

South Oxfordshire District Council

# Corporate Performance Report



**2023/24 Quarter One**  
**July 2023**

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# Background

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- The Council monitors performance and progress towards achieving the aims and priorities set out in the South Oxfordshire District Council **Corporate Plan 2020-2024**.
- This report provides a strategic overview of the performance for **quarter one (01 April to 30 June 2023)**, focusing on the activity to deliver our priorities in the Corporate Plan.
- As well as giving a performance update on delivering the Council's six strategic themes in the Corporate Plan, this report will also provide any strategic context relevant to the Council's operations.



## Strategic context

During quarter one of 2023/24, the global economic situation remained precarious. Soaring prices have driven inflation across the world and placed individuals, families, and businesses under increasing financial pressures. Nevertheless, wholesale prices have fallen from some of the highs seen in recent months and global supply chain disruptions have continued to ease.

Within the UK, the rate of inflation rose by 7.9 per cent in the 12 months to June 2023. This was down from 8.7 per cent in May (inflation peaked at 11.1 per cent in October 2022 – the highest rate since 1981). Around half of the current strength in inflation is accounted for by energy and food prices.

The easing in the rate of inflation in June was driven by falls in the rate of inflation for transport (specifically petrol and diesel), food and non-alcoholic drinks (this was still, however, running at 17.3 per cent in the 12 months to June 2023), furniture and household goods, and restaurants and hotels. There were no large offsetting upward contributions to the rate of inflation.

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), as part of its remit to keep inflation under control, raised interest rates to 5.0 per cent in June 2023 (the highest level since September 2008 but still below the long-term historic average of 5.9 per cent).

Since the end of 2021, the MPC has approved 13 consecutive increases in the Bank Rate. In the medium-term it is expected that these actions will dampen demand within the economy and, therefore, hopefully push down the rate of inflation.

In its Quarterly Monetary Policy Report (May 2023), the Bank of England forecast that inflation will fall but at a slower rate than they suggested in their previous Quarterly Monetary Report (February 2023). The Bank is now predicting that inflation will still be above/around 5.0 per cent at the end of year and will not return to the 2.0 per cent target until quarter four 2024 (in February, they had forecast that inflation would be just under 4.0 per cent by the end of 2023). It assesses that the fall in inflation caused by lower energy prices and base effects (the inflation rate in the corresponding period of the previous year) will be partially offset by the slower unwinding of the second-round effects of inflation (labour market tightness, wage growth and services price inflation).

The continued high rate of inflation has meant that household finances have been squeezed as incomes have failed to keep pace with the rising cost of living. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that between March and May 2023 growth in total and regular pay fell in real terms, when adjusted for inflation, by 1.2 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively on the year (recent analysis from the Resolution Foundation has, however, indicated that the UK's wage squeeze may be ending – they suggest that inflation might, for the first time in eighteen months, have fallen below the rate of real pay growth towards the end of quarter one 2023/24).



In June 2023, the number of registered company insolvencies in England and Wales was 27.0 per cent higher than in June 2022. It is suggested that this increase is being driven by firms struggling with higher costs and rising interest rates.

The pressures on household and businesses, ongoing economic uncertainties and rising interest rates have impacted on overall economic growth. In the three months to May 2023, economic growth was estimated to have been flat (output was flat across the service sector, while there was modest growth in the construction and production sectors).

Industrial action has continued to take place across many sectors of the economy in relation to both pay and conditions. While negotiations have led to some of these disputes being resolved, others are ongoing, with more strikes and disruption expected in the coming weeks and months.

June 2023 was the hottest on record in the UK (in a series stretching back to 1884). The average mean temperature was 15.8°C, 0.9°C warmer than the previous record and 2.5°C higher than the usual temperature for June. (Eight of the twelve calendar months now have an average temperature record set since 2006).

Individually, England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland also all reported their respective warmest June on record.

The average UK house price increased by 1.9 per cent in the 12 months to May 2023 (provisional estimate) – the average UK house price was £286,000. In England, the average house price increased by 1.7 per cent – the average house price in England was £304,000. Across the South East region (excluding London), the average house price increased by 1.5 per cent – the average house price in the South East was £388,873.

NHS figures showed that a record 7.47 million people were waiting to start routine hospital treatment at the end of May. The pandemic and long-standing staff shortages have been cited as major contributory factors towards this growing backlog.

In April, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published the Plan for Water. This sets out HM Government's strategy for cleaning up England's waters and ensuring that there is a plentiful supply for the future.

During May, Homes England unveiled its Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028. This lays out how they intend to drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality homes and thriving places.

In June, the NHS published the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. This is designed to put staffing within the health service on a sustainable footing and improve patient care. In addition to focusing upon retaining existing talent and making the best use of new technology, it also heralds the start of the biggest recruitment drive in the history of the health service.

On 4 May 2023, local elections were held in South Oxfordshire. The make-up of the council following this was as follows:

- 21 Liberal Democrats
- 8 Green
- 3 Henley Resident's Group
- 3 Labour
- 1 Conservative



# Quarter one performance highlights

## Protect and restore our natural world



We are developing a strategy on the local visitor economy, that will focus on gaining better understanding of how visitors use **South Oxfordshire's natural assets**



We opened an expression of interest process for **Rural England Prosperity Funding** that will give rural communities and organisations the chance to bid for capital funds

## Openness and accountability



We promoted and highlighted various campaigns and celebrations including **Earth Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, Refugee Week, Pride Month, Easter, Eid Al-Fitr** and **Eid Al-Adha**



We introduced a new and improved **Annual Governance Statement** which will be supported by a **Code of Corporate Governance** and will be included into the **Constitution** after review

## Action on climate emergency



We released the draft **Air Quality Action Plan** for public comment – this plan sets out the future direction for the current Air Quality Management Areas within the district



**2,000**

The number of survey responses received as a result of our successfully delivered '**Let's Talk Rubbish**' communications campaign

## Improved economic and community well-being



We responded to the County Council's **Didcot Central Corridor Project** consultation, welcoming the development of placemaking, wayfinding and improvements to travel management within the town



**£7,060,367**

The amount of allocated **Community Infrastructure Levy** funding available for infrastructure projects

## Homes and infrastructure that meets local need



The **Berinsfield Community Delivery Plan** – outlining projects which will support the transformation of the village and improve the health/wellbeing of its residents – was approved by the Berinsfield Steering Group



**£3.6 million**

The amount we applied for from the Oxfordshire **Local Electric Infrastructure Fund** in collaboration with the County Council

## Investment that rebuilds our financial viability



We presented an **update report** to Cabinet regarding the amended design and the revised delivery programme for the office building following completion of the redesign work



We are supporting Active Oxfordshire in their bid to get an **additional three years funding** for the Move Together and You Move programmes to support residents with long-term health conditions and families on low incomes

# Theme 1: Protect and restore our natural world

## Why?

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

## So:

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

*Strategic Lead - Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive / Place)*

## Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 1 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 19

**D**uring quarter one, work began on the research and development of a strategy on the local visitor economy. This will be delivered by Tourism South East and will include a strong focus on building a better understanding of how visitors use South Oxfordshire's natural assets including our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Thames.

After securing funding from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund, the council has opened an expression of interest (EOI) process to support small businesses and community infrastructure. The council is highlighting the opportunity that this provides for rural communities and organisations to bid for capital funds to help deliver projects related to tourism, leisure, nature, and net zero. To support uptake, the Economic Development team has met with a number of rural partners and other interested parties to discuss the fund and how it might be used.

The Economic Development team also led an internal working group of council officers focusing upon a specific intervention within



the UK Shared Prosperity Fund related to the creation of new green spaces and improvements to our existing green spaces. The council started to invite expressions of interest to inform how available funding could be used from 2024/25.

