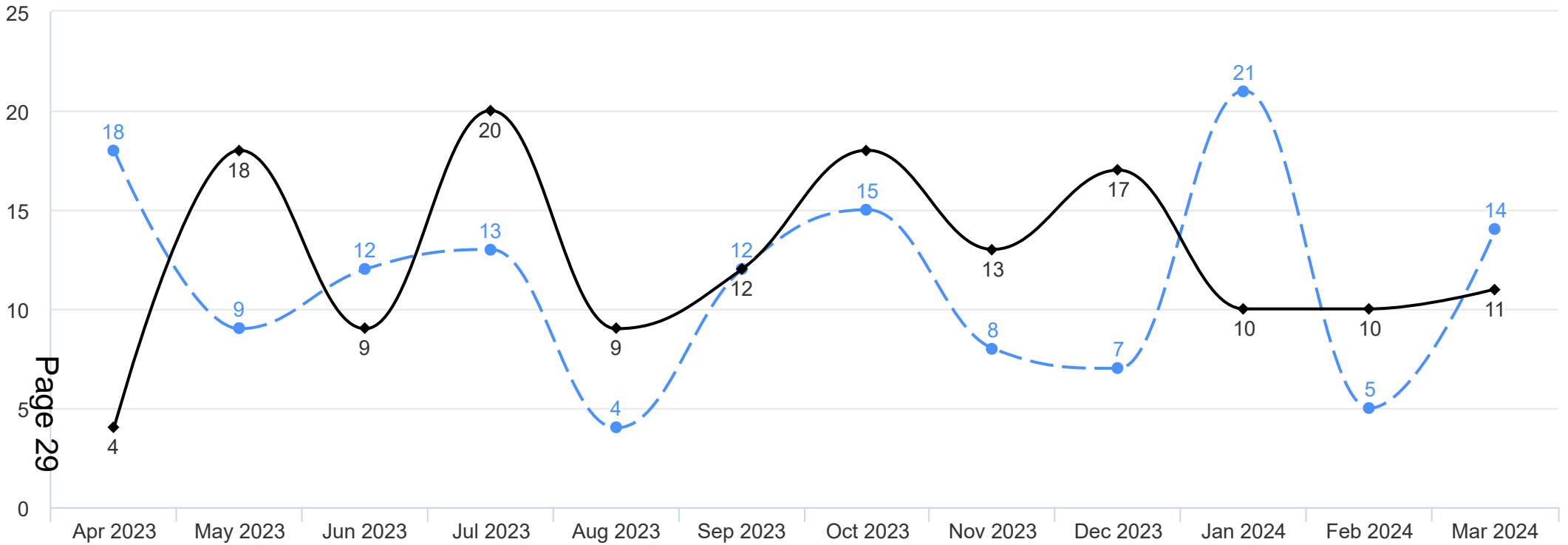
Ref	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP4.1.06 Support and Safeguard Vulnerable People	Cllr P Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gordon Stewart ■ Nicola Riley 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★

Commentary

In order to develop a Safeguarding action plan which forms part of the Section 11, we need to identify what needs to be introduced or improved. To gain this information we have provided a staff survey and the Gap Analysis for Line Managers to complete. Capturing, from services leads & staff's perspective, what we have that works, what we have that needs improving and where there are gaps in our systems. The information they provide will help develop a Safeguarding Action plan for Cherwell and be part of the Safeguarding self-assessment /Section 11 annual return.

Appendix 2 – Monitoring only Business plan objectives End of year 2023/24

Please note the blue line represents performance 2023-24 and the black line the previous financial year 2022-23

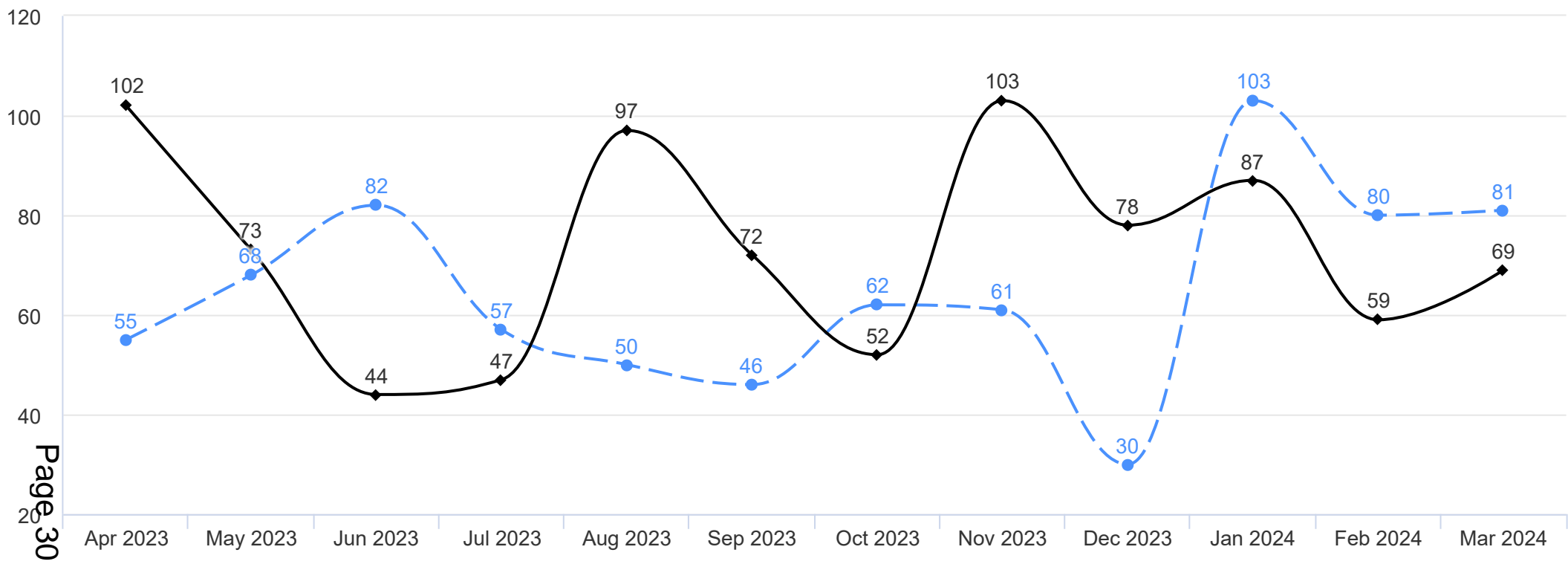


Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Homes improved through enforcement action

Year end: 138

The Housing Standards team have continued to take a proactive approach to enforcement against landlords who have substandard practices that require enforcement actions from the team. The year end total of 138 is slightly down on the previous year of 156, but enforcement is difficult to predict as it is based on practice and evidence, so is not a cause for concern.

