

# Vale of White Horse District Council

# Corporate Performance Report



## 2023/24 Quarter One

## July 2023

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# Background

- The Council monitors performance and progress towards achieving the aims and priorities set out in the Vale of White Horse 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 Vale of White Horse. The make-up of the council following this was as follows:

- 34 Liberal Democrats
- 4 Green



# Quarter one 2023/24 performance highlights

## Providing the homes people need



We appointed Bioregional to provide **Net Zero Carbon Evidence Base** for the Joint Local Plan



We developed a new policy framework for **housing development** that will aid in environmental protection and support healthier living



**£4,874,000**

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

## Tackling the climate emergency



We commissioned **Concept Energy** to produce **decarbonisation reports** for The Beacon and Abbey Meadows



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



We produced a **Solar Farms Best Practice Guidance Note** for Oxfordshire to help assess applications for solar farms

## Building healthy communities



We launched a new **food bank grant scheme** to help the district's food banks purchase supplies



**2,983**

The number of people we engaged through our **physical activity programmes**



We approved a new **Partnership Grant Policy** - this will offer up to five years of funding for information and advice services in our district

## Building stable finances

**£528,032**

The amount of funding we secured from the **Rural England Prosperity Fund**



**£3.6 million**

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



**£65,000**

The amount we applied for from the **Great Western Railway Customer and Community Fund** to pay for a Didcot Transport Hub Feasibility Study

## Working in partnership



We are collaborating with **Tourism South East** to develop a consultation process for residents and businesses operating in the visitor economy



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



We are involved with and promote events supporting the creation of the **Local Skills Improvement Plan**, led by the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

## Working in an open and inclusive way



**209,339**

The number of **unique visits** to the council website.



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 produced the **Annual Consultation and Engagement Report** which will be used as a benchmark for future engagement activities



# Theme 1: Providing the homes people need

## We will:

- find ways to provide more genuinely affordable housing, including housing for social rent, to better provide for the needs of the Vale residents
- aim to provide a mix of tenures in each development to build sustainable homes in balanced and sustainable communities
- use our influence on decision makers, where the responsibility lies outside of Vale.

## We will do this by:

- exploring and considering opportunities to bring forward the delivery of homes people can afford
- adopting a policy framework that ensures those homes could be delivered in a way that supports the environment and people living healthy lives.

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

## Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 1 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 20

In 2022/23, there were 514 recorded affordable housing completions in the Vale. This was significantly above the target for the year (230) and compares favourably to the 289 completions recorded for 2021/22.

As part of the Vale's commitment to help deliver more affordable homes, the council continued to have conversations with a range of landowners and promoters to progress housing and residential-led, mixed-use schemes (including Dalton Barracks and Ock Valley Park). Close liaison was also maintained with Oxfordshire County Council's highways and strategic planning teams.

Officers drafted an updated policy on how Section 106 funds could be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing and this will progress through the formal democratic process in quarter two. The council also investigated the process for becoming a Registered Local Authority Provider of Housing with the Regulator for Social Housing. If the Vale makes a successful application, it will enable the council to directly provide affordable/social housing.



**A**cross-departmental team continued to work on developing the various housing schemes to support people from Afghanistan and Ukraine. These activities included the purchasing of homes and the making of preparations to lease property from the Ministry of Defence.

Approval was granted for officers to continue with a scheme to deliver additional mobile home berths at Pebble Hill. Work has now begun on the next stages of this project.

The council wants to adopt a policy framework that ensures that homes can be delivered in a way that supports the environment and people living healthy lives. To help achieve this, 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 the Vale’s housing,

employment, retail and leisure needs.

**I**n addition, the Vale 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.

The 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.





## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency

### We will:

- do everything we can to help tackle the Climate Emergency
- reduce council emissions by 75% by 2025
- become a carbon neutral council by 2030
- reduce all emissions across the Vale District by 75% by 2030
- aspire to be a carbon neutral Vale district by 2045.

### We will do this by:

- a Climate Emergency programme, focussed on what the council has control over, working
- towards our own targets for our own buildings, vehicles, leisure and arts centres
- a Climate Emergency programme focussed on encouraging the wider district community
- to reduce its carbon footprint in order to meet the Climate Emergency targets
- a programme around exercising our influence with partners on wider policy, working with neighbouring authorities, lobbying Government, and identifying environmental policy gaps.

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

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 2 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 25

During quarter one, the Vale commissioned Concept Energy to produce decarbonisation reports for The Beacon and Abbey Meadows. This work will inform the council's decisions about how these facilities should be decarbonised and also whether any proposed projects could be eligible for funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This is important for our aim of reducing council emissions by 75% by 2025 and become a carbon neutral council by 2030.

Significant work was carried out this quarter on the Joint Local Plan (JLP) and a new policy framework for housing development was created. The framework aims to tackle 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. In addition, consultants started assessing the policy options for the JLP against sustainability objectives.

Through its membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group, Vale continued to work with neighbouring authorities in relation to climate and environmental matters. Officers from the Climate team led the production of a Solar Farms Best Practice Guidance Note for Oxfordshire. This advice will help planning departments and elected members from around the county to assess the relative merits of applications for solar farms against national best practice.

Officers worked 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 retrofitting skills shortage.

Vale officers were actively engaged in the production of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and attended two steering group meetings. The LNRS will include a statement on biodiversity priorities within Oxfordshire and a local habitat map. It is also expected to be the mechanism used to facilitate Biodiversity Net Gains.

To help increase biodiversity on council land, Vale 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 (including the new wildflower meadow in Abingdon). The council also continued to support the No Mow May campaign.

During quarter one, Defra submitted a planning application to install a new particulate matter analyser in Botley (next to the A34). The data collected will be monitored against the national Ambient Air Quality Directives as part of the Automatic Urban and Rural Network.

Quarter one also saw the release of the draft Air Quality Action Plan 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 Vale. The council also submitted the Air Quality Annual Status Report to Defra for review, after which the document will be made publicly available.

In line with our commitments to work with partners on increasing charging infrastructure across Oxfordshire, the Vale provided a letter of support to the county council for their proposals relating to the use of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) grant earmarked for Oxfordshire. Officers from the Policy and Programmes service are currently leading on the detail that the county council needs to provide into how and where this money will be spent.

Promoting engagement with recycling, the council 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.

The council also worked on various communications to increase awareness of the Climate Emergency and to help the community to reduce its carbon footprint. The Council promoted Home Upgrade grants and the new EV car club, based at three of the council's car parks. The council also updated our Economic Development web pages to include information for businesses on retrofitting and energy saving measures and our Action on Climate and Nature webpages to include a new section on climate and environmentally friendly lifestyle changes.





## Theme 3: Building healthy communities

### We will:

- contribute to making people's lives healthier by encouraging the switch to more active travel, improving air quality where people work and live, and providing active opportunities.

### We will do this by:

- building strong communities and connections with a sense of place and strong community identity
- promoting healthy place shaping and active communities for everyone
- safeguarding and supporting our vulnerable residents

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

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 3 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 29

At the end of quarter one 2023/24, the council recorded zero rough sleepers. The very low levels of rough sleeping in the district reflects the success of the Vale's preventative approach.

The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) on 30 June 2023 was 16 – a reduction of one compared to 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 98 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 the Vale was 87.0 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).



As part of the Vale's commitment to safeguarding and supporting the district's vulnerable residents, the council 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.