## Theme 2: Openness and accountability

### Why?

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

### So:

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

*Strategic Lead - Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive / Transformation and Operations)*

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 2 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 21

To maintain and improve the services that the council provides, South Oxfordshire has continued work on reviewing how best to improve the council's garden waste processes. In addition, officers have explored proposals for utilising the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) to process resident's reports of enviro-crimes e.g., fly tipping.

Also, during quarter one, progress was made on the procurement of a new consultation and engagement platform for the council. Officers are currently in the process of finalising the contractual arrangements.

South Oxfordshire continued to promote diversity and inclusion through the recognition of events contained within its Diversity and Social Campaign Calendar. During quarter one, the council marked the religious festivals of Easter, Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. It also promoted Pride Month, including through events at the Cornerstone arts centre and on Great Western Park, both in Didcot.



Further, the council highlighted other important/significant events such as Stress Awareness Month, Mental Health Awareness Week, Refugee Week, Loneliness Awareness Week, Learning Disabilities Week and Armed Forces Day through its communication channels.

As part of South Oxfordshire's efforts to champion openness and transparency, it continued to livestream all public meetings (except for the Full Council – due to logistical/IT issues) during quarter one. These recordings will remain available on the council's YouTube channel for a year.



South Oxfordshire has also continued to increase the amount of information that it provides through the data hub section of its website. During quarter one 2023/24, the performance management report for quarter four 2022/23 and the 2022/23 annual corporate plan performance review were published on South's website. This is intended to increase the public's understanding of what the council does, how it works and how decisions are made.

With the ambition of increasing meaningful engagement with everyone, officers finalised the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23. It includes data on the council's level of engagement with different communities and demographics (e.g., by age). This information will be used to provide a benchmark for South Oxfordshire's future engagement activities.

South Oxfordshire continued to work on a new and improved Annual Governance Statement and a Code of Corporate Governance. These will be considered by the Constitution Review Group (when it reconvenes) and then added to the Constitution.



## Theme 3: Action on climate emergency

### Why?

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

### So:

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

*Strategic Lead - Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive / Place)*

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 3 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 26

During quarter one, surveys of South Oxfordshire's council buildings and leisure facilities to explore ways to reduce carbon emissions got underway. This work will help the council's approach to reducing the carbon emissions of these spaces, which is vital in achieving the target of being net carbon neutral - where emissions produced are the same as those absorbed in the environment - as a council, by 2025. The surveys will also be used to identify potential opportunities to bid for the next round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding.



The council relaunched its procurement process for an architect-led team to design net zero homes at a council-owned site in Didcot. The development must incorporate key sustainability measures to ensure these homes are fit for the future and support our climate ambitions.

In line with our commitment to mitigate climate change through planning and land use measures, significant work was carried out this quarter on the Joint Local Plan (JLP) and a new policy framework for development was created. The framework aims to mitigate the effects of climate change, ensure that development is steered towards locations which reduce the need to travel by private car, and encourage healthier lifestyles.

The council also appointed external consultants to provide a Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base for the JLP. They will provide recommendations that will shape the JLP draft policy approaches regarding sustainable construction and zero carbon design. Consultants also started assessing the policy options for the JLP to make it more sustainable.

The council also continue to participate in the new Enhancement Partnership Board, working on improving bus services.

During quarter one, the draft Air Quality Action Plan was released for consultation. The draft outlines the progress made since the last iteration of the plan and sets out the future direction for the current Air Quality Management Areas within South Oxfordshire. In addition, the council submitted the Air Quality Annual Status Report to Defra for review after which the document will be made publicly available.

Working with Oxfordshire County Council to build on our commitment to active travel is an important objective in the corporate plan. This quarter, the County Council consulted South Oxfordshire on the Didcot Central Corridor Project. Officers drafted a response welcoming the improvements to travel management within the town and the benefits these would bring about in terms of reduced congestion, reduced carbon emission and improved air quality in the area. Officers also included feedback on how and where the County Council's proposals could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians.



This quarter, the council examined proposals to use UK Shared Prosperity Fund money to support a local strategic partnership to deliver support for businesses to reduce their carbon emissions. The partnership would provide resources, support and a county-wide programme of activities to help local companies respond to the climate emergency.

To help increase biodiversity on council land South Oxfordshire continued to support the 'Let it Bee' project, allowing wildflowers and plants to grow on specific sites and by modifying cutting regimes in these areas. The council also continued to support the No Mow May campaign.

Promoting engagement with recycling, South Oxfordshire successfully delivered the 'Let's Talk Rubbish' communications campaign in support of the council's waste survey to which more than 2,000 people across South and Vale submitted responses.



## Theme 4: Improved economic and community well-being

### Why?

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

### So:

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

*Strategic Lead - Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive / Place)*

*Strategic Lead - Adrianna Partridge (Deputy Chief Executive / Transformation and Operations)*

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 4 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 31

In quarter one 2023/24, Economic Development continued to focus upon implementing South Oxfordshire's UK Shared Prosperity Fund plans. Work began on the research and development of a strategy on the local visitor economy. In collaboration with Tourism South East, officers have developed a consultation process for residents and businesses operating in the visitor economy – this will be rolled out in quarter two 2023/24.

South Oxfordshire also continues to be a member of OxLEP's steering group for development of the Oxfordshire Destination Management Plan – with the intention of ensuring that the steering group's work complements the council's own visitor economy strategy.

The expression of interest (EOI) process for organisations to pitch projects that align with South's UK Shared Prosperity Funding plans closed at the end of June. The EOI received will be analysed and assessed during quarter two and may result in the creation of new support programmes for businesses within the district. In addition, after South successfully secured £733,241 in Rural England Prosperity Funding, the council opened an EOI process highlighting the opportunity that this provides for rural communities and organisations to bid for capital funds.

The South and Vale Business Support website was successfully reintegrated within that of the main council during quarter one. No negative impacts have been observed because of this change. Officers are now exploring whether it is possible to collect analytics for the Economic Development pages on the council's website.

The council continues to support independent businesses through the ShopAppy e-commerce platform.

Officers from the Economic Development team supported consultants in the preparation of the Employment Land Needs Assessment for the Joint Local Plan. This work will help to ensure that the assessment is relevant to the needs and requirements of the area's business community.

Economic Development have continued to be actively involved with the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economic Partnership Steering Group. Following the publication of the Partnership's Charter, officers have prepared recommendations for initiatives that build upon this work – these are scheduled to be brought before the Senior Management Team (SMT) in July 2023.

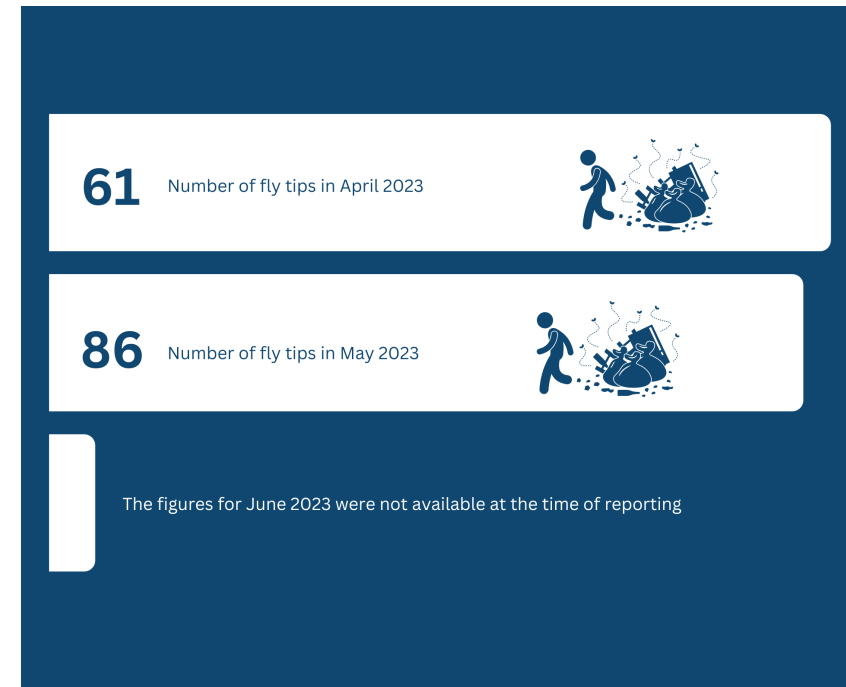
The Economic Development team have also maintained their connection to the working group overseeing the development of the emerging Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire. Officers have represented the council at meetings and workshops with the purpose of ensuring that the Plan continues to align with South Oxfordshire's objectives.