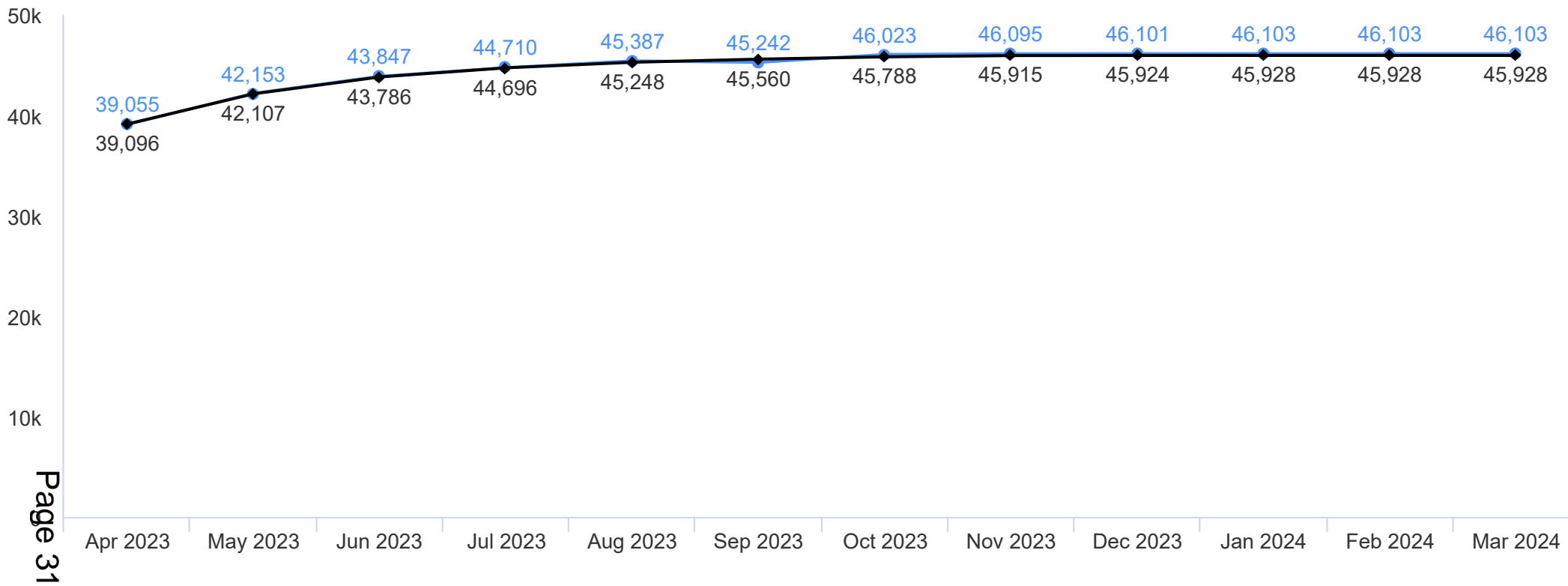


Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Number of Housing Standards interventions

Year end: 775

The number of housing standards interventions are down on the previous year. 775 compared to 883 in the previous year. This number is largely driven by service requests from customers who need the support of the Council for dealing with their problem in their rented home. It is therefore largely demand driven and thus not in the Council's direct control.

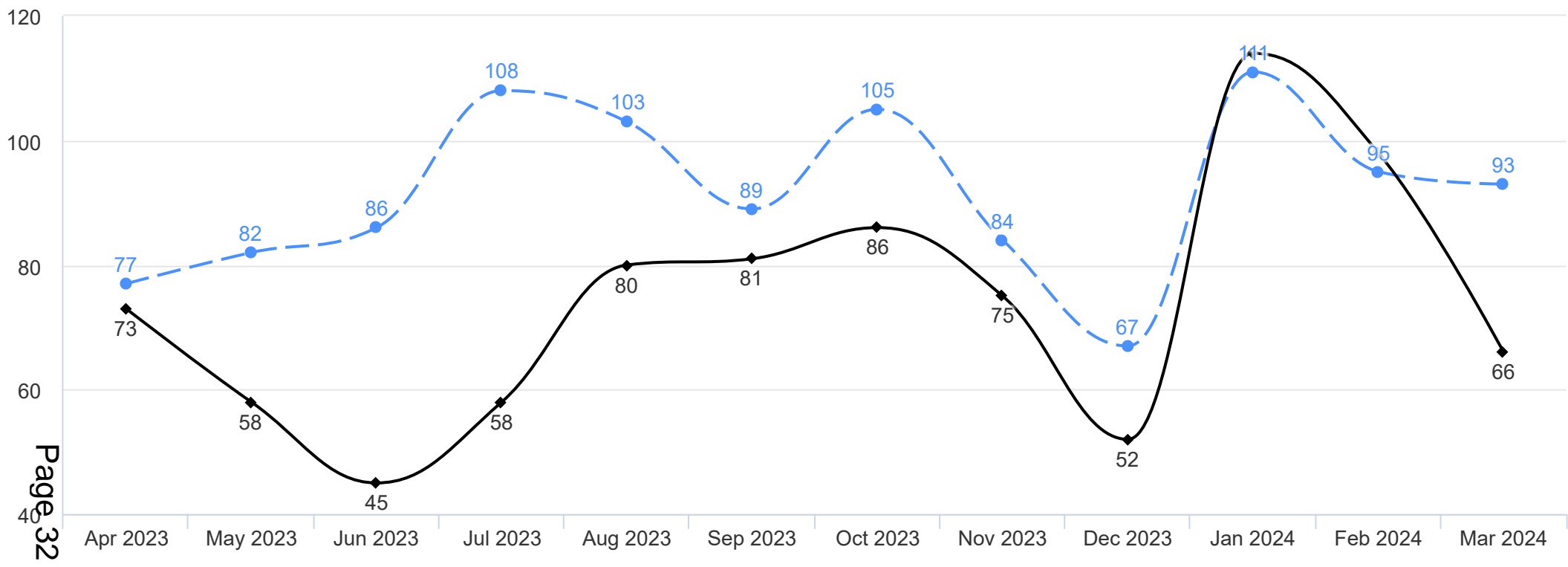


Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Number of garden waste subscriptions

Year end: 46.103

No subscriptions sold as it's the last month of subscription year 23/24. Subscription sales for the year 24/25 have been open since 04.12.2023 and will be reported next month.