Throughout the quarter, the Community Wellbeing team has continued to work with communities across the district to support them through the cost-of-living crisis. As part of these efforts, the Community Hub, along with colleagues from the enablement team, held a community cost of living event in Wantage. The Vale also launched a new food bank grant scheme. This will help the district's food banks purchase supplies.

In June, the Cabinet approved a new Partnership Grant Policy for 2024-29. This will be used to support district-wide advisory services.

With the aim of building strong communities and connections with a sense of place, the Planning Policy team have continued to make significant progress on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers have now created strategic policies for each of district's towns – building on their strengths and differing local identities. In addition, the consultants preparing the Town Centre & Retail Study have produced their report. This included health checks of the district's towns.

The Vale has, through its membership and participation in county-wide initiatives through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, continued to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

The council has continued to support and advise parishes throughout the Vale in relation of the provision of public art. (A draft public art strategy is to be included as part of the new Joint Local Plan. It will be consulted upon as part of the wider process of engagement).

With the intention of promoting healthy place shaping and active communities, the final stages in the development of the Active Communities Delivery Plan were completed in quarter one 2023/24. This involved the intensive mapping and reviewing of areas of inequality within the district.

After developing stronger links with local GP surgeries, the Active Communities team now have a regular presence at monthly clinics in all the district's market towns.

Work has continued on the development of the 'Nature Trails' in Abingdon. The draft map is currently being reviewed and consulted on, while marker posts, lecterns and raised beds have been ordered – and final arrangements made for their installation over the summer.





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 Vale.

Officers issued for consideration a draft quarterly report based on the outcomes from the 2022/23 quarter four meeting of the Asset Management Group. The assets listed will be reviewed by a working group – currently in the process of being established – to ascertain whether they can be used as community gardens and allotments.

The Vale has continued to work with partners (particularly Active Oxfordshire) to encourage involvement in physical activities. During quarter one, the Active Communities team supported Active Oxfordshire in their bid for an additional three years of funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes. This will enable the council to continue the work that it is undertaking with residents who have long-term health conditions and families on low incomes.

Officers attended a workshop (hosted by Oxfordshire County Council) to discuss barriers to cycling and walking. The Vale also went to a Didcot Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 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. In June 2023, the Cabinet endorsed the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership's Integrated Care Strategy. The Strategy seeks to provide a clear direction for the area's health and care system.



## Theme 4: Building stable finances

### We will:

- manage the council's resources responsibly and make effective use of the council's assets
- do our best to build financial resilience to protect the council against future uncertainties
- work across the public sector to influence and maximise funding for local government, in order to continue to invest and provide the services residents and businesses need.

### We will do this by:

- exploring and actively considering all avenues to deliver financial stability, including maximising income available to the council
- making effective use of the council's assets acting in a manner that ensures the long-term financial viability for the benefit of our residents and the environment.

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

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 4 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 41

With the aim of managing the council's resources responsibly and making more effective use of its assets, the Vale'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.

Progress has continued to be made on a Forward Maintenance Plan (and project delivery planning) for future capital funding proposals. The expectation is that a working version of the Forward Maintenance Plan will be ready by quarter three.

Following a review of Grounds Maintenance by the Performance team in quarter four 2022/23, information is still being analysed and collated. The intention is for them to recommend ways of improving both performance and flexibility.

Progress has continued to be made on developing an action plan for the Beacon with the intention of maximising usage and income for the council. Further investigation work has also been undertaken into the required next steps.

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.



The Vale'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 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.

In quarter one 2023/24, the Vale successfully secured £528,032 in Rural England Prosperity Funding.

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.

The pipeline of external funding opportunities was also maintained and assessed throughout the quarter.



## Theme 5: Working in partnership

### We will:

- work in partnership with other councils, authorities and businesses, non-profit organisations, community and residents' groups, to achieve our aims and objectives effectively, efficiently and fairly
- provide support to residents and organisations to effect and drive change in the community
- provide all the support we can to businesses in the Vale to help them succeed.

### We will do this by:

- working in partnership to influence and shape regional and national agendas to maximise opportunities for our communities and businesses
- working with and supporting our residents, businesses and communities to effect and enable change.

*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 5 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 46

In quarter one 2023/24, Economic Development continued to focus upon implementing the Vale'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. The Vale 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 the Vale's UK Shared Prosperity Funding plans closed at the end of June. The 68 EOI received will be analysed and assessed during quarter two.

In addition, after the Vale successfully secured £528,032 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 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.

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.



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

As part of the Vale's efforts to support residents and organisations to effect and drive change in the community, the council continued its pilot project on a simpler approach to neighbourhood planning. Officers met regularly with the pilot groups, providing one-to-one support. They also brought the different groups together to collaborate and share experiences.

The Community Wellbeing team has continued to work with communities across the district to support them through the cost-of-living crisis. As part of these efforts, the Community Hub, along with colleagues from the enablement team, held a community cost of living event in Wantage. The Vale also launched a new food bank grant scheme. This will help the district's food banks purchase supplies.

In June, the Cabinet approved a new Partnership Grant Policy for 2024-29. This will be used to support district-wide advisory and information services.

The council continued to support the White Horse Community Lottery Scheme. During the quarter, 13,442 lottery tickets were sold generating an annual estimated income of £33,103 for the voluntary sector.

Also, in quarter one, the 2023/24 Climate Action Fund opened for new applications.

With the intention of progressing the Vale's goal of working in partnership to influence and shape regional and national agendas, 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.

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 the Vale's objectives.

Through its membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group, the Vale continued to work with neighbouring authorities in relation to climate and environmental matters. During quarter one 2023/24, officers from the Climate team led the production of a Solar Farms Best Practice Guidance Note for Oxfordshire.

The Vale also remains involved in more broadly shaping and participating in countywide initiatives through its wider contribution to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. In this forum, officers and members continue to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.

During quarter one 2023/24, officers attended workshops launching the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The council is also actively engaged in the strategy's production, with officers attending two steering group meetings between April and June.

Officers continued to contribute to the Oxfordshire Asylum Support system. The council takes a strong partnership approach to both 'Moving On' accommodation and the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Programme (ARAP). The Vale is currently working with the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office to deliver transitional accommodation for the ARAP residents following the announcement of the closure of bridging hotels. Officers from the council have also contributed to discussions at the South East Migration Partnership aimed at coordinating approaches with the Home Office across the asylum system.

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way

### We will:

- work openly and transparently, promoting a world in which all can participate equally
- listen to feedback from local residents, communities, businesses, partners and our own officers
- ensure our work particularly aims to include those groups that have historically been
- marginalised or those that have been hard to reach
- ensure we are accountable and that our decisions are open to appropriate scrutiny, and we will admit when we get things wrong.

### We will do this by:

- improving our use of technology to increase understanding and access to what we do, how we work and the decisions we make
- increasing meaningful engagement and communication with everyone
- strengthening our governance framework and address our policy gaps, improving transparency.

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

### Key Activities in quarter one

See Theme 6 performance updates against all reporting measures on page 56

As part of the council's commitment to working openly and transparently, the Vale continues 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 the Vale's website. This is intended to increase the public's understanding of what the council does, how it works and how decisions are made.

The Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was finalised in quarter one. 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 the Vale's future engagement activities.

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.





To fulfil the Vale's ambition to improve its use of technology to increase understanding and access to what it does, 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 Vale's YouTube channel for a year.

Work continued on reviewing how best to automate and improve the council's garden waste processes. Officers have also been exploring proposals for utilising the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) to automate resident's reports of enviro-crimes e.g., fly tipping.