South Oxfordshire is committed to using its planning powers to preserve the district's green spaces. Between April and June, the council adopted two neighbourhood plan reviews (Tiddington with Albury and Culham).

The Tiddington with Albury Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy protecting three green spaces through Local Green Space designations and the Culham Neighbourhood Plan, - while not including any Local Green Space Designations – contains policies on community facilities and nature recovery.

Throughout the quarter, South Oxfordshire has continued to assist those in our communities that are most in need – particularly considering the cost-of-living crisis – through the Community Hub.

Fly tipping data - see **ECW7** performance update on p.36



Between January and, South Oxfordshire continued to act against fly-tippers. In quarter one, the council issued eight Fixed Penalty Notices for waste crimes. There was also one prosecution for fly-tipping – a further four prosecutions are pending.

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local needs

### Why?

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

### So:

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

*Strategic Lead - Suzanne Malcolm (Deputy Chief Executive / Place)*

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 5 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 36

At the end of quarter one 2023/24, the Council recorded four rough sleepers. The low levels of rough sleeping in the district reflects the success of South Oxfordshire's preventative approach.

The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation at the end of June 2023 was 16 – only one higher than the previous quarter (despite the increasing pressures on the service caused by the cost-of-living crisis and the ending of hosting arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine scheme). The rolling six-month average length of stay in emergency accommodation was 63 nights, above the ceiling target of 42, and a reflection of the number and complexity of the cases.

During quarter one 2023/24, the rate of successful homelessness prevention in South Oxfordshire was 84.0 per cent. This is above the very challenging target of 80.0 per cent (the average rate of homelessness prevention in the South East region is 56.0 per cent).



Furthermore, South Oxfordshire continues to actively participate in the countywide Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and is a member of both the countywide Homelessness Steering Group and the Homelessness Directors Group.

**W**ith the aim of ensuring that new homes and infrastructure meet local needs, are sustainable, zero carbon and high quality in design, the Planning Policy team have continued to make significant progress on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers prepared the text for the forthcoming preferred options consultation. This was shared with the Joint Local Plan Steering Group for feedback.

As part of this work, a new policy framework for housing development was created. This aims to help protect the environment, ensure that development is steered towards locations which reduce the need to travel by private car and to encourage healthier lifestyles.

The council also continued to work with consultants on further establishing the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan – this includes studies assessing and analysing South Oxfordshire’s housing, employment, retail, and leisure needs.

In addition, South Oxfordshire appointed Bioregional as external consultants to provide a Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base for the Joint Local Plan. After meeting with officers, Bioregional have started on the initial stages of their work on providing recommendations that will shape the draft policy approaches regarding sustainable construction and zero carbon design.

**T**he council have also made progress in relation to the issue of nature recovery, with work from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre being utilised in updating the draft nature recovery zones – which will feed into the Joint Local Plan.

The Berinsfield Community Delivery Plan – outlining projects which will support the transformation of the village and improve the health/wellbeing of its residents – was approved by the Berinsfield Steering Group. In addition, Oxfordshire Architects completed their work on the Berinsfield Community Facilities Project. A draft final report was circulated to the Steering Group and the recommendations shared with Ptarmigan Land as part of the master-planning process.

The Berinsfield Community Energy Feasibility Study was completed in quarter one. This will be considered by the Berinsfield Steering Group in July. Moreover, decarbonisation audits of five community buildings within the village were finalised, and the recommendations put forward for potential UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

The Cabinet endorsed the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership’s Integrated Care Strategy in June 2023. The Strategy seeks to provide a clear direction for the area’s health and care system.



To help ensure that new and existing buildings are zero-carbon in their operation, work began on implementing the priority actions identified in the adopted Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. This includes major workstreams on building decarbonisation and addressing the retrofit skills shortage.

In addition, a briefing on retrofitting homes and community buildings for district, town and parish councillors was finalised by officers. This document – which consolidates a lot of information – is intended to help councillors advise residents about this issue and direct them towards potential sources of support. The aim is for this briefing to be published in quarter two 2023/24.

As part of the council's efforts to prioritise active travel and to make sure that new developments are accessible, progress continued to be made on the Didcot Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). South Oxfordshire attended a LCWIP Steering Group session to review the work undertaken by the consultants on the project so far – this included route prioritisation and the core walking zone. The consultants are now looking at high level interventions for the plan's proposed schemes.

The County Council also consulted South Oxfordshire on the Didcot Central Corridor Project. Officers have drafted a response welcoming the development of placemaking, wayfinding and improvements to travel management within the town. They have also included feedback on how and where the County Council's proposals could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians. (A public consultation on the Didcot Central Corridor proposals was launched in June).

To help deliver on their commitment to providing homes that people can afford to live in, South Oxfordshire relaunched its procurement for an architect-led team to design net zero homes at a council-owned site in Didcot. The specification includes details on the sustainability measures that will need to be incorporated into the scheme's design and requires the successful bidder to employ a dedicated consultant within their team to deliver on these commitments.





## Theme 6: Investment that rebuilds our financial viability

### Why?

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

### So:

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

*Strategic Lead - Simon Hewings (Head of Finance)*

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 6 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 43

To invest, save and act responsibly with our financial resources, South Oxfordshire's Asset Management Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis to progress implementation of the Strategic Property Review. The aim of the group is to assess the council's assets in a holistic manner and consider opportunities for their development, usage, or disposal.

The Head of Finance finalised discussions with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on a review of business partnering. This will take place in quarter two and will encompass the use of the council's financial systems.

With the intention of building financial resilience to protect the council against future uncertainties, the Strategic Property Team continued to lease vacant properties, progress lease renewals and review rents during quarter one 2023/24.



South Oxfordshire's Transformation Programme – designed to assist in assuring the council's financial stability – is changing to provide a more people-centred approach to the proposed changes. The core Transformation team is in the process of forming/evolving – including in relation to its leadership and position within the Policy and Programmes service area. Additional recruitment has also been approved to strengthen the support and assurance to the core Transformation team and to assist in the delivery of the wider programme.

Following completion of the redesign work on the new office building, an update report was presented to Cabinet regarding the amended proposal and the revised delivery programme. Officers are also finalising the masterplan for the building and the submission of a full planning application.

Preparatory work has started on developing proposals for potential submission to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. Heat decarbonisation plans have been drafted for several sites with further assessments scheduled for next quarter.

In quarter one 2023/24, South Oxfordshire successfully secured £733,241 in Rural England Prosperity Funding. The pipeline of external funding opportunities was also maintained and assessed throughout the quarter.