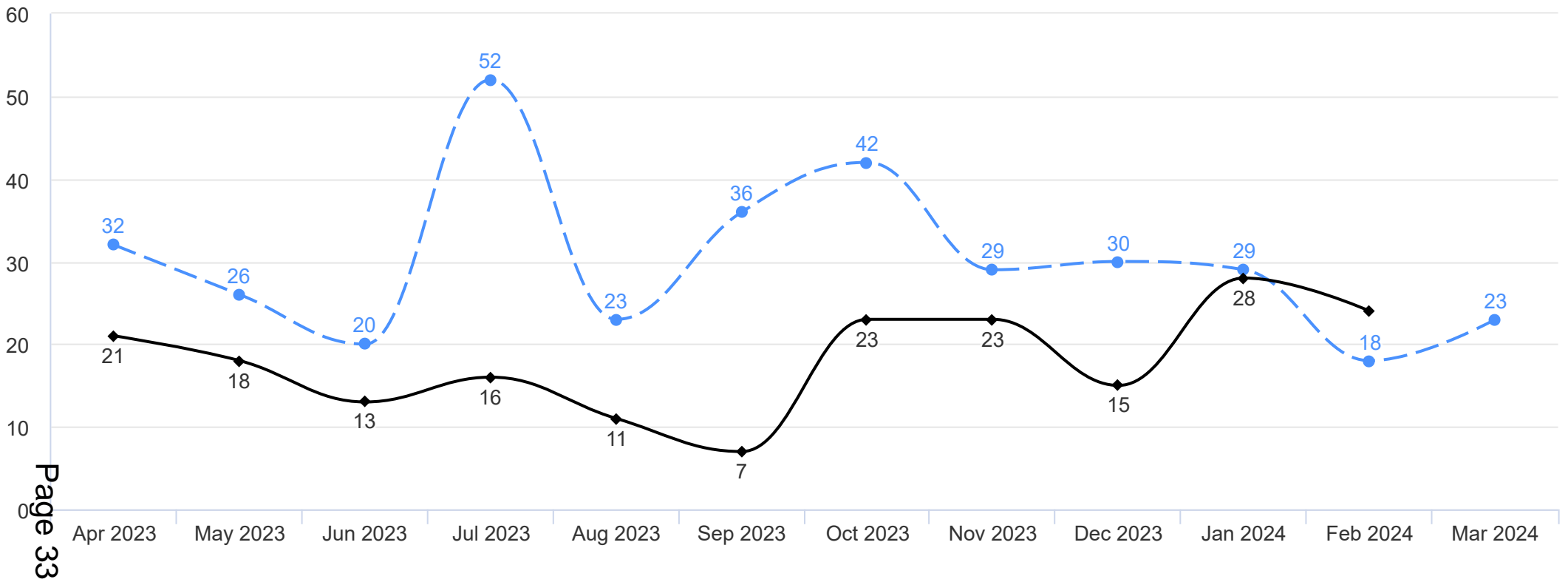


Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Number of Illegal Fly Tips

Year end: 1,100

93 fly tips were reported in March and 72 were investigated. This is similar to the number reported last month (95), but an increase on the number reported (66) for the same period last year.



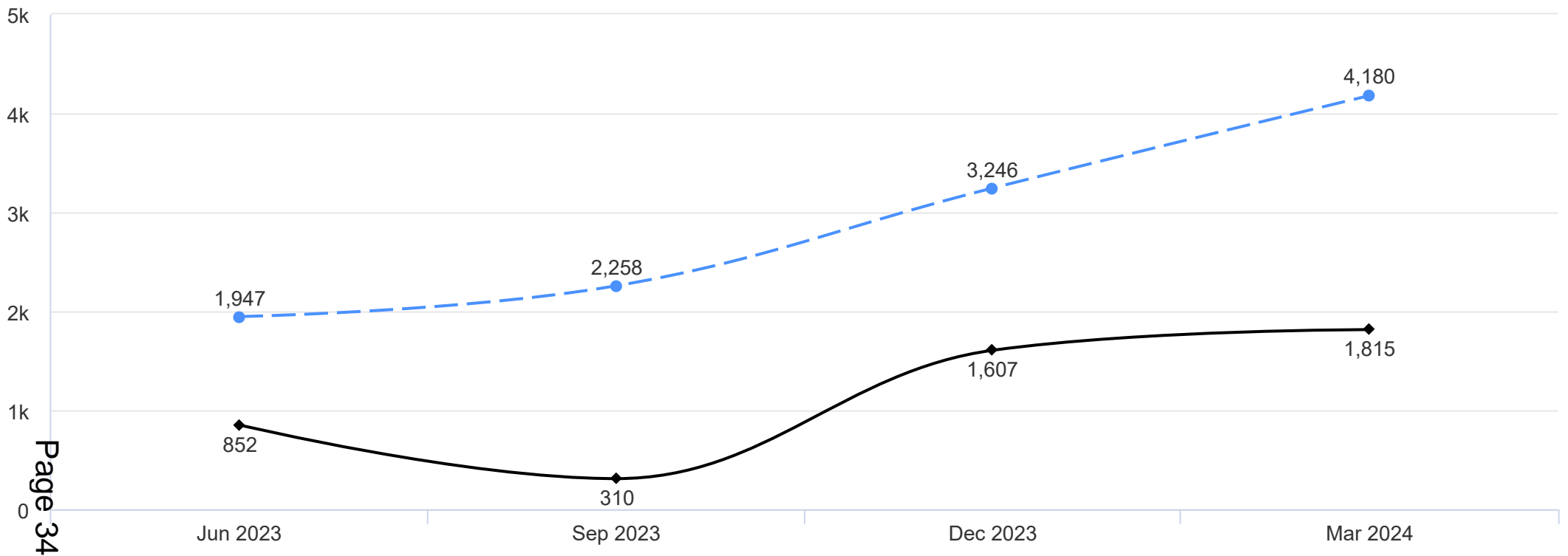
Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Number of enforcement notices issued

Year end: 360

In response to the evidence found 15 warning letters were sent, 4 interviews under caution were carried out, and 4 notices were served for waste related offences.