In order to increase meaningful engagement with everyone, officers started work on revamping the format of the town and parish forums. The Climate team is currently leading on an initial schedule of events – this will include a briefing on helping towns/parishes retrofit their buildings.

With the intention of delivering on the Vale's commitment to increasing accountability and strengthening its governance framework, work has continued on reviewing the council's constitution. During quarter one, officers prepared a new Planning Protocol and Code of Corporate Governance. These will now be considered by the Constitution Review Group.

#### Vale of White Horse quarter one independent cabinet member decisions

Date	Description
14/04/2023	Section 106 funding to St Nicholas Primary School at East Challow
21/04/2023	Community Infrastructure Levy funding for play equipment enhancements
26/04/2023	Telephony system - to procure a new system
27/04/2023	Community Infrastructure Levy allocation to Oxfordshire County Council
02/05/2023	UK Spared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund - to accept government funding
26/05/2023	East Challow Neighbourhood Plan
05/06/2023	Section 106 funds to Harwell Village Hall
21/06/2023	Section 106 funds to Steventon Parish Council
29/06/2023	Section 106 funds to Sutton Courtenay Village Hall

## Theme 1: Providing the homes people need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	Explore and consider opportunities to bring forward the delivery of homes people can afford	Narrative report of newly identified opportunities to bring forward/expedite the delivery of affordable homes	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Housing and Environment	During Q1 2023/24, a cross-departmental team continued to work on developing the various housing schemes to support people from Afghanistan and Ukraine. These activities included the purchasing of homes and the making of preparations to lease property from the Ministry of Defence.
PHPN1.1	Explore a council-owned holding company/vehicle, to focus on delivering a wide range of regeneration and community benefits including housing , community facilities, land maintenance and health	Narrative update on the potential opportunities/ challenges around the creation of a holding company/ SPV (special purpose vehicle)	Cllr Sue Caul	Master Planning Lead	During Q1 2023/24, the Vale continued to have conversations with a range of landowners and promoters to progress housing and residential-led, mixed-use schemes (including Dalton Barracks and Ock Valley Park). Close liaison was also maintained with Oxfordshire County Council's highways and strategic planning teams.
PHPN1.2	Explore how the council can provide low-cost sustainable housing. Include working with developers, registered providers, community trusts, as well as new partnerships. Include council owned housing. Include a definition of affordability relative to ability to pay, not to market value, and social rent definitions	Narrative report on provision of low cost housing, focusing on partnership working, including an update on the shifting metric of affordability based on relative ability to pay rather than market value and social rent definitions	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Housing and Environment	During Q1 2023/24, the Vale undertook work to understand the process for becoming a Registered Local Authority Provider of Housing with the Regulator for Social Housing. If the Vale makes a successful application, it will enable the council to directly provide affordable/social housing.



## Theme 1: Providing the homes people need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PHPN1.3	Review our affordable housing planning policies and ensure they are providing what's needed in the Vale	Narrative report on review of planning policies	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q1 2023/24, officers drafted an updated policy on how Section 106 funds could be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing. This was taken to both SMT and Cabinet briefing.</p> <p>Progress also continued to be made on the development of the Joint Local Plan.</p>
PHPN1.4	Review our strategy for spending s106 sums paid in lieu of onsite affordable housing and identify how earmarked funds, including retained S106 monies, can be best utilised to deliver affordable homes	<p>"Narrative report on s106 spend, focusing on the stated aim and any updates to the existing strategy</p> <p>Additional quantitative elements - s106 spend/units provided from spend</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Housing and Environment	During Q1 2023/24, officers drafted an updated policy on how Section 106 funds could be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing and this will progress through the formal democratic process in Q2.
PHPN1.5	Explore how mobile homes might be better used as affordable homes, reviewing sites and policies to ensure good use of available space	Narrative update on utilisation of mobile homes/mobile home sites or opportunities for creating such sites	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q1 2023/24, approval was granted for officers to continue with a scheme to deliver additional mobile home berths at Pebble Hill. Work has now begun on the next stages of this project.
PHPN1.6	Use Garden Villages and Towns designation as a mechanism to introduce innovative housing to meet our needs for high quality, low energy, zero-carbon homes	Narrative report on garden village and town designation utilisation and any projects which fall within this designation. Also to include initiatives which will result in low energy, zero carbon homes.	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, there were no further updates regarding Dalton Barracks.</p> <p>In order to ensure that garden community principles were represented in the Joint Local Plan, officers fed into the development process.</p>

## Theme 1: Providing the homes people need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 2	Adopt a policy framework that ensures those homes could be delivered in a way that supports the environment and people living healthy lives	Narrative report against the Programme aim	Cllr Sue Caul	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.
PHPN2.1	Develop a s106 obligations strategy to inform negotiations between planners and developers	Narrative report on strategy development/adherence (once delivered)	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	Action completed, no update required.
PHPN2.2	Update the CIL spending strategy and associated procedures to accelerate the delivery of local infrastructural improvements for our communities both in line with our corporate objectives and, where appropriate, to support current spending on existing infrastructure	<p>"Narrative update on CIL spend to support the delivery of local infrastructure</p> <p>Total CIL spend + CIL spend breakdown"</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Finance	<p>£2,132,000 in new allocations of CIL funding were included in the Vale's capital programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding contribution - Wantage Leisure Centre = £247,000</li> <li>• Replacement of all roof coverings at Wantage Leisure Centre = £225,000</li> <li>• Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding contribution – White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre = £1,660,000</li> </ul> <p>The above allocations, profiled for expenditure between 2023/24 and 2025/26, support the Vale's successful Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding bid.</p> <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 £4,874,000 has been allocated to district council infrastructure projects.</p> <p>£80,000 has been allocated in the capital programme for replacement boilers at The Charter Medical Centre.</p>



## Theme 1: Providing the homes people need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PHPN2.3	Consider ways we can encourage lower-carbon construction in Vale	Narrative update to include any activity supporting lower-carbon construction in the Vale	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	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.
PHPN2.4	Develop an affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Evidence of housing needs, housing mix, self-build, rural exception sites. Include definition of 'affordable'	Narrative update on the development of an affordable housing SPD, additionally include information on planning permissions granted with affordable housing numbers	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Housing and Environment	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.
PHPN2.5	Develop a Land Use strategy to inform and guide OxPlan2050 and Vale Local Plan with proposed need for housing, retail, employment, leisure, open spaces	Narrative update on progression against stated aim of PHPN 2.6 in the corporate plan.	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, significant progress was made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers worked with consultants on establishing the evidence base for the plan – this includes studies assessing and analysing the Vale's housing, employment, retail and leisure needs.</p> <p>Officers have also 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.</p>
PHPN2.6	Update the Local Development Plan to reflect the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) and connecting our strategic housing sites with employment land	Narrative update on progression against stated aim of PHPN 2.7 in the corporate plan.	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, officers developed the chapter of the Joint Local Plan preferred options on infrastructure into a completed draft. To assist with this work, discussions were held with transport planners at Oxfordshire County Council.