#### South Oxfordshire quarter one 2023/24 individual cabinet member decisions

Date	Description
17/04/2023	Allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy to Oxfordshire County Council
24/04/2023	UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund
26/04/2023	Procurement of contact centre software
25/05/2023	Section 106 funds for Wallingford Site B Public Art
25/05/2023	Section 106 funds for The Wave, Didcot
26/05/2023	Culham Neighbourhood Plan
26/05/2023	Tiddington with Albury Neighbourhood Plan
14/06/2023	Oxford's unmet housing need
19/06/2023	Appointments to Outside Bodies June 2023 - May 2027

## Theme 1: Protect and restore our natural world - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PRN1	With partners, promote in-depth mapping and surveying of ecosystems across the district, planning for restoration of the natural world and working closely with land-owners and specialist agencies	Narrative report to include information on work with partners, and Habitat and Species data + changes/trends on a 12 month basis	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Planning	No progress to report in Q1 2023/24, update will be provided in Q4. Data is available on an annual reporting basis.
PRN2	Celebrate, protect and enhance our natural assets, including the River Thames and the AONBs and their setting, promoting our rural district for tourism, leisure and wellbeing	Narrative report to include information on work to manage natural assets and ANOBs (both internally and with partners)	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, work began on the research and development of a strategy on the local visitor economy. This will be delivered by Tourism South East and will include a strong focus on building a better understanding of how visitors use South Oxfordshire's natural assets (the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the River Thames etc.).</p> <p>Following the confirmation of funding from HM Government, the council has opened an expression of interest (EOI) process for Rural England Prosperity Funding. The EOI highlights the opportunity that this provides for rural communities and organisations to bid for capital funds to help deliver projects related to tourism, leisure, nature and net zero.</p>
PRN3	Encourage the use of natural processes to combat risks arising from climate change, such as meadows and trees to reduce flooding	Narrative report to include direct and indirect information on use of natural processes to combat risks of climate change. This should include new policy development and direct activity undertaken by the Council	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.

## Theme 1: Protect and restore our natural world - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PRN4	Recognise and support the vital role of farming in economic and ecosystem resilience, local food provision and the recovery of soils and natural processes	Narrative report on activity undertaken with partners to encourage and support the vital role of farming in economic and ecosystem resilience (where possible, although this may be implicitly included in the information above)	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>Following the confirmation of funding from HM Government, the council has opened an expression of interest (EOI) process for Rural England Prosperity (REPF) Funding. The EOI highlights the opportunity that this provides for rural businesses to bid for capital funds that could be used for the diversification of agricultural businesses (where it involves conversion of farm buildings) and equipment related to the processing and marketing of local foods.</p> <p>The Economic Development team has also met with a host of rural partners and other interested parties regarding the availability of the REPF during Q1 2023/24.</p>
PRN5	Call for the establishment of a Local Nature Partnership for Oxfordshire to promote an ambitious nature recovery programme, including tree and meadow planting, rewilding and providing habitats for wildlife including wildlife corridors	Narrative report - accepting that much of the activity to support PRN3 will be relevant here	Cllr David Rouane	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required – action complete.
PRN6	Work in partnership with the Earth Trust, Chilterns Conservation Board, North Wessex Downs AONB, the Environment Agency and others to improve access to green spaces in and around our towns, reinforcing access to nature as a priority for community wellbeing	Narrative report on activity with partners (including those named, and others), with a particular focus on work supporting the link between green spaces and community wellbeing	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q1 2023/24, Economic Development have led an internal working group of council officers focusing upon a specific intervention within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund related to the creation of/ improvement to green spaces. The council has also started to invite expressions of interest (EOI) to inform how available funding could be used from 2024/25.

## Theme 2: Openness and accountability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
OA1	Enhance trust and accountability in democratic decision-making, including live-streaming and recording of meetings, ensuring full accessibility of facilities and monitoring progress in an open and transparent way	<p>Narrative update to include information on the performance management framework, communications update on Cabinet/Council decisions, IAG around the operations/activity of the Council</p> <p>% of Public Council meetings within 12 months available online</p>	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Corporate Services	With the exception of the Full Council (due to logistical/IT issues), all other meetings during Q1 2023/24 were livestreamed (they will also remain available to view on the council's YouTube channel for a year).
OA2	Ensure that council departments work collaboratively to deliver best outcomes for residents	Narrative report detailing significant, non-recurring examples of inter-departmental working which have secured concrete outcomes for residents	Cllr Andrea Powell	Deputy Chief Executive - Transformation and Operations	<p>During Q1 2023/2024, work continued on reviewing how best to automate and improve the council's garden waste processes. In addition, officers have been exploring proposals for utilising the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) to automate resident's reports of enviro-crimes e.g., fly tipping. This has involved close collaboration between Customer Services, IT and Waste.</p> <p>Also, in Q1, the Comms and Elections teams delivered a comprehensive communications plan for the elections across a wide variety of channels. This included informing people about the requirement for voter ID and providing resources for sixth forms and colleges, community groups, parish councils.</p> <p>Other notable collaborations in Q1 included the continued cross-departmental collaboration on the council's response to the cost-of-living crisis and ongoing support for the Homes for Ukraine programme.</p>

## Theme 2: Openness and accountability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
OA3	Embed an organisational culture that celebrates diversity, inclusion and respect	Narrative report on work undertaken to celebrate diversity, inclusion and respect. Should include standard recurring activity, one off supporting activity. This should be a joint report primarily from HR/Comms but include comments from others	Cllr Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire continued to promote diversity and inclusion through the marking of events contained within the council's Diversity and Social Campaign Calendar.</p> <p>In April, South highlighted Stress Awareness Month and encouraged staff to join the Stress Management Society 30 Day Challenge. They also promoted Earth Day through their website and social media channels. South Oxfordshire also marked the religious celebrations of both Easter and Eid Al-Fitr.</p> <p>In May, the council emphasised the importance of Mental Health Awareness Week by publicising a range of activities for staff. In addition, they promoted sessions for community groups and parishes to find out about South Oxfordshire's grants. Residents were also invited to meet the Community Hub team to find out about the range of advice and support provided by the council.</p> <p>During June, South Oxfordshire helped to promote Pride Month. This included events at Cornerstone and a Pride Picnic at Great Western Park. The council supported Refugee Week by sharing the story of Olha (a member of staff). South also highlighted Volunteers Week, Loneliness Awareness Week, Learning Disabilities Week and Armed Forces Day across its communications channels. In addition, South Oxfordshire marked the religious celebration of Eid Al-Adha.</p>
OA4	Apply good governance and transparency in all our working and decision-making, exploring optimal structures and mechanisms for best practice in local government	Narrative report on significant change initiatives which have resulted in restructures/new processes to deliver local govt services	Cllr David Rouane	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>South Oxfordshire are introducing a new and improved Annual Governance Statement which will be supported by a Code of Corporate Governance. These will be considered by the Constitution Review Group (when it reconvenes) and then added to the Constitution. (The Annual Governance Statement and the Code of Corporate Governance will also be presented to the Joint Audit Committee alongside the Statement of Accounts).</p> <p>Further enhancements and modifications have been made to the council's data hub – a readily accessible resource which contains reports and data on South Oxfordshire's responsibilities, projects and programmes.</p>

## Theme 2: Openness and accountability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
OA5	Engage effectively with residents, Parish and Town Councils and other community organisations, using plain English in our communications and using appropriate methods and technologies to ensure equal and fair access for all	Narrative report on activities communications/engagement specific activities	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Corporate Services	<p>South Oxfordshire successfully delivered a comprehensive communications plan for the elections across a wide variety of channels. This included informing people about the requirement for voter ID and providing resources for sixth forms and colleges, community groups, parish councils. As a result, only 0.3 per cent (96 people) of those eligible to vote at a polling station were not initially issued with a ballot paper because they did not have the correct photo ID – by the close of poll, 84 of these had returned with an acceptable photo ID and were allowed to vote.</p> <p>There were 12,200 visits to the election results service on the South website on 5 May.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire successfully delivered the ‘Let’s Talk Rubbish’ communications campaign in support of the council’s waste survey. The production and distribution of articles, posters and images across a wide variety of media channels helped ensure that more than 2,000 people submitted responses.</p> <p>In May, the council announced the opening of the Riverside Outdoor Pool in Wallingford. This message (and a related notice about refurbishment plans at the site) attracted a large degree of media and online attention.</p> <p>(update continues on page 26)</p>