There were two prosecutions. In the Oxford Magistrates Court on 22 March 2024 Mumma Sue's Ltd, 58 Orchard Way, Banbury, and Lords and Ladies Ltd, 70-72 Orchard Way, Banbury were found guilty of failing to produce waste transfer notes to confirm their waste had been disposed of legally. Each company was fined £1,332, and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £533 and costs of £1,200.48.



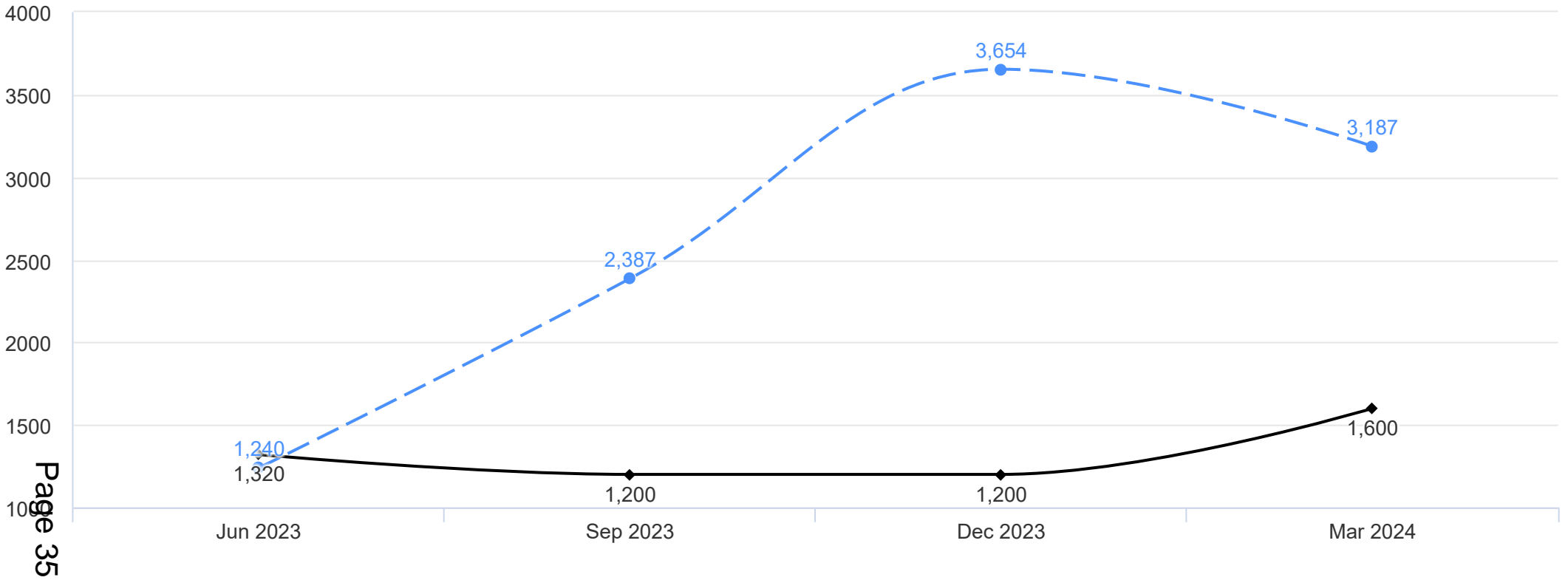
Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Number of individuals registered to YouMove

Year end: 4,180

The You Move programme has had a big impact over the year working with families who access Free School Meals making it more accessible and easy for families to take part in activities. Currently there are 789 families with 4180 individuals registered.

Since being part of You Move 34% of Adults on the programme have increased their physical activity levels to recommended levels while 36% of children have increased in physical activity levels. As part of the programme there are heavily reduced admission with to clubs such as Boxing, Cricket, Football, Rugby and many more making it as accessible as possible for families to join community clubs along with over 50% reduced admission to Leisure Centres with family swimming proving particularly popular. Free activities have also been delivered through the team of Youth Activators in school and community settings taking activities to the heart of local communities



Please note the blue line represents 2023-24 performance and black line the previous financial year 2022-23

Objective: Number of young people who participated in Youth Activators activities

Year end: 3,187

The Youth Activator programme has had a huge reach both in school and community settings across Cherwell for 5 – 16 year olds over the last year. The Activators have been in 47 schools providing a range of opportunities from targeted activities for children you need more support to be active through to the mental health and physical activity programme designed to help children understand their emotions better linking to physical activity. The Activators have successfully linked in with the Youth Sport Trust and School Sport Partnership to offer activities that are needed and seen as a crucial service which is being embedded even further with schools in 24/25.