## Theme 1: Providing the homes people need - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PHPN2.7	Update Vale's Local Plan and OxPlan2050 with modern environmental policies in support of government's and Vale's goals	Narrative update on progression against stated aim of PHPN 2.8 in the corporate plan.	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>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>Also, during Q1 2023/24, 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>
PHPN2.8	Develop a Housing Policy: that outlines the types of housing we are going to provide, in what mix of design and for what demographic and tenure, to inform our Local Plan and future work. Include affordable housing aspirations, consideration of an aging population, and environmental policies for housing	<p>"Narrative update on housing policy and adherence.</p> <p>Include quantitative measures for housing mix, tenure, and affordable and shared ownership."</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>In 2022/23, there were 514 recorded affordable housing completions in the Vale. This was significantly above the target for the year (230) and compares favourably to the 289 completions recorded for 2021/22.</p> <p>The figures for Q1 2023/24 are not yet available – they will be reported in Q2.</p>
PHPN2.9	Work with partners to produce an Active Travel Network map of current and required coverage across the Vale to include commercial and community buses, cycle paths and storage facilities, pavements and footpaths, green and blue infrastructure, and local taxi firms. Encourage systems that increase use of the Active Travel Network	Narrative update on progress toward completion of map, once map completed, this should transition to an annual review of the accuracy of map	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, the County Council consulted the Vale 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.



## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	A climate emergency programme, focussed on what the council has control over, working towards our own targets for our own buildings, vehicles, leisure and arts centres	A narrative summary comprised of all new activity to reduce the carbon footprint of all Council assets on a quarterly basis		Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, the Vale commissioned Concept Energy to produce decarbonisation reports for The Beacon and Abbey Meadows. This work will inform the council's decisions about how these facilities should be decarbonised and also whether any proposed projects would be eligible for funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
TCE1.1	Develop a Climate Emergency Strategy for the Council, setting out how we will reach Zero Carbon for all Vale assets by 2030. Identify energy saving opportunities in council-owned buildings and fleets	A narrative report of activity underway to design the plan to achieve a zero carbon position for all Vale assets by 2030.	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, the Quarter 4 2022/23 Climate Action Plan (CAP) report was published on the Vale's website. The progress made against the CAP targets is detailed in the published CAP reports.
TCE1.2	Complete the CEAC Year One Climate Action Plan and plan for future years	Narrative report on progress	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required – action complete.
TCE1.3	Include in Councils Open Space Strategy opportunities to increase biodiversity, increase tree cover, and (other things we want to do on Council's open spaces)	Narrative report on specific opportunities which have arisen for the council to improve open spaces. Also include any additional policy developments.	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the nine areas included in the 'Let It Bee' campaign were left to grow as part of the Vale's wider ambition to encourage nature to flourish on council-owned land.</p> <p>The Vale, through the implementation of a more relaxed mowing regime, is currently sites (including the new wildflower meadow in Abingdon) in a more wildlife friendly manner. This approach will be reviewed during Q2 with the results used to inform future management plans.</p> <p>Also, in Q1 2023/24, the council continued their support for No Mow May.</p>

## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 2	A climate emergency programme focussed on encouraging the wider district community to reduce its carbon footprint in order to meet the Climate Emergency targets	A narrative update of the work of the comms team in promoting measures/initiatives which will help the community to reduce it's carbon footprint.		Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Vale ran several successful comms campaigns and initiatives designed to increase awareness of the Climate Emergency and to help the community to reduce its carbon footprint. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting Home Upgrade grants for energy efficiency measures to eligible householders</li> <li>• Issuing a press release on the provision of the new county-wide EV car club based at three of the council's car parks.</li> <li>• Highlighting articles on the Climate Action Oxfordshire website on the amount of energy that could be saved by insulating properties.</li> <li>• Updating the council's Action on Climate and Nature webpage to include a new section promoting a wide variety climate/ environmentally friendly lifestyle changes.</li> <li>• Developing the council's economic development climate action webpages to promote retrofitting and energy saving measures to businesses.</li> <li>• Publicising an online briefing for community groups and town/ parish councils about improving energy efficiency in community buildings.</li> </ul>
TCE2.1	Complete those tasks in Year one Climate Action Plan that have to do with reducing carbon in the wider district	Narrative report on progress	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required – action complete.



## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
TCE2.2	Introduce policies for zero carbon construction requirements	Narrative update on progress toward design guide implementation, transitioning into review of relevant information/developments in this area	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>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, 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>
TCE2.3	Introduce sustainable growth and environmental policies to our Local Plan	Narrative update on the progress towards development of new local plan, specifically referring to details in TCE2.3/4	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, progress continued to be made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers undertook significant work on drafting policy options and text on a wide range of topics – including sustainable development. 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.</p> <p>The timetable for the Joint Local Plan was also adjusted to allow more opportunities for the Joint Local Plan Steering Group to provide feedback on the draft preferred options. This new programme was published in an update to the Local Development Scheme in June.</p> <p>In addition, consultants started assessing the policy options for the Joint Local Plan against sustainability objectives.</p>

## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
TCE2.4	Ensure our Local Plan contains policies to make new buildings carbon zero to build and to live/work in	Narrative update on the progress towards development of new local plan, specifically referring to details in TCE2.3/4	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Policy and Programmes	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.
TCE2.5	Develop a year two plan with CEAC for meeting our Climate emergency goals	High level narrative on progress towards approval of two year plan	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required – action complete.
TCE2.6	Improve how we measure air quality. Explore particulate measurement in our sensitive areas. Explore ways to publish AQ measurements in live time, so people can make decisions on whether it's healthy outside for them today	Narrative containing updates/ changes to AQ monitoring techniques, an update on work with partners to monitor AQ and details of published AQ measures	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q1 2023/24, Defra submitted a planning application to install a new particulate matter analyser in Botley (next to the A34). When installed, the data collected will be made available as part of HM Government's Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) – the UK's largest automatic monitoring network used for compliance reporting against the Ambient Air Quality Directives.</p> <p>Real Time Air Quality Data for sites within Vale of White Horse is available at <a href="https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk">https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk</a>.</p>
TCE2.7	Update the Air Quality Action Plans for our Air Quality Management Areas	Until funding confirmed for development of new AQAP's, narrative update on any significant deviation from last relevant AQAP. Once funding confirmed, this can report on the development of the new AQAP.	Cllr Bethia Thomas	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 Vale.</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>
TCE2.8	Explore setting up a Habitat Bank to deliver biodiversity offsetting requirements and facilitate tree planting	Narrative update as to progress of potential pilot and other relevant initiatives	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required – action complete.



## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 3	A programme around exercising our influence with partners on wider policy, working with neighbouring authorities, lobbying Government and identifying environmental policy gaps	General Narrative update		Head of Policy and Programmes	The Vale – through its membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group – continued to work with neighbouring authorities in relation to climate and environmental matters. During Q1 2023/24, officers from the Climate team led the production of a Solar Farms Best Practice Guidance Note for Oxfordshire. This advice is designed to help planning departments and elected members from around the county to assess the relative merits of applications for solar farms against national best practice.
TCE3.1	Complete the CEAC Year One Action Plan and plan for future years	Narrative report on progress	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	Action completed, no update required.
TCE3.2	Work with partners to define a waste reduction scheme: including ways to reduce bulky waste headed to landfill and reduce recycling contamination	Narrative report to outline steps to influence partners and our actions to reduce overall waste	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>The March 2023 recycling rate was 60.68%, the landfill rate was 0.21% 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 61.00%, the landfill rate was 0.24% and the contamination rate was 11.96%.</p> <p>The May 2023 recycling rate was 62.39%, the landfill rate was 0.25% and the contamination rate was 13.60%.</p> <p>The figures for June are not yet available.</p> <p>The Vale 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, the Vale 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>

## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
TCE3.3	Develop a tree-planting strategy and work with partners to plant more trees across the district	Narrative update to include development of the tree policy and subsequent activity	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.
TCE3.4	Develop a Biodiversity Net Gain Targeting Strategy and contribute to a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire	Narrative update on related work, including but not limited to the work to support the Oxfordshire Plan.	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, officers attended workshops launching the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The LNRS will include a statement on the biodiversity priorities within Oxfordshire and a local habitat map. It is also expected to be the mechanism used to facilitate Biodiversity Net Gains. The council is also actively engaged in the strategy's production, with officers attending two steering group meetings between April and June.
TCE3.5	Work with partners to provide electric charging points in Vale car parks and at our buildings, and increase charging infrastructure across Oxfordshire	A narrative update to include work to promote and develop EV infrastructure across the district.  Quantitative element - breakdown of existing/planned EV charging points	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q1 2023/24, the Vale provided a letter of support to the county council for their proposals relating to the use of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding (LEVI) grant earmarked for Oxfordshire. Officers from Policy and Programmes are currently leading on the detail that the county council needs to provide into how and where this money will be spent.
TCE3.6	Take an active role in the Oxford-Cambridge arc to influence the inclusion of sustainable growth and environmental policies	A narrative update on the work of the Oxford-Cambridge arc and our influencing activity	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required – action complete.  The Vale does not support the proposed development of a pan-regional partnership across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.
TCE3.7	Take an active role in the Growth Deal and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 to influence the inclusion of sustainable growth and environmental policies	Narrative report on work to support the Oxfordshire Plan in accordance with TEC3.7	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	While work has ceased on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, the Vale remains involved in shaping and participating in county-wide initiatives through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. In this forum, officers and members continue to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. During Q1 2023/24, progress was made on solar farm guidance and the potential for collaboration on energy planning.

## Theme 2: Tackling the climate emergency - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
TCE3.8	Work with local partners and Government to encourage retrofitting houses with sustainable energy schemes; help residents take advantage of schemes that come along to help with costs	Narrative report on work influencing work, comms activity and direct engagement with residents.	Cllr Bethia Thomas	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 retrofitting 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 Vale through Oxfordshire County Council.</p>



### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	Building strong communities and connections, with a sense of place and strong community identity	Narrative update		Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, work continued on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Officers prepared draft strategic policies for each of district's towns, building on their strengths and local identity. In addition, the consultants preparing the Town Centre &amp; Retail Study produced their draft report, which included health checks of the district's towns.</p> <p>The Community Wellbeing team continued to work with communities across the district to support them through the cost-of-living crisis. They also maintained the support provided for the Vale's Ukrainian guests and their hosts.</p> <p>The Vale remains involved in shaping and participating in county-wide initiatives through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. In this forum, officers and members continue to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.</p>
BHC1.1	Review the use of Community buildings and other facilities owned or managed by the council to maximise usage, income for the council and ensure communities have spaces in which to come together.	Narrative update as to the progress/outcomes from the Strategic Property Review	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the focus has been on realigning the teams in this area with Property Operations being separated from Arts Centre Management. Recruitment has also been undertaken to bring the Property Operations team up to strength.</p> <p>Progress has continued to be made on developing an action plan for the Beacon with the intention of maximising usage and income for the council. Further investigation work has also been undertaken into the required next steps.</p>

### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC1.2	Establish a Public Arts policy	Narrative update on the progress towards developing a public arts policy	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, officers continued to support and advise parishes throughout the Vale in relation of the provision of public art.</p> <p>A draft public art policy is to be included as part of the new Joint Local Plan. It will be consulted upon as part of the wider process of engagement.</p>
BHC1.3	Maintain and develop the council's Community Enablement function to respond to changing needs because of Covid-19	Narrative update on relevant areas of the Council response to Covid 19 as the needs/ requirements change	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Cabinet approved a new Partnership Grant Policy for 2024-29. This will be used to support district-wide advisory services.</p> <p>The Vale also launched a new food bank grant scheme. This will help the district's food banks purchase supplies.</p> <p>The Community Hub continued to work with the voluntary and community sector in response to the cost-of-living crisis (particularly in relation to food initiatives and the provision of support for those in most need). In addition, the Community Hub, along with colleagues from the enablement team, held a community cost of living event in Wantage.</p>

### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC1.4	Work with others to promote Active Travel and support the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans to help shape new developments that link homes to work, recreation and social spaces within communities	<p>Narrative report on the work with partners to promote active travel and encouragement of cycling and walking infrastructure</p> <p>Quantitative measure of amount of new footpaths/cycle paths approved since last report/YTD etc.</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, officers attended a workshop (hosted by Oxfordshire County Council) to discuss barriers to cycling and walking. The Vale also attended a Didcot Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 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.</p> <p>Work continued on the development of the ‘Nature Trails’ in Abingdon. The draft map is currently being reviewed and consulted on, while marker posts, lecterns and raised beds have been ordered – and final arrangements made for their installation over the summer.</p> <p>Following intensive mapping and a review of areas of inequalities across the district, the development of the Active Communities Delivery Plan reached its final stages during Q1 2023/24.</p> <p>Also, in Q1 2023/24, the County Council consulted the Vale 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> <p>The council also promoted the launch of Ride Revolution, a project that takes unwanted bikes and gets them restored/ repaired.</p>



### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC1.5	Develop planning policies to ensure careful consideration of the effect of air pollution on the lives of people who will live there	<p>Narrative update to include information relevant to BHC1.5,</p> <p>Quantitative measure - the number of neighbourhood plans and the stage they are current at</p>	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the council continued its pilot project on a simpler approach to neighbourhood planning. The project provides an opportunity for communities to explore how to tackle air quality issues locally. Officers met regularly with the pilot groups, providing one-to-one support. They also brought the different groups together to collaborate and share experiences.</p> <p>As of 30 June 2023, there are 16 made Neighbourhood Plans in the district (one of which is currently under review). There are eight plans in progress, two have reached the independent examination stage, two have completed pre-submission consultations and the remaining four are at plan drafting stage.</p>
BHC1.6	Update the Air Quality Management Action Plans for the Vale's air pollution hotspots; Work with Oxfordshire County Council to improve how we measure and report air pollution and how we will work with schools and community groups to raise awareness of our clean air campaigns	Narrative update on activity related to BHC 1.6	Cllr Bethia Thomas	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 Vale.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council have also launched their own Air Quality Strategy aimed at improving local air quality across the county.</p>

### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 2	Promoting healthy place shaping and active communities, for everyone	Narrative update	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>Between April and June, 2,983 people took part in the Vale's regular activities.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the Active Communities team supported Active Oxfordshire in their bid for an additional three years of funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes. This will enable the council to continue the work that it is undertaking with residents who have long-term health conditions and families on low incomes.</p> <p>The Vale now has 1,004 people signed up to the 'You Move' project (aimed at families with children and in receipt of benefits). It also has 888 people enrolled on the 'Move Together' project (designed to help people with long-term health conditions become more active).</p> <p>Also, in Q1 2023/24, progress continued on the development of the Joint Local Plan. As part of this work, officers are advancing planning policies that will help to promote healthy place shaping and active communities.</p> <p>Following intensive mapping and a review of areas of inequalities across the district, the development of the Active Communities Delivery Plan reached its final stages during Q1 2023/24.</p>
BHC2.1	Produce an Active communities strategy; setting out how the council will work with our communities and partners and enable everyone to participate in physical activities	Narrative update on progress against strategy development and work with partners to encourage involvement in physical activities	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>Following intensive mapping and a review of areas of inequalities across the district, the development of the Active Communities Delivery Plan reached its final stages during Q1 2023/24.</p> <p>After developing stronger links with local GP surgeries, the Active Communities team now have a regular presence at monthly clinics in all the district's market towns.</p> <p>In addition, the Vale has continued to work with partners (particularly Active Oxfordshire) to encourage involvement in physical activities.</p>

### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC2.2	Work with Active Oxfordshire to target get active projects in our most deprived communities	Narrative update on proposals from Active Oxfordshire	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Vale continued to collaborate with Active Oxfordshire to improve the health and wellbeing of the district's residents – especially those in the most deprived areas.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the Active Communities team supported Active Oxfordshire in their bid for an additional three years of funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes. This will enable the council to continue the work that it is undertaking with residents who have long-term health conditions and families on low incomes.</p> <p>The Vale now has 1,004 people signed up to the 'You Move' project (aimed at families with children and in receipt of benefits). It also has 888 people enrolled on the 'Move Together' project (designed to help people with long-term health conditions become more active).</p>
BHC2.3	Promote use of the Council's public green spaces for exercise and activity.	Narrative update on the work to promote green spaces for exercise and activity	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q1 2023/24, work continued on the development of the 'Nature Trails' in Abingdon. The draft map is currently being reviewed and consulted on, while marker posts, lecterns and raised beds have been ordered – and final arrangements made for their installation over the summer.
BHC2.4	Identify councils owned land for community gardening and allotments projects	Narrative update on the work/ outcomes from the Strategic Property Review	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q1 2023/24, officers issued a draft quarterly report (based on the outcomes from the Q4 meeting of the Asset Management Group) for consideration. The assets listed (land) will be reviewed by a working group – currently in the process of being established – to ascertain whether they can be used for meeting climate emergency actions (e.g., community gardens, allotments).



### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC2.5	Active engagement with the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure the Vale has strong representation in countywide health forums	Narrative update on work with the Oxfordshire Health Improvement Board/Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>In June 2023, the Cabinet endorsed the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership's Integrated Care Strategy. The Strategy seeks to provide a clear direction for the area's health and care system.</p> <p>The Health Improvement Partnership Board met on 15 June 2023 and considered reports on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Making Every Contact Count</li> <li>• Social Prescribing</li> </ul> <p>The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board met on 29 June 2023 and considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOB Joint Forward Plan</li> <li>• JSNA 2023 update</li> <li>• Updating the Health and Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• Better Care Fund</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Combating Drugs Partnership</li> <li>• Community Profiles</li> <li>• Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment</li> <li>• An update from Healthwatch Oxfordshire</li> <li>• Reports from the Partnership Boards.</li> </ul>
PROGRAMME 3	Safeguarding and supporting our vulnerable residents	Narrative report on support provided by the VCS and potentially the number of properties approved with special adaptations (drawn from AMR data, available annually)	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>During Q1 2023/24, 13 safeguarding concerns were raised with the council – the majority of these were for poor mental health. Four of these resulted in referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Teams.</p> <p>One new closure order was issued during Q1 (a closure order acts to safeguard access to properties where vulnerable tenants are being exploited).</p>

### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC3.1	Work as part of the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership on the agreed priorities: tackling Domestic abuse; exploitation of vulnerable people and children (including modern slavery, county lines); and reducing knife crime, harm and vulnerability caused by drugs and alcohol	Narrative report on work with partners, to include relevant published statistics as quantitative measure for information	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>The data from the domestic abuse service for Quarter 1 2023/24 will be available in Q2 2023/24.</p> <p>During Q4 2022/23, the countywide service received 1,111 calls to their helpline, a decrease on the previous quarter (1,354). 417 of these calls were new contacts, 98 of whom came from South and Vale. Across Oxfordshire, 47 cases were referred for outreach – of which 27 came from South and Vale.</p> <p>In Q1 2023/24, there were 13 referrals to the South and Vale domestic abuse sanctuary scheme. This was a slight increase on Q4 2022/23 (11).</p>
BHC3.2	Develop a new framework on vulnerability, responding to changes in needs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic	Narrative update on related work	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the council received applications for the Food Network Grant. Following review, the Vale will make eight awards to food banks, larders and organisations across the district.</p> <p>Progress is being made on the development of a further grant for organisations supporting those facing particular challenges during the cost-of-living crisis. The existing referral-based voucher support scheme for residents will also be widened in the autumn to provide additional assistance.</p> <p>The Community Hub has also continued to work with the voluntary and community sector in response to the cost-of-living crisis (particularly in relation to food initiatives and the provision of support for those in most need). In addition, the Community Hub, along with colleagues from the enablement team, held a community cost of living event in Wantage.</p>
BHC3.3	Review and Revise the Joint Taxi Licensing Policy	Narrative update on the JTLP	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Legal and Democratic	This action is now complete – the work to review, revise and embed the new Joint Taxi Licensing Policy was completed during Q2 2021/22.

### Theme 3: Building healthy communities - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BHC3.4	Take a key role in countywide homelessness prevention and provision for young people, those with mental health conditions and review of adult homelessness pathway	<p>Narrative update on influencing/partnership activity, new initiatives.</p> <p>Quantitative update on successful homelessness cases + other homelessness stats, TA stats including average length of stay etc.</p>	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>Vale of White Horse recorded zero rough sleepers at the end of Q1 2023/24. The very 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 – a reduction of one compared to 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 98 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 the Vale was 87.0 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 4: Building stable finances - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	Explore and actively consider all avenues to deliver financial stability, including maximising income available to the council	Narrative update on initiatives to deliver financial stability and maximise income across the Council	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.
BSF1.1	Introduce an Investment Strategy and associated Investment Policy which gives the Council greater ability to invest in a wider range of assets to maximise its return on capital and therefore improve its income	Narrative update on the introduction of an introduction of the investment strategy and subsequent decision-making around investing	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.

## Theme 4: Building stable finances - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BSF1.2	Commit resources to identify more third-party income, including government and other grants, to help pay for our services	Narrative update as to current initiatives to increase external funding for Council activities, with details of additional resources committed to support these activities	Cllr Andrew Crawford	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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EV charging hubs in council owned car parks.</li> <li>• On-street EV chargers</li> <li>• Grants for EV Charge Points in community hubs (village halls and community centres etc.).</li> </ul> <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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport integration.</li> <li>• Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure.</li> <li>• Enhanced active travel links.</li> <li>• Wayfinding improvements.</li> <li>• Public realm improvements.</li> </ul> <p>(Update continues on page 43)</p>

## Theme 4: Building stable finances - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BSF1.2	Commit resources to identify more third-party income, including government and other grants, to help pay for our services	Narrative update as to current initiatives to increase external funding for Council activities, with details of additional resources committed to support these activities	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>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 Q2.</p> <p>In Q1 2023/24, the Vale successfully secured £528,032 in Rural England Prosperity Funding.</p> <p>It was, however, unsuccessful in an application for Net Zero Fast Followers support – while the application scored higher than some of the successful submissions, due to a portfolio distribution methodology based on geography and application type (rural/urban) the proposal was unsuccessful. Other funding opportunities are being considered to enable this project to move forward.</p>
BSF1.3	Identify opportunities to generate additional income from our services and assets and review these annually as part of the budget setting process	Narrative describing activity/ referring to programme 1 narrative	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.
BSF1.4	Review the schedule of existing contracts to identifying opportunities for rationalisation and savings	Narrative update initially detailing BAU activity to support this aim, until specific project is kicked off at which point reporting would be based on the project activity	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	As a result of a staff vacancy, the work on updating the Vale's contract register has not progressed – officers have been concentrating on delivering BAU activities.
BSF1.5	Upgrade the council's finance IT systems to improve functionality and support in-year budget monitoring	Narrative report on the implementation of new systems, and then a yearly light-touch review	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	During Q1 2023/24, the Head of Finance finalised discussions with CIPFA on a review of business partnering. This will take place in Quarter 2 and will encompass the use of the council's financial systems.