## Theme 2: Openness and accountability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
OA5	Engage effectively with residents, Parish and Town Councils and other community organisations, using plain English in our communications and using appropriate methods and technologies to ensure equal and fair access for all	Narrative report on activities communications/engagement specific activities	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Corporate Services	<p>South Oxfordshire also successfully launched the Didcot Garden Party 2023 during Q1, with posters/brochures readily available across the town.</p> <p>In Q1 2023/24, the council promoted sessions for community groups and parishes to find out about South Oxfordshire's grants. Residents were also invited to meet the Community Hub team to find out about the range of advice and support provided by the council.</p> <p>Officers are in the process of finalising the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform.</p> <p>There was a decrease in the number of unique website visitors (-1.0%) but an increase in page views (+2.0%) compared to the previous reporting quarter. It is hoped that this means more visitors are finding what they need quicker, reducing the need to view multiple pages. (This may also be reflected in the slightly higher bounce rate and lower visit duration).</p> <p>Q1 Web Usage Figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 245,757 unique website visitors</li> <li>• 284,212 total visits</li> <li>• 654,820 page views</li> <li>• 2.3 views per visit</li> <li>• 55.0% bounce rate</li> <li>• 2m4s average visit duration</li> </ul> <p>During Q4 2022/23, South Oxfordshire's social media accounts were moved from Hootsuite to a different social media manager. When combined with the ongoing flux at Facebook and Twitter, this meant that the analytics for that quarter were severely impacted and, therefore, were not comparable with those from other quarters.</p> <p>(update continues on page 27)</p>



## Theme 2: Openness and accountability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
OA5	Engage effectively with residents, Parish and Town Councils and other community organisations, using plain English in our communications and using appropriate methods and technologies to ensure equal and fair access for all	Narrative report on activities communications/engagement specific activities	CLlr Andrea Powell	Head of Corporate Services	<p>In Q1 2023/24, South’s reach on Facebook returned to its expected level and, therefore, provides a benchmark for future quarters. The council’s Instagram reach also rose – an encouraging indication, given the younger demographic on that platform.</p> <p>South’s Twitter impressions also increased significantly during Q1 2023/24</p> <p>Facebook Reach 336,038 Posts 244 New followers 324 Total followers 7,756</p> <p>Instagram Reach 2,623 New followers 34 Total followers 660</p> <p>Twitter Impressions 123,400 New followers 85 Total followers 11,426</p>

### Theme 3: Action on climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q4 Performance Update
ACE1	Achieve our own zero carbon target by 2025 and support others to achieve the district target of zero carbon by 2030	Narrative report on strategic projects which will help to deliver net zero carbon for 2025/2030. This should be split between Council specific and District specific activities	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, decarbonisation surveys of South Oxfordshire's council buildings and leisure facilities got underway. This work will inform the council's decisions about how these facilities should be decarbonised and will be used to identify potential opportunities to bid for the next round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Funding.</p> <p>The consultant tender for the Cornerstone decarbonisation project was returned and evaluated. Award announcement will be made in September following Governance sign off process.</p>
ACE2	Develop an annually approved climate emergency programme and adequately finance it	Quantitative measure - delivery of an annual CEP Y/N	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is being monitored as part of South's corporate performance management framework and will provide a detailed overview of all actions that may have an impact on reducing carbon in the wider district.</p> <p>The CAP Performance Report for Q4 2023/24 has been completed and is published on the council's website.</p>
ACE3	Deliver Council-owned net-zero homes and use grants, planning policy and advocacy to ensure the same standards throughout the district	Narrative Update on the current activities which WILL result in the delivery of Council owned homes (and details of those homes where possible)	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire relaunched its procurement for an architect-led team to design net zero homes at a council-owned site in Didcot. The specification includes details on the sustainability measures that will need to be incorporated into the scheme's design and requires the successful bidder to employ a dedicated consultant within their team to deliver on these commitments.</p>

### Theme 3: Action on climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q4 Performance Update
ACE4	Promote and encourage behavioural change with informational campaigns and leading by example	Narrative update to include the number of communications campaigns undertaken which promote/encourage behavioural change (with examples)	Cllr Andrea Powell	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire continued to promote the 'Let it Bee' project to residents. This aims to increase biodiversity on council land by allowing wildflowers and plants to grow on specific sites. To help achieve this, the cutting regimes in these areas have been modified. The council also continued to support the No Mow May campaign.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire successfully delivered the 'Let's Talk Rubbish' communications campaign in support of the council's waste survey. The production and distribution of articles, posters and images across a wide variety of media channels helped ensure that more than 2,000 people submitted responses.</p> <p>The council also publicised the launch of a county-wide EV car club for Oxfordshire.</p>
ACE5	Take positive action on single-use plastics, air quality improvement measures and sustainable transport	Suggested combined narrative update on Comms relating to single use plastics/comms relating to AQ initiatives and metrics relating to AQ (with an appreciation that this data will be skewed in 2020 due to lockdown(s))	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the draft Air Quality Action Plan was released for consultation. It outlines the progress made since the last iteration of the plan and sets out the future direction for the current Air Quality Management Areas within the district.</p> <p>In addition, the council has submitted the Annual Status Report to Defra for review. Once this process is complete, the document will be made publicly available.</p>

### Theme 3: Action on climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q4 Performance Update
ACE6	Mitigate climate change through planning and land use, enhancing biodiversity on our own land and strengthening the planning system to enforce environmental standards	Narrative update to focus on planning initiatives which support the potential deliverables where possible (primarily the development of the joint 2041 Local Plan, the joint Design Guide and carbon reduction in planning (DES8/10)	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	<p>During Q1 2023/24, significant progress was made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers prepared the text for the forthcoming preferred options consultation and shared this with the Joint Local Plan Steering Group so that members could provide feedback. As part of this work, a new policy framework for development was created. This aims to help protect the environment, mitigate the effects of climate change, ensure that development is steered towards locations which reduce the need to travel by private car and to encourage healthier lifestyles.</p> <p>Also, In Q1 2023/24, the council appointed Bioregional as external consultants to provide a Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base for the Joint Local Plan. After meeting with officers, they have started on the initial stages of their work on providing recommendations that will shape the Joint Local Plan draft policy approaches regarding sustainable construction and zero carbon design.</p> <p>In addition, the council made progress in relation to the issue of nature recovery with work from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre being utilised in updating the draft nature recovery zones – which will feed into the Joint Local Plan.</p>

### Theme 3: Action on climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q4 Performance Update
ACE7	Promote the circular economy (reduce, re-use and recycle), including in our waste management contracts	<p>Narrative measure on comms activity relating to waste/ recycling</p> <p>Quantitative information on recycling rate, contamination rates, % of residual waste to landfill</p>	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>The March 2023 recycling rate was 61.37%, the landfill rate was 0.23% and the contamination rate was 13.29%. These figures were not available for Q4 2022/23 reporting.</p> <p>The April 2023 recycling rate was 62.49%, the landfill rate was 0.23% and the contamination rate was 11.96%.</p> <p>The May 2023 recycling rate was 68.76%, the landfill rate was 0.23% and the contamination rate was 13.60%.</p> <p>The figures for June are not yet available.</p> <p>South successfully delivered the 'Let's Talk Rubbish' communications campaign in support of the council's waste survey. The production and distribution of articles, posters and images across a wide variety of media channels helped ensure that more than 2,000 people submitted responses.</p> <p>Through its communication channels, South Oxfordshire highlighted the changes to the waste collection services over Easter and the May Bank Holidays.</p> <p>The council also publicised the extra garden waste collection weeks to residents.</p>
ACE8	Support and encourage local businesses to respond to climate change and nature recovery	Narrative update on the work influencing work undertaken to support and encourage local businesses relating to climate change and nature recovery	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire has been examining proposals to use UK Shared Prosperity funding to support a local strategic partnership deliver decarbonisation support for businesses. The partnership – if established – would provide resources, support and a county-wide programme of activities to help companies respond to the climate emergency.
ACE9	Promote waste minimisation initiatives such as Repair Cafés	Unless specific activity relating to Repair Café's and Freecycle can be reported on, suggest that this is covered in previous narratives	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing and Environment	Although there was no specific activity during Q1 2023/24 relating to repair cafés and Freecycle, South Oxfordshire continued to promote the use of repair cafés, swap shops, Freecycle and refill stations through the council's website.