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Appendix 3 - Annual Delivery Priorities 2023 - 2024 - Quarter 4

Priority	Director/AD	Milestones/Actions	Quarter 4 update	Comments
ADP02 Climate Emergency Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ed Potter ▪ Mona Walsh ▪ Ian Boll ▪ Stephen Hinds 	ADP02.02 Devise plan for new Depot at Graven Hill, which will incl. several sustainability measures	Ongoing	Property have appointed a Quantity Surveyor to help manage the budget and obtained planning approval for the secure fence around the site with fencing works scheduled to start on site in June 2024. Scheme designers to be appointed in May 2024 subject to Contract Strategy Report approval by Procurement.
		ADP02.03 Undertaken a Techno Feasibility Study for a Heat Network in Banbury	Ongoing	Feasibility work is on-going though almost completed. Meetings now need to be held with both CDC and OCC to discuss how the Heat Network could be financed.
ADP03 Vibrant Economy Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ian Boll ▪ Robert Jolley 	ADP03.01 Deliver the UKSPF Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund projects.	Ongoing	<p>Twelve projects were live during Q4, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the findings from a district-wide business needs survey at the Cherwell Economic Forum event • Employment support for the unemployed through a Job Fair • Projects to increase access and participation in cultural and arts activities • Increasing access to and use of a community garden space through events and skills workshops • Development of public realm strategy frameworks (to identify recommendations for improvements to the three urban centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington) • Completion of a second round of applications and awards for a capital grant scheme for infrastructure improvements to village and rural community halls • Installation of floodlighting at Whitelands sports pitch; this was delayed due to poor weather and will proceed in Q1 2024/25.
ADP05 Investment in our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nicola Riley ▪ Gordon Stewart 	ADP05.03 Hold Voluntary Organisations Forum as investment in our communities	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Forum held in Q4. However, we continue to closely communicate and work with partners across the district to extend our outreach within our communities.

		ADP05.05 Support the Voluntary Sector	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UKSPF funds are distributed to community centres and support given to programmes of work to empower and enable community action. Winter warmers programme concluded. Community Food grants concluded. Brighter Futures partnership continued to coordinate activity across Banbury wards with higher levels of deprivation
ADP06 Local Strategic Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Riley Gordon Stewart 	ADP06.03 Implement agreed Local Strategic Partnership changes	Completed	The agreed changes to the LSP have been implemented and the partnership met in October. Also, Brighter Futures in Banbury annual report was shared, and an update on Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing strategy was given.
ADP07 Homelessness Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Riley Gordon Stewart 	ADP07.02 Present final draft of the Homelessness Strategy	Completed	The Strategy was consulted with residents on December 2023 and approved by the Executive on 05 February 2024.
ADP08 Everyone's Wellbeing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Riley Gordon Stewart 	ADP08.03 Agree Everyone's Wellbeing strategy	Completed	Following extensive consultation and an all-Members seminar, the Executive approved in December 2023, Everyone's Wellbeing A for a healthier and Happier Cherwell 2024-2028
		ADP08.05 Promote Health & Wellbeing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The You Move Program has significantly impacted families with access to Free School Meals, with 789 families and 4180 individuals registered. The program has increased physical activity levels for 34% of adults and 36% of children, offering discounted club admissions and reduced fees for leisure centers, promoting community engagement. The Youth Activator programme in Cherwell engages 5 to 16-year-olds in schools and communities, offering various activities like mental health and physical activity programs. Collaborating with Youth Sport Trust and School Sport Partnership, the programme has reached 47 schools, with 24 out of 25 schools participating during 2023-24.
		ADP08.06 Promote Healthy Place Shaping	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Healthy Bicester Conference held. First Cherwell Climate Change Community networking event held Household support funds dispersed to support families experiencing hardship
ADP09 Medium Term Financial Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Furness Stephen Hinds 	ADP09.02 Identity transformation opportunities of Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council set a balanced budget for 2024/25 in February 2024. A selection of environmental services transformation opportunities has been included in the 24/25 budget consultation, with the remainder set to be consulted on in 25/26. Additional transformation reviews will take place over the coming months.

		ADP09.03 Consult on transformation proposals for 2024/25 budget of Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Completed	Budget proposals for 2024/25 were consulted on in November/December 2023. Consultation responses were taken into consideration when Council agreed its budget in February 2024.
ADP10 Team Cherwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Claire Cox ▪ Shona Ware ▪ Gordon Stewart 	ADP10.02 Launch and embed Team Cherwell values	Completed	Following the successful launch of the values in October, we will now continue to work on embedding the principles of the values into everything we do.

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Appendix 4 - Peer Review - Action Plan 2023 - 2024 - Quarter 4 (Year-end)

Priority	Director/AD	Milestones/Actions	Year-end 2023/24	Comments
PEER01 Vision	Jo Miskin	PEER01.04 Refresh the climate strategy and associated actions plans and continue to embed them across the organisation demonstrating a robust pathway to achieving its net zero ambition.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the action plan is on-going Carbon Literacy training is complete The Climate Forum was held in January. All future activity will be captured and reported in the Climate Action Plan.
PEER04 Resources	Claire Cox	PEER04.02 Develop a plan and programme of activities to support staff through the Transformation and Prioritisation Programme.	Ongoing	Empowering staff to lead service transformations is a key goal of the Transformation Strategy. Services are encouraged to form their transformation groups with guidance from the central team and external experts. Change management plans are being created alongside major transformation proposals.
PEER05 Regeneration	David Peckford	PEER05.04 Ensure planning service can administer continued sustainable growth.	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation on a Draft Local Plan was undertaken from September to November 2023. A proposed Plan is scheduled to be consulted upon later in 2024. Planning improvement continues as part of wider transformation programme
	Mike Gillespie / Mona Walsh	PEER05.02 Undertake a strategic asset review as part of the transformation and prioritisation programme to recognise the potential of the council's property portfolio in meeting its regeneration ambition	In progress	Property Asset Management Strategy approved by Executive in March 2024. Asset Review work commenced.
	Robert Jolley	PEER05.01 Communicate the council's vision for Banbury and Bicester. Adopt a Place shaping Strategy for Banbury (non-statutory masterplan) and clarify role in securing future stages.	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council received 2,729 responses to the Banbury Vision 2050 survey which closed on 15th January. Workshops attended by 150 people from local schools, businesses, and community groups also formed part of the engagement. The feedback received will help inform and contribute to the new vision to support the town's future. The consultants' report and analysis of the survey is due in Q1 2024/25. The Council continued informal engagement with residents and businesses on the Bicester Market Square project by taking a stall at Bicester's Friday market for several weeks, with some 296 people in total visiting the stall. The Council's procurement process to contract project consultants concluded with the appointment of WSP, an expert in town centre regeneration. WSP will study the town centre – in particular, its traffic flows, parking, and pedestrian-friendly elements - in order to develop designs and conduct a formal consultation programme.