### Theme 3: Action on climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q4 Performance Update
ACE10	Work with Oxfordshire County Council to build on our commitment to active travel including walking, public transport and cycling infrastructure	<p>Narrative update on work with Oxfordshire County Council</p> <p>Optional Quantitative metrics on the amount of new footpaths/ cycle paths</p>	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>South Oxfordshire continue to participate in the new Enhancement Partnership Board with the other councils in Oxfordshire. This board will manage the additional HM Government funding of £12.7 million for the Bus Service Improvement Plan – as well as local funding.</p> <p>The County Council consulted South Oxfordshire on the Didcot Central Corridor Project. Officers have drafted a response welcoming the development of placemaking, wayfinding and improvements to travel management within the town. They have also included feedback on how and where the County Council’s proposals could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians.</p>

## Theme 4: Improved economic and community well-being

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
ECW1	Partner with regional agencies to ensure economic recovery, quality employment, thriving businesses and vibrant communities, avoiding the blight of “dormitory towns”	<p>Narrative report on work with partners in this area</p> <p>Quantitative metrics relating to employment rates (trends, actuals) - unemployment rate, trajectory/trend, earnings information</p>	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, Economic Development have continued to be actively involved with the steering group for the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP). Following the publication of the Partnership’s Charter, officers have prepared recommendations for initiatives that build upon this work – these are scheduled to be brought before the Senior Management Team (SMT) in July.</p> <p>The Economic Development team have maintained their connection to the working group overseeing the development of the emerging Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire. Officers have represented the council at meetings and workshops with the purpose of ensuring that the Plan continues to align with South Oxfordshire’s objectives.</p> <p>In Q1 2023/24, work began on the research and development of a strategy on the local visitor economy. In collaboration with Tourism South East, officers have developed a consultation process for residents and businesses operating in the visitor economy – this will be rolled out in Q2 2023/24.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire also continues to be a member of OxLEP’s steering group for development of the Oxfordshire Destination Management Plan – with the intention of ensuring that the steering group’s work complements the council’s own visitor economy strategy.</p> <p>Economic Development attended two meetings of the advisory panel for the development of Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Events supporting the creation of the LSIP have also been promoted to businesses via the South and Vale Business Support newsletter. The LSIP has now been submitted to the Department for Education for approval.</p> <p>(update continues on page 33)</p>

## Theme 4: Improved economic and community well-being

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
ECW1	Partner with regional agencies to ensure economic recovery, quality employment, thriving businesses and vibrant communities, avoiding the blight of “dormitory towns”	<p>Narrative report on work with partners in this area</p> <p>Quantitative metrics relating to employment rates (trends, actuals) - unemployment rate, trajectory/trend, earnings information</p>	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>In June, the expression of interest (EOI) process for organisations to pitch projects that align with the South Oxfordshire’s UK Shared Prosperity Funding plans closed. The EOI received will be analysed and assessed during Q2 and may result in the creation of new support programmes for businesses within the district.</p> <p>Also in June, the council opened an EOI process for Rural England Prosperity Funding. The EOI highlights the opportunity that this provides for rural communities and organisations to bid for capital funds.</p> <p>The council continues to support independent businesses through the ShopAppy e-commerce platform.</p> <p>Officers from Economic Development supported the external consultants developing the Future Employment Lands Needs Assessment for the Joint Local Plan. They helped to provide information on the barriers to entry and growth for SMEs in the district.</p> <p>As of April 2023, the unemployment rate in South Oxfordshire stood at 2.6 per cent. This was a slight increase on the figure for the previous quarter but below the Oxfordshire (2.8 per cent) and English (3.0 per cent) averages.</p>



## Theme 4: Improved economic and community well-being

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
ECW2	Provide advice on access to grants, training and diversification programmes, helping local businesses to build agility and resilience	Quantitative measures - number of businesses we engage with, social media hits, newsletter subscribers, clickthrough rate, numbers of business grants awarded	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>In Q1 2023/24, the South and Vale Business Support website was successfully reintegrated within that of the main council. No negative impacts have been observed as a result of this change. Officers are now exploring whether it is possible to collect analytics for the Economic Development pages on the council's website.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, South and Vale Business Support sent 11 newsletters. These generated 1,814 clickthroughs with an average open rate of 50.8%.</p> <p>There were 60 tweets in Q1 2023/24 on the South and Vale Business Support Twitter feed. These created 6,200 impressions and 140 engagements. (Due to the upgrading of the analytics for Twitter, it was not possible to determine the number of new followers or profile visits).</p> <p>The South and Vale Business Support Facebook page over the same period created 1,782 impressions, generated 90 engagements and had 90 profile visits.</p> <p>The council sent out five Start Your Own Business Guides, five Greening the Web Guides and three Circular Economy Guides during the quarter.</p> <p>There are currently no business grants being offered in South Oxfordshire.</p>
ECW3	Plan for communities connected by walking & cycling networks, with sustainable, accessible and affordable public transport and reliable Broadband, learning the lessons from the Covid-19 experience and enabling more home-working	<p>Narrative update on work support reliable broadband (where possible)</p> <p>Narrative update on transport initiatives</p> <p>Quantitative - new footpath/ cycle paths delivered</p>	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, Economic Development continued to support the work of the Digital Infrastructure Partnership (DIP).</p> <p>The County Council consulted South Oxfordshire on the Didcot Central Corridor Project. Officers have drafted a response welcoming the development of placemaking, wayfinding and improvements to travel management within the town. They have also included feedback on how and where the County Council's proposals could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians.</p>

## Theme 4: Improved economic and community well-being

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
ECW4	Launch a new community wellbeing strategy to encourage and support culture, leisure and the arts	Approval/Launch of 'Community Wellbeing Strategy' Y/N (document should encompass large parts of information above)	Cllr Maggie Fillipova-Rivers	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, work on the Community Wellbeing Strategy was paused to allow officers to concentrate on reviewing the updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Oxfordshire-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
ECW5	Use our planning powers to preserve our valuable green spaces, particularly in urban areas	Number of Neighbourhood Plans implemented/green spaces secured	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the council adopted two neighbourhood plan reviews (Tiddington with Albury and Culham).</p> <p>The Tiddington with Albury Neighbourhood Plan included a policy protecting three green spaces through Local Green Space designations. Local Green Space designations provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.</p> <p>The Culham Neighbourhood Plan does not include Local Green Space Designations, but it contains policies on community facilities and nature recovery which seeks to protect the value and function of locally important green spaces.</p>
ECW6	Work with our communities to maximise Community Infrastructure Levy funds and to allocate these to achieve best outcomes for residents in the District	<p>Narrative update about work in this area to include detail of new CIL spending strategy, communication with parishes</p> <p>Quantitative elements - CIL Spend broken down by type, by parish</p>	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Finance	<p>£5,039,000 in new allocations of CIL funding were included in South Oxfordshire's provisional capital programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cornerstone Decarbonisation Works = £1,592,000</li> <li>• GWP Northern Community Centre Decarbonisation Works = £200,000</li> <li>• Projects to look at land management, tree planting, wildflower, rewilding and habitat creation = £50,000</li> <li>• Wheatley West Flood Alleviations = £51,000</li> <li>• Surface water flooding reduction schemes = £100,000</li> <li>• Improvements to riverbanks = £50,000</li> <li>• East Hagbourne – structural lining of culvert and maintenance of existing storage facility = £10,000</li> <li>• EV charging = £50,000</li> </ul> <p>The previously approved CIL allocations that were yet to be delivered as of the end of 2022/23 have been carried forward into 2023/24 – a total of £7,060,367 has been allocated to district council infrastructure projects.</p>

## Theme 4: Improved economic and community well-being

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
ECW7	Take enforcement action on fly-tipping and dog fouling	<p>Small narrative on Fly Tipping/dog following activity (with Comms input on any campaigns)</p> <p>Qualitative data on fly tipping - what we collect, where from, how much, nature of enforcement action undertaken, hotspot map</p>	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>In April 2023, there were 61 fly tips in South Oxfordshire. This was a decrease on the 73 fly tips recorded in April 2022.</p> <p>In May 2023, there were 86 fly tips in South Oxfordshire. This was a significant increase on the 40 fly tips recorded in May 2022.</p> <p>The figures for June are not yet available.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the council issued eight Fixed Penalty Notices for waste crimes. There was one prosecution for waste crimes between April and June. Another four prosecutions are pending.</p> <p>In addition, officers received 105 abandoned vehicle reports during Q1 2023/24. Of these, 44 vehicles were not on site, 32 were identified as not abandoned, three were removed, and 11 investigations remain ongoing (the other 10 were duplicate reports).</p>
ECW8	Work with local partners to introduce civil parking enforcement as a district responsibility	Narrative update on progress	Cllr David Rouane	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	No update required – action complete.

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN1	Didcot Garden Town priority projects as identified by the Advisory Board, specifically a sustainable plan to redevelop the Didcot Gateway site, a public transport and active walking and cycling network, community facilities and accessible green spaces for Didcot residents	Narrative update against the stated aim, to include as many of the potential deliverables as possible, but not limited in scope to this	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>Following completion of the redesign work on the new office building, an update report was presented to Cabinet regarding the amended proposal and the revised delivery programme. Officers are also working on finalising the masterplan for the building and the submission of a full planning application.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, progress continued to be made on the Didcot Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The Part A consultation came to an end, with 1,300 comments being received. The intention is for the Part B consultation to go live in August.</p> <p>In addition, South Oxfordshire attended a LCWIP Steering Group session to review the work undertaken by the consultants on the project so far – this included route prioritisation and the core walking zone. The consultants are now looking at high level interventions for the plan’s proposed schemes.</p> <p>Also, in Q1 2023/24, the County Council consulted South on the Didcot Central Corridor Project. Officers have drafted a response welcoming the development of placemaking, wayfinding and improvements to travel management within the town. They have also included feedback on how and where the County Council’s proposals could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians. (A public consultation on the Didcot Central Corridor proposals was launched in June).</p> <p>A procurement exercise is currently underway to advance green infrastructure wayfinding.</p>

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN2	The transformation of Berinsfield into a thriving Garden Village with improved facilities that are developed in line with the community's needs and aspirations	Narrative update against the stated aim, to include as many of the potential deliverables as possible, but not limited in scope to this	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Berinsfield Community Delivery Plan – outlining projects which will support the transformation of the village and improve the health/wellbeing of its residents – was approved by the Berinsfield Steering Group.</p> <p>Oxfordshire Architects completed their work on the Community Facilities Project. A draft final report was circulated to the Steering Group and the recommendations shared with Ptarmigan Land as part of the master-planning process.</p> <p>The Community Energy Feasibility Study was also completed in Q1. This will be considered by the Steering Group in July. In addition, decarbonisation audits of five community buildings were finalised and the recommendations put forward for potential UK Shared Prosperity Funding.</p> <p>The Berinsfield Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group was launched during Q1. This was the initial step of a project to review health inequalities within the village.</p>
HILN3	New council-owned homes with a focus on quality of design, affordability and local requirements	Narrative Update on the current activities which WILL result in the delivery of Council owned homes (and details of those homes where possible) Also reporting on progress of Design Guide	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire relaunched its procurement for an architect-led team to design net zero homes at a council-owned site in Didcot. The specification includes details on the sustainability measures that will need to be incorporated into the scheme's design and requires the successful bidder to employ a dedicated consultant within their team to deliver on these commitments.</p> <p>The Asset Management Group (established during Q3 2021/22) continues to meet on a quarterly basis to progress implementation of the Strategic Property Review and to consider assets in line with the council's corporate priorities.</p> <p>In addition, where pre-application advice is sought from the council, officers continue to draw attention to the advice in the council's Design Guide and the appropriate sustainable design/ carbon reduction policies within the Local Plan.</p>

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN4	Support and encouragement for the retrofit of our existing housing stock for low-carbon performance and to eliminate fuel poverty	Narrative update on current/completed activities and influencing activity	Cllr Sue Cooper	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, work began on operationalising the priority actions identified in the adopted Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. This includes major workstreams on building decarbonisation and addressing the retrofit skills shortage.</p> <p>A briefing on retrofitting homes and community buildings for district, town and parish councillors was finalised by officers. This document – which consolidates a lot of information – is intended to help councillors advise residents about this issue and direct them towards potential sources of support. The aim is for this briefing to be published in Q2 2023/24.</p> <p>Funding for retrofitting remains available to eligible residents within the district though Oxfordshire County Council.</p>
HILN5	Elimination of homelessness in our District	<p>Narrative update on progress in this area</p> <p>Quantitative information on - Homelessness rates, homeless cases and TA numbers, length of stay in TA and effectiveness of interventions (avoided homelessness)</p>	Cllr Maggie Phillipova Rivers	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>South Oxfordshire recorded four rough sleepers at the end of Q1 2023/24. The low levels of rough sleeping in the district reflects the success of the council's preventative approach.</p> <p>The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) on 30 June 2023 was 16 – only one higher than the previous quarter (despite the increasing pressures on the service caused by the cost-of-living crisis and the ending of hosting arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine scheme).</p> <p>The rolling six-month average length of stay in emergency accommodation was 63 nights, above the ceiling target of 42, and a reflection of the number and complexity of the cases.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the rate of successful homelessness prevention in South Oxfordshire was 84.0 per cent. This is above the very challenging target of 80.0 per cent (the average rate of homelessness prevention in the South East region is 56.0 per cent).</p> <p>The council continues to actively participate in the countywide Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy and is a member of both the countywide Homelessness Steering Group and the Homelessness Directors Group.</p>

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN6	Bringing empty properties back into use	Narrative update on any relevant initiatives to reduce the number of empty properties and any data on empty property levels in South Oxfordshire	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>There are currently no funded initiatives to bring vacant commercial premises back into use in South Oxfordshire. Nevertheless, during Q1 2023/24, Economic Development continued to explore the possibility of using grant funding secured through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to unlock enterprise infrastructure in South Oxfordshire by making use of vacant premises. Following the development of an expression of interest (EOI) form to allow private organisations to pitch appropriate projects for potential funding in Q4 2022/23, the council is currently in the process of assessing these EOI to establish demand ahead of developing a grant criterion.</p> <p>Empty rateable premises data shows that 356 rated premises are currently vacant in South Oxfordshire (total rateable value circa £5.3m).</p> <p>The vacancy rates for the district's largest towns are as follows (June 2023):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didcot Town Centre: 10.8 per cent</li> <li>• Henley: 9.3 per cent</li> <li>• Thame: 8.0 per cent</li> <li>• Wallingford: 10.3 per cent</li> </ul> <p>This compares to a vacancy rate of 9.5 per cent across the wider South East region.</p>