		PEER05.03 Create a prospectus for investment in Cherwell	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint Place Narrative continues to be developed with OCC and Future Oxfordshire Partnership members. This work remains in progress and CDC continues to work closely with partners • A more detailed output is expected from each of the Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington projects looking at infrastructure and community assets in each area which will help inform. • We continue to engage and work closely with the Pan Regional Partnership on the wider investment narrative for the region. The PRP has now commissioned its own place narrative work to reflect the regional strengths.
PEER06 Communications	Julian Cotton	PEER06.01 Develop and agree a council wide Communications, and Marketing Strategy	Completed	A strategy has been created and went to CLT. The comms team will begin implementing the strategy.
PEER08 Infrastructure	Ian Boll	PEER08.02 Reset critical officer and member relations with partners and the business community, including developers) and increase the visibility of other senior leaders across the organisation.	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council officers have continued to work with developers involved in North West Bicester to bring forward proposals for the Howes Lane/Lords Lane realignment (Strategic Link Road) and develop a funding and delivery strategy with Oxfordshire County Council. • The Council has also commissioned an energy study, with the engagement of private sector businesses, which will assess constraints and opportunities for energy delivery in Bicester. • An Economic Forum was held in March with partners and representatives of the local business community in order to share the findings of the business needs survey which had been funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
	Robert Jolley/Ian Boll	PEER08.01 Establish a clear action plan for the next phase of the infrastructure and place-shaping relationship with Oxfordshire County Council	In progress	The Future Oxfordshire Partnership leads meet monthly to review the agenda and inform the forward work programme. Projects groups are established for Bicester and Banbury. It is expected that a similar approach will be taken for Kidlington. A shared place programme officer role has been established with OCC and the officer has commenced in post.

Appendix 5 - EDI Action plans End of year 2023_24

Inclusive Communities				
Commitment	Action	Owner	Status	Comments
EDI 1.01 Engage with, and support local community groups and organisations	1.01.01 Review existing relations with community groups and organisations to ensure they remain effective in being able to listen, learn and understand the barriers facing our underrepresented communities and, if applicable, identify which connections need building or renewing.	Wild, Jon	Ongoing	The EIA will need to be concluded in Q1 24/25
	1.01.02 Review the process for gathering equality data on the district to ensure we have an accurate picture of our underrepresented communities and identify any gaps which require filling. This will enable us to continually direct our resources where they are needed most.	Prado-Teeling, Celia	Ongoing	This is a continuous piece of work, more complex than what was envisioned when the action was proposed, the Performance & Insight Team is working across services to make sure all data gathered is reviewed, as part of the EIA internal audit proposed in the 24-25 EDI action plans
And EDI 1.02 Promote inclusive behaviour with residents and service users	1.02.01 Raise awareness of the standards we expect from ourselves and others by publicising our EDI principles, commitments, and policies.	Cotton, Julian	Ongoing	We now have a communications coordinator in place and part of their remit is to support EDI awareness internally and externally where appropriate.
	1.02.02 Develop and agree a policy for supporting national events that further our corporate priorities and reflect the diversity of our communities	Cotton, Julian	Ongoing	We have a list of important events, and our communications coordinator will be highlighting these throughout the year. An example is how we recognised Ramadan.
EDI 1.03 Work directly with communities to identify inequality and tackle disadvantage	1.03.01 Following on from the Wellbeing Strategy, review our community development scheme to ensure it remains effective in creating community cohesion and tackling inequality and, if appropriate, identify potential improvements	Wild, Jon	Completed	Q4 Action plan developed as a result of our Wellbeing service plan which will be delivered in 2024/25
EDI 1.04 Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chain and strategic partnerships	1.04.03 Review the processes in place for considering the EDI implications partnership plans to identify if there is scope for them to be strengthened	Riley, Nicola	Completed	All grant payments now require clear EDI policies in place by the grant recipient.

EDI 1.05 Promote and encourage inclusive behaviour for future generations	1.05.01 Review our outreach to different community groups on EDI matters, including how to engage young people in the process, and identify areas where there is scope for improvement	Wild, Jon	Ongoing	Continuing to make positive connections to new groups / organisations through our community networks and forums. This will continue as a live action.
EDI 1.06 Work with all partner organisations to understand diverse needs and create inclusive communities	1.06.01 Review the membership and effectiveness of our strategic partnerships and identify areas where they might require different resources, plans and processes in order to identify and tackle the issues and barriers affecting and concerning our communities	Riley, Nicola	Ongoing	This is an ongoing piece of work, which will be undertaken in Q1 2024-25

Inclusive Services

Commitments	Action	Owner	Status	Comments
EDI 2.01 Ensure information, website and digital services are accessible to all incl. digitally excluded	2.01.01 Review all our digital services to identify any improvements needed to address any accessibility or inclusivity issues	Cotton, Julian	Ongoing	We continue to support and advise teams about accessibility. One example is encouraging a clause to be inserted during procurement which states any public reports suppliers complete on our behalf reflect accessibility guidance. We plan to do more to promote accessibility good practice through internal communications. Communications campaigns consider the intended audience and how to reach them within agreed budgets.
	2.01.02 Introduce a guide and training module for staff on writing clearly, in plain English and with the audience and accessibility rules in mind	Cotton, Julian / Reed, Teresa	Completed	We have a communications strategy. At its heart is friendly, authentic and need-based communications. Being easy to understand is an important element.
EDI 2.02 Take action to make our buildings accessible to all residents and staff	2.02.01 Include delivering against our commitment of accessible council buildings now and in the future as an objective in our emerging Property Strategy	Walsh, Mona	Completed	The Property Strategy was approved on 4 March 2024. The Strategy confirms management of assets and decision making will be wide ranging and comprehensive. This will include taking action to make our buildings accessible to residents and staff.