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN7	Ensuring that our teams are ready to access or signpost to any Government schemes or funding that is made available	Narrative update on signposting activity and if possible, update on take-up	Cllr Robin Bennett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, officers collaborated with colleagues from the County Council to develop a proposal to secure Oxfordshire's Local Electric Infrastructure Fund allocation of £3.6m. This will include capital funding to cover the costs of installing electric vehicle charging points across three workstreams: EV charging hubs in council owned car parks, on-street EV chargers, grants for EV Charge Points in community hubs (village halls and community centres etc.).</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council will manage the procurement of all of the workstreams, the Community Hub grants, and the installation/ongoing contract management of on-street chargers. The district councils will manage the installation/ongoing contract management of the EV charging hubs in council owned car parks – there will a revenue share arrangement with the charge point operator to cover the ongoing costs.</p> <p>The External Funding Lead and the Garden Communities team submitted an application of £65,000 to the Great Western Railway Customer and Community Fund. If successful, this money will be used to commission consultants to undertake a Didcot Transport Hub Feasibility Study.</p> <p>The proposed study will explore options for the provision of public transport integration, electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, enhanced active travel links, wayfinding improvements and public realm improvements.</p> <p>Preparatory work has started on developing proposals for potential submission to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund. Heat decarbonisation have been drafted for several sites with further assessment planned for Q2.</p> <p>In Q1 2023/24, South Oxfordshire successfully secured £733,241 in Rural England Prosperity Funding.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire also signposted the following funding opportunities to Oxfordshire County Council: Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2, Smart Infrastructure Pilots Programme.</p>



## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN8	New homes are future-proofed, meeting the highest environmental standards and enhancing nature through sensitive, high quality design	Narrative update around refresh of the design guide, local plan, and information around DES10	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	In Q1 2023/24, the council appointed Bioregional as external consultants to provide a Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base for the Joint Local Plan. After meeting with officers, they have started on the initial stages of their work on providing recommendations that will shape the Joint Local Plan draft policy approaches regarding zero carbon development.
HILN9	Spatial planning embeds public health, wellbeing and sustainability	Narrative update on work around planning reinforcing wellbeing and sustainability. This should include 'health based planning data' where possible - information on public gym equipment - footpaths, cycle paths etc.	Cllr Anne Marie Simpson	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, significant progress was made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers prepared the text for the forthcoming preferred options consultation and shared this with the Joint Local Plan Steering Group so that members could provide feedback. As part of this work, a new policy framework for housing development was created. This aims to help protect the environment, ensure that development is steered towards locations which reduce the need to travel by private car and to encourage healthier lifestyles.

## Theme 5: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
HILN10	Changes over time in our stock of homes meet local needs	<p>Narrative update based on information available from 3rd parties and the impact this has on the local area</p> <p>Bedroom mix in new developments breakdown every 6 months</p>	Cllr Anne-Marie Simpson	Head of Planning	<p>During March 2023, the final month of Q4 2022/23, a further 27 affordable properties were reported as delivered, taking the Q4 total to 177. The type and size of the 27 units delivered in March 2023 was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 x 1 bed houses</li> <li>• 11 x 2 bed flats</li> <li>• 7 x 2 bed houses</li> <li>• 5 x 3 bed houses</li> </ul> <p>2022/23 saw the delivery of 384 new affordable homes.</p> <p>During Q1 (April, May &amp; June) 2023-2024, 30 affordable properties have been reported as delivered.</p> <p>The type and size of the 30 units currently delivered in Q1 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 x 1 bed houses</li> <li>• 17 x 2 bed houses</li> <li>• 10 x 3 bed houses</li> <li>• 1 x 4 bed house</li> </ul> <p>2023/24 to date has seen the delivery of 30 affordable homes.</p> <p>It should be noted that over the life of a development, different dwelling and tenure types will be delivered at varying rates depending upon the developer's build programme.</p>
HILN11	Sustainable transport solutions prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to reduce car dependency and air pollution	Narrative update on overall progress relating to sustainable transport solutions - particularly EV elements	Cllr Anne Marie Simpson	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, a county-wide EV car club was launched. Vehicles from this scheme are available for hire in Henley, Thame and Wallingford.</p> <p>The County Council consulted South Oxfordshire on the Didcot Central Corridor Project. Officers have drafted a response welcoming the development of placemaking, wayfinding and improvements to travel management within the town. They have also included feedback on how and where the County Council's proposals could be improved for cyclists and pedestrians.</p>

## Theme 6: Investment that rebuilds our financial viability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
IRFV1	Develop and implement an innovative Transformation Strategy to diversify our revenue streams, improve our effectiveness and secure our on-going viability	<p>Narrative measure relating to the development of an overarching Transformation Strategy and any overall narrative linking to potential deliverables</p> <p>Quantitative data - Income relative to Net expenditure (in context), this could be broken down by service</p>	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The council's Transformation Programme is being reprofiled to provide a people-centred approach to the proposed changes.</p> <p>The core Transformation team is currently forming/evolving – including to its leadership and position within the Policy and Programmes service area.</p> <p>Additional recruitment has been approved to strengthen the support and assurance to the core Transformation team and to assist in the delivery of the wider programme.</p>
IRFV2	“Invest to save” for the District, including the delivery of sustainable new Council offices – on time and within budget – to realise future operational efficiencies	Narrative on progress of the Corporate Office project, including data on current spend on office accommodation which will no longer be spent once project completed. Further narrative to discuss impact of new building finances	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Policy and Programmes	Following completion of the redesign work on the new office building, an update report was presented to Cabinet regarding the amended proposal and the revised delivery programme. Officers are also working on finalising the masterplan for the building and the submission of a full planning application.
IRFV3	Exercise strong Stewardship of all Council assets including property and financial investments, optimising their performance for the benefit of our residents	Narrative update on the progress of the SPR, in the initial period detailing the scope and scape, then once SPR has been delivered, the outcomes and future measures (quant element)	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>The Strategic Property Review was completed during 2021/22. No further progress on related initiatives to report Q1 2023/24.</p> <p>The Asset Management Group (established during Q3 2021/22) continues to meet on a quarterly basis to progress implementation of the Strategic Property Review and to consider assets in line with the council's corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Strategic Property Team continues to progress lease renewals and review rents and where appropriate seek new tenants.</p>

## Theme 6: Investment that rebuilds our financial viability - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
IRFV4	Maximise external funding opportunities to support our services and to enrich our leisure, sporting and community activities	<p>Narrative update relating to external funding utilisation, both funding received direct to the council, and projects which have received part external funding or are in progress if not already delivered</p> <p>Specific elements which should be included - Proportion of spend on leisure/community facilities vs amount funded by Council.</p> <p>CIL/106 spend broken down by type/parish</p> <p>Externally funded Capital schemes</p> <p>Total External funding received figure - narrative should be clear that this is not the total figure</p>	Cllr Maggie-Fillipova Rivers	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Active Communities team are now supporting Active Oxfordshire in their bid to get an additional three years funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes. This will enable the council to continue the work that it is currently undertaking with residents who have long-term health conditions, and families on low incomes.</p> <p>South Oxfordshire now has 1133 people signed up to the 'You Move' project (aimed at families with children and in receipt of benefits). It also has 664 people enrolled on the 'Move Together' project (designed to help people with long-term health conditions become more active).</p> <p>An application to Great Western Rail for improvements to Didcot Parkway station submitted - outcome due in August 2023.</p>
IRFV5	Invest responsibly and ethically with the Climate Emergency at the heart of what we do	Narrative update detailing changes which have included climate elements into regularised decision making	Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker	Head of Finance	As a consequence of the uncertain economic climate, officers are not currently pursuing a funds review to find alternative potential investment opportunities. They will, however, continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the council's treasury advisors.



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