EDI 2.05 Plan and deliver services that promote inclusion	2.05.03 Ensure staff have received up-to-date EDI training	Reed, Teresa	Completed	EDI training is now fully integrated into the training suite delivered via the I-Hasco online training platform. Staff must complete the appropriate modules biennially
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Inclusive Workforce				
Commitment	Action	Owner	Status	Comments
EDI 3.01 - Improve the diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities	3.01.01 Identify additional ways to recruit new staff and promote our job opportunities so that they are brought to the attention of all members of local communities	Blunsden, Susan	Completed	We have attended job fairs across the district, which were well attended, including the Careers and Apprenticeship fair at Banbury College, Banbury Town Council Job fair in conjunction with the Economic Growth Team, which promoted Cherwell's job opportunities to a variety of residents, including a large presence of diverse minority groups. This activity will continue as part of our Business as usual during the new financial year
	3.01.03 Split out the workforce statistics used for the comparison with the demographics of the district by grade and department	Prado-Teeling, Celia	Completed	This activity was completed and reported on Q3, the action will be carried out as a business-as-usual activity for the next financial year.
EDI 3.02 – Celebrate and promote diversity in our workforce	3.02.01 Promote Viva Engage as a means for employees to set up virtual social groups or employee networks for causes that are important to them. Invite employees to set up such groups and provide a commitment that the council will engage with them if requested	Cox, Claire	Completed	This is now business as usual; we continue to celebrate and promote diversity within our workforce, during quarter 4 we had the first meeting of the Neurodiversity group in January 2024, we produced a guide for Officers and Managers regarding Ramadan awareness, and marked neurodiversity week, including sharing information and links for staff training.
	3.02.02 Continue to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate diversity via the Chief Executive's weekly updates and other similar channels	Cotton, Julian	Ongoing	With a new chief executive, the weekly staff updates have changed to updates from the communications team. Our communications coordinator is highlighting diversity linked to the relevant national events etc.

<p>EDI 3.03 - Provide a supportive environment so all staff can reach their potential</p>	<p>3.03.02 Develop and agree a comms plan for promoting the development opportunities</p>	<p>Cotton, Julian</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The communications coordinator's work will help showcase development and training in our communications, with the guidance and necessary support of HR. An initial plan was shared with HR.</p>
<p>EDI 3.04 -Identify and tackle discrimination in all its forms</p>	<p>3.04.01 Review the processes in place for investigating and taking necessary action in response to potential issues of discrimination being brought to HR's attention</p>	<p>Blunsden, Susan</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>As part of our business as usual, we continue to ensure relevant policies and procedures are adhered to when investigating of any issues with potential discrimination that are brought to HR's attention. Our policies have been updated during 2023-24 in line with the guidance from our EDI framework.</p>



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Annual Report 2023 – 2024

**Proudly serving the Cherwell
district for 50 years
1974-2024**

Foreword

Your district council is hard at work making north Oxfordshire a great place to live, work and play.

Every year we offer you this snapshot of how key public services are running in your area, and of the progress we're making towards our long term strategic goals for the district. We run services including waste collection, street cleansing services, housing, planning, and enforcement. It's no secret that councils everywhere are operating in challenging financial circumstances, impacted by inflation and the increased cost of living. But we are a prudent and well run council and have maintained a high level of performance for north Oxfordshire residents, while navigating these challenges with a balanced budget.

We are determined to deliver housing to meet the community's needs, and our recent successes include the launch of a tenants' charter, the delivery of grant funding to improve the condition of privately rented homes, and the start of work on site at Town Centre House, which is being refurbished for use as social housing. Cherwell supports environmental sustainability, and the year just gone saw extraordinary success as coffee loving residents embraced a new coffee pod recycling scheme, the business waste service continued to grow, and we won funding to plant new, carbon sequestering woodlands.

Our work to support the district's economy and urban centres reached some crucial milestones in the past year. Our work revitalising Bicester Market Square is underway, and we ran a key survey on the future of Banbury town centre, seeing a massive response from the public. We also had a fantastic response to a survey of local businesses, helping steer our plans for future economic growth.

I am also really pleased that, even against a challenging financial backdrop, the council is sticking to its vision of doing more for you, leading the way with initiatives designed to make Cherwell a district where it's easy to make healthy lifestyle choices.

We have continued to invest in the health and wellbeing of your communities; we cast a wide net with a series of investments and leisure programmes that offers something for people at all stages of life.

For youngsters we delivered scores of new bikes to bike libraries at primary schools in the district. And our Move Together programme is a standout example of best practice, with the highest take-up in the county on this programme which offers tailored exercise programmes to people with long-term health conditions.

Read on for more information about the good work we are doing with your council tax money and to learn more about the real impact our work is having in your area.

Gordon Stewart
Chief Executive Officer

Our Business Plan 2023 – 2024

We are proud to celebrate our 50th year serving the Cherwell district. Established on April 1, 1974, Cherwell District Council was formed by merging four local districts under the Local Government Act 1972.

Our 2023/24 business plan includes the following four priorities:

Housing that meets your needs

Promote affordable, green housing and minimum rental standards. Prevent homelessness with partners. Support vulnerable residents. Prepare the Local Plan.



Supporting environmental sustainability

Achieve carbon net zero by 2030. Promote the green economy. Reduce waste and improve air quality with partners.



An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Support business growth. Partner for skills and innovation. Promote district as a visitor destination and attract investment. Ensure business compliance and best practices.



Healthy, resilient, and engaged communities

Encourage active lifestyles and wellbeing. Develop leisure services. Support community and diversity. Address health inequality. Reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.



Our 2023 - 2024 performance

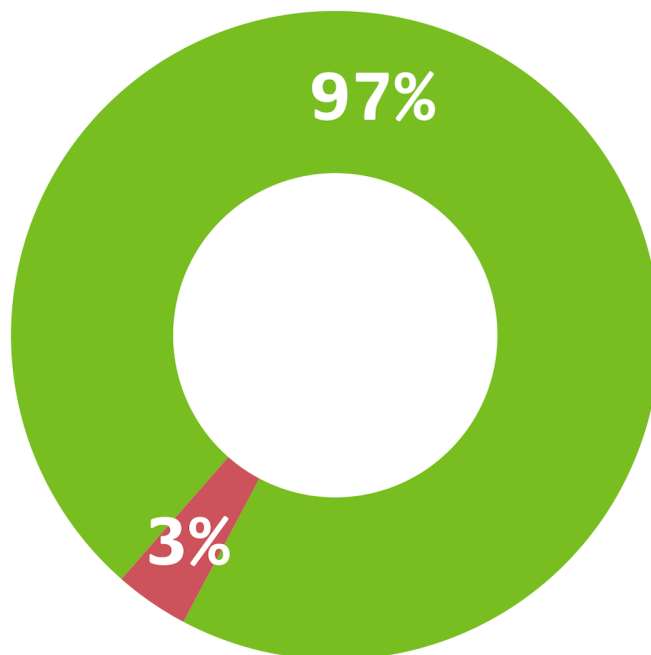
Every year, we look to serve you better. This includes emptying your bins, managing your planning applications, handling housing benefit requests, keeping your communities clean and tidy, and delivering crucial day-to-day services.

This report highlights some notable accomplishments from the past year that are on top of our regular work.

We assess progress based on our four key business plan priorities, measured through 27 performance goals.

In 2023/24, All but one of the 27 Business Plan measures achieved their year-end target or reported within tolerance.

The measure that missed its target for the year was “Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell Needs”, reporting a final figure of 792, which is 70% of the set target for the year; this result has been heavily affected by the national context, circumstances such as inflation, high building costs, and high interest rates resulting in lower than expected completions.



Housing that meets your needs

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



Prevented 215 households from becoming homeless.

Secured over £400,000 funding to support low-income residents with housing needs. Current tenants were involved in shaping a new charter and services provided by the landlord.



Our Cherwell Bond Scheme assisted landlords in improving homes for tenant properties with grants, tenant support, property viewings, and a deposit bond equivalent to 10 weeks of rent.

Launched a new strategy to address homelessness and rough sleeping in our district for the next 5 years.



Delivered 266 affordable homes, 38% more than last year

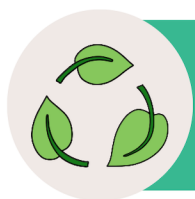
Improved 138 homes through enforcement to ensure homeowners and landlords provide safe places for people to live.



Processed new housing benefit claims in 16 days, two days quicker than our target average for the year.

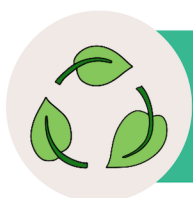
Supporting environmental sustainability

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



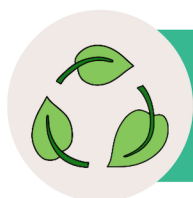
Achieved our objective to reach 15% of electric vehicles in our fleet by the end of 2023/24.

Our crews emptied 8.5 million containers, collecting a total of 60,652 tonnes of waste, 4% more than last year, whilst consuming 2% less fuel than last year



Recycled 53% of waste collected, 10% more than England's average.

Secured government funding to increase tree-cover in the district by creating a tiny forest at Longford Park and a community orchard at Burnehyll Community Woodland.



Our new coffee pod recycling scheme recycled 1,048,397 pods (16.4 tonnes)

Proposed a new Climate Action Plan for Cherwell to achieve carbon net zero by 2030 and support the district's carbon reduction goals.



An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



Our Banbury Vision 2050 survey to shape the future of Banbury town centre, registered an unprecedented 2,729 responses from our residents, business owners and visitors.

Plans launched to revitalise Bicester Market Square with £4.25m funding from the council's capital budget and a government grant for infrastructure.



Over 750 district businesses took part in the survey. 37% reported improved performance in the past year, with the same percentage expecting this trend to continue in 2024.

The Business Needs Survey results will guide projects for the 2024-25 UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund, emphasising business support, decarbonisation, and green skills training.



Launched a consultation to seek residents feedback on our Local Plan Review 2040 first draft.

Healthy, resilient, and engaged communities

Below are some of the past year's achievements for this strategic priority.



Our Move Together programme benefited over 1,800 participants improving their physical and mental health.

Donated £10,600 to Alexandra House of Joy, to help the facility to keep offering support for adults with severe learning disabilities.



Assisted residents by upgrading the least energy-efficient homes to alleviate cost-of-living pressures, combat fuel poverty, and lower energy expenses.

Attracted 4,180 residents to our You Move programme to enjoy free and reduced-price physical activities.



Developed Everyone's Wellbeing Strategy for a healthier and happier Cherwell 2024-2028

Implemented Cost-of-Living Action plan with grant schemes for food groups, expanded Warm spaces network, updated "Who can Help?" booklet, and distributed it through partner organisations.



Encouraged 3,187 children to become more active through our Youth Activators program.

Welcomed 1,395,640 visitors to our leisure centres, 3% more than the forecasted for the year.



How we spend your money



The council reported a balanced financial position for 2023/2024, after proposed transfers to reserves of £4.461m

Where did our funding come from?

Government grants	Council Tax	Business rates	New Homes Bonus
£0.307m	£9.306m	£17.910m	£1.625

Totalling £29.148m in funding for last year.

We monitor our ongoing budget position to enable the Executive to make timely decisions on any required changes. Through this robust process, we have demonstrated that we are fiscally responsible and, with this strong end-of-year financial position, have put us in a good place for the year to come.

Where did we spend our funding?

Here is where we spent our funding and what services each directorate covers:

Chief Executive Directorate	Resources	Communities	Executive Matters
Human Resources Organisational Development Wellbeing & Housing Customer Focus	Finance Legal & Democratic Digital & IT Property	Planning & Development Growth & Economy Environmental & Regulatory Service	Includes corporate costs and income, including pension and interest payments
£5.462m	£5.818m	£9.938m	£3.469m

Proposed transfers to reserves of £4.461m

Customer service excellence

Providing quality customer service for all our residents is another priority.



In 2023/24 our Customer Services officers answered:
76,435 Phone calls
68,744 Emails

Our officers achieved 92% of customer satisfaction with the service received.



Help us to help you

We are committed to delivering the best service possible and ensuring our services are accessible to all. Doing things online is much cheaper and means we can spend more on providing essential services, so wherever possible, please make use of our 24/7 online services, which can be found at: [cherwell.gov.uk](https://www.cherwell.gov.uk)

Here, you can access a range of services and can Pay, Apply, Report and Book

If you cannot use our online services, email customer.service@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or call 01295 227001.

Alternatively, please write to us at Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4AA.

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