## Theme 4: Building stable finances - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BSF1.6	Lobby for the ability to set our Council Tax at a level that can sustain council services while seeking opportunities to reduce council tax for those on the lowest incomes	Narrative report covering external influencing/lobbying work (and work with partners) and additionally, relevant information pertaining to Council Tax decisions within the Council	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q1 2023/2024.
BSF1.7	Lobby for a fairer distribution of government funding and more devolution of funding to councils to sustain essential local services	Narrative report detailing lobbying activity over the period and any successes occurring as a result	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q1 2023/2024.
PROGRAMME 2	Make effective use of the council's assets acting in a manner that ensures the long-term financial viability for the benefit of our residents and the environment	Narrative report on the progress of the Strategic Property review and other relevant initiatives	Cllr Andrew Crawford	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>
BSF2.1	Develop a comprehensive and ethical Procurement Policy that reflects our corporate goals and aims	Narrative update reporting on completion of activity and an annual review of success	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.
BSF2.2	Conduct a Strategic Property Review to identify opportunities to enhance, redevelop, transfer the councils assets to maximise income and/or benefit to the district	Narrative report on the progress of the SPR	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Action completed, no update required.

## Theme 4: Building stable finances - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
BSF2.3	Complete an asset management plan to provide a comprehensive policy to inform how assets may be most efficiently maintained	Narrative report on progress of this within the SPR	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q1 2023/24, progress has continued to be made on a Forward Maintenance Plan (and project delivery planning) for future capital funding proposals. The expectation is that a working version of the Forward Maintenance Plan will be ready by Q3.
BSF2.4	Undertake a full review of all leases and licences to ensure council income is collected when due and maximised	Narrative report on progress of this within the SPR	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Action completed, no update required.
BSF2.5	Undertake a detailed review of the financial position of the Beacon in Wantage and determine what changes to its operations can be made to improve its viability	Narrative update on the review of financial position of the Beacon	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Progress has continued to be made on developing an action plan for the Beacon with the intention of maximising usage and income for the council. Further investigation work has also been undertaken into the required next steps.
BSF2.6	Insourcing our grounds maintenance and public conveniences contracts to save funds and increase flexibility over how our public spaces are used and managed	Narrative update on the activities of the new insourced team and the initiatives being undertaken	Cllr Bethia Thomas	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>Following a review by the Performance team in Q4 2022/23, information is still being analysed and collated. The intention is for them to recommend ways of improving the performance and flexibility of the Grounds Maintenance team.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the nine areas included in the 'Let It Bee' campaign were left to grow as part of the Vale's wider ambition to encourage nature to flourish on council-owned land.</p> <p>The Vale, through the implementation of a more relaxed mowing regime, is currently sites (including the new wildflower meadow in Abingdon) in a more wildlife friendly manner. This approach will be reviewed during Q2 with the results used to inform future management plans.</p> <p>Also, in Q1 2023/24, the council continued their support for No Mow May.</p>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	Work in partnership to influence and shape regional and national agendas to maximise opportunities for our communities and businesses	Narrative report on work with partners across the organisation which will maximise opportunities for communities and businesses	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, officers continued to contribute to the Oxfordshire Asylum Support system. The council takes a strong partnership approach to both 'Moving On' accommodation and the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Programme (ARAP). The Vale are currently working with the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office to deliver transitional accommodation for the ARAP residents following the announcement of the closure of bridging hotels. Officers from the council have also contributed to discussions at the South East Migration Partnership aimed at coordinating approaches with the Home Office across the asylum system.</p> <p>The County Council consulted the Vale 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> <p>The Vale – through its membership of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environment Advisory Group – continued to work with neighbouring authorities in relation to climate and environmental matters. During Q1 2023/24, officers from the Climate team led the production of a Solar Farms Best Practice Guidance Note for Oxfordshire.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, officers attended workshops launching the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The council is also actively engaged in the strategy's production, with officers attending two steering group meetings between April and June.</p> <p>The Vale remains involved in shaping and participating in countywide initiatives through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership. In this forum, officers and members continue to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.</p> <p>(update continues on page 47)</p>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	Work in partnership to influence and shape regional and national agendas to maximise opportunities for our communities and businesses	Narrative report on work with partners across the organisation which will maximise opportunities for communities and businesses	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Vale 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 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 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 the Vale's objectives.</p> <p>Officers from Economic Development have continued to support OxLEP with development of Community Employment Plans (CEP).</p>
WIP1.1	Create a partnerships protocol. Map our current partnerships and assess the effectiveness of each. Clarify which local, regional, and national partnerships Vale needs to have an active presence in and focus resource accordingly.	Narrative update on the position of this work and an annual review after it's completion	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q1 2023/24 – This work was completed during Q4 2021/22. It will now be subject to an annual review.



## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP1.2	Develop an enhanced consultations strategy and process to ensure we respond to consultations and proactively lobby national government and other bodies on matters that impact our corporate priorities	<p>Narrative update on proactive work to lobby govt and key organisations, update on key consultations responded to within the period.</p> <p>Quantitative -- Number of consultations replied to.</p>	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Vale responded to five external consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger performance of local planning authorities supported through an increase in planning fees.</li> <li>• RAPID consultation on Strategic regional water resource solutions: standard gate two submissions and draft decisions</li> <li>• Environmental Outcomes</li> <li>• Short Term Lets Planning Consultation Response</li> <li>• Infrastructure Levy Consultation Response</li> </ul> <p>The council's submissions are available at <a href="https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/external-planning-consultations-our-response/">https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/external-planning-consultations-our-response/</a>.</p>
WIP1.3	Create a framework that sets out how we will engage with developers, other councils, and members to maximise opportunities for our priorities to shape development	Narrative update on the work of planning and engagement activity	Cllr Sue Caul	Master Planning Lead	During Q1 2023/24, meetings have been held with developers, promoters and public/private landowners. Officers have also continued to meet with members, town/parish councils, other interested stakeholders, Oxfordshire County Council and Homes England. These events are part of the Vale's framework of coordinated activity in this area.

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP1.4	Work with businesses to undertake economic development review to ensure that council is providing support to SMEs, homebased businesses, supporting skills development, and ensuring that businesses are playing a role in place making	<p>A narrative report of activity to undertake an economic development review and details of how the Council is supporting SME's at this time.</p> <p>Quantitative information from CRM detailing number of businesses engaged with</p>	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>In Q1 2023/24, Economic Development 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.</p> <p>During 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>In June, the expression of interest (EOI) process for organisations to pitch projects that align with the Vale's UK Shared Prosperity Funding plans closed. The 68 EOI received will be analysed and assessed during Q2.</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>Between April and June, Economic development responded to 150 e-mailed enquiries – mainly about the availability of funding.</p> <p>No enquiries were logged in Tractivity during Q1 2023/24. This was a reflection of capacity demands within the team, rather than a lack of enquiries.</p>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP1.5	Strengthen any existing network of local business groups to increase awareness of the council's ED programmes and communication throughout the district	Detail engagement with small business newsletter, number of recipients, clickthrough	Cllr Neil Fawcett	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>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP1.6	Input into countywide and Arc-wide economic recovery plans to maximise understanding of the local impact of Covid-19 and to help shape the support available to our local economy	Narrative update on activity supporting WIP 1.5	Cllr Neil Fawcett	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 the Vale's objectives.</p> <p>The Vale 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 have 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.</p> <p>Officers from Economic Development have continued to support OxLEP with development of Community Employment Plans (CEP). A total of 11 CEPs are currently either at inception, pipeline, or implementation stage in the district.</p>



## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP1.7	Work with Oxfordshire County Council to introduce civil parking enforcement for the Vale	Narrative update on progress in this area, if impacts are seen in other areas as a result of this activity, those impacts should be included (PnD parking income for example)	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	No update required – action complete.
PROGRAMME 2	Work with and support our residents, businesses and communities to effect and enable change	<p>Narrative update on work with Parish Councils, particularly relating to the transfer of management of assets. Update on other activity that directly supports residents and business effecting change</p> <p>Quantitative elements - number of neighbourhood plans adopted, number of community initiatives undertaken, breakdown of assets where management has been transferred</p>	Cllr Helen Pighills	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The council continued its pilot project on a simpler approach to neighbourhood planning. Officers met regularly with the pilot groups, providing one-to-one support. They also brought the different groups together to collaborate and share experiences.</p> <p>As of 30 June 2023, there are 16 made Neighbourhood Plans in the district (one of which is currently under review). There are nine plans in progress, one is progressing to referendum on 4 May, two have formally been submitted to the council, two have completed pre-submission consultations and the remaining four are at plan drafting stage.</p> <p>The Community Hub continued its response to the cost-of-living crisis (particularly in relation to food initiatives and the provision of support for those in most need).</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the Cabinet approved a new Partnership Grant Policy for 2024-29. This will be used to support district-wide advisory services.</p> <p>The Vale also launched a new food bank grant scheme. This will help the district's food banks purchase supplies.</p> <p>The Community Hub continued to work with the voluntary and community sector in response to the cost-of-living crisis (particularly in relation to food initiatives and the provision of support for those in most need).</p>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP2.1	Support new business start-ups and support schemes for businesses and residents through post Covid-19 economic recovery initiatives, by implementing the “Opening Up High Streets Safely Fund” and associated schemes	Narrative update on support schemes for businesses and residents. Updates on any relevant schemes should be included	Cllr Neil Fawcett	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. 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>In June, the expression of interest (EOI) process for organisations to pitch projects that align with the Vale’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 also continues to support independent businesses through the ShopAppy e-commerce platform.</p>
WIP2.2	Find ways to elevate the understanding of and promote Neighbourhood Plans in planning decisions with a review of development appraisal and communications with all parties prior to an application coming to committee	<p>Narrative update on activity to support and promote Neighbourhood plan adoption.</p> <p>Quantitative measure - number of Neighbourhood plans adopted</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24 officers have continued to use internal planning communications to confirm the progress of new neighbourhood plans and the appropriate weight they carry when determining planning applications. All relevant parish councils are informed of the council’s decision to progress and make neighbourhood plans and webpages are updated accordingly.</p> <p>Preparations for workshops with neighbourhood plan groups was paused in Q1 while officers focused on progressing submitted neighbourhood plans and responding to neighbourhood planning statutory consultations. Preparations for the workshops are expected to resume in Q3.</p> <p>As of 30 June 2023, there are 16 made Neighbourhood Plans in the district (one of which is currently under review). There are eight plans in progress, two have reached the independent examination stage, two have completed pre-submission consultations and the remaining four are at plan drafting stage.</p>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP2.3	Review the planning committee process to identify ways to maximise public understanding, engagement and participation as well as supporting member input into the committee meetings with opportunities for training and development	<p>Narrative update on activities to review and promote the activities and understanding of the planning committee.</p> <p>Quantitative elements - Online engagement figures relating to the planning portal/planning sections of the website.</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Planning	<p>During Q1 2023, the Vale maintained the processes that had been developed around the Planning Committee. This meant that the Weekly Chair Briefing sessions continued – including debriefs on the meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>In addition, the Chair and the Deputy Chair, along with the Development Manager, have regularly reviewed all call-in requests to determine whether they should be referred to the Planning Committee.</p> <p>Planning Committee training was held in May covering an overview of the planning system, material planning considerations and a Cllrs role at Planning Committee.</p> <p>The Vale have continued with the Town and Parish Council Surgeries during Q1 2023.</p> <p>Officers also continue, where differing views exist, to advise town and parish councils of their recommendations on planning applications. This helps to explain why decisions are being made and improves partnership working between the Vale and these organisations.</p> <p>Four Planning Committee meetings were held between April and June 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 05-04-2023 - this had 153 views</li> <li>• 18-04-2023 – this had 71 views</li> <li>• 31-05-2023 – this had 59 views</li> <li>• 21-06-2023 – this had 61 views</li> </ul>

## Theme 5: Working in partnership - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIP2.4	Review developer contribution collection and spend policy and improve ward member and parish council involvement with a clear timetable that is triggered by officers, with improved communication from the council	<p>A narrative update on activities relating to the spend of CIL</p> <p>Quantitative element - Breakdown of CIL spend by type/amount/area</p>	Cllr Sue Caul	Head of Finance	<p>£2,132,000 in new allocations of CIL funding were included in the Vale's capital programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding contribution - Wantage Leisure Centre = £247,000</li> <li>• Replacement of all roof coverings at Wantage Leisure Centre = £225,000</li> <li>• Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding contribution – White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre = £1,660,000</li> </ul> <p>The above allocations, profiled for expenditure between 2023/24 and 2025/26, support the Vale's successful Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding bid.</p> <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 £4,874,000 has been allocated to district council infrastructure projects.</p> <p>£80,000 has been allocated in the capital programme for replacement boilers at The Charter Medical Centre.</p> <p>There is currently no aim/project to review the CIL process.</p>
WIP2.5	Refresh our community grants scheme and introduce a Community Lottery to raise funds for groups to develop in line with our corporate objectives	Narrative report on activity relating to new community grants, information relating to the implementation of the Community Lottery, and once implemented performance metrics	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the council continued to support the White Horse Community Lottery Scheme. Throughout the quarter, 13,442 lottery tickets were sold generating an annual estimated income of £33,103 for the voluntary sector.</p> <p>The Cabinet approved the Partnership Fund Grant Policy in June. This will offer up to five years of funding for information and advice services.</p> <p>Also, in Q1, the 2023/24 Climate Action Fund opened for new applications.</p>



## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 1	Improve our use of technology to increase understanding and access to what we do, how we work and the decisions we make.	Narrative update on any work relating to technological implementation/adaptation and processes making greater use of existing technology to bring about efficiency or increase accessibility.	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	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.
WIOI1.1	Provide and maintain a new Vale website with increased accessibility to services and information, on multiple devices	Quantitative report on website usage	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, there was an increase in both the number of unique website visitors (+5.0%) and page views (+1.0%) compared to the previous reporting quarter. The fact that visitor numbers grew more than page views could suggest that people are finding the content they need more easily, thereby, demonstrating the work done to improve the website.</p> <p>Q1 Web Usage Figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 209,339 unique website visitors</li> <li>• 239,176 total visits</li> <li>• 549,657 page views</li> <li>• 2.3 views per visit</li> <li>• 55.0% bounce rate</li> <li>• 2m4s average visit duration</li> </ul>

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIOI1.2	Develop our use of social media platforms to reach and engage with more residents and local businesses	<p>Narrative report on new social media initiatives</p> <p>Quantitative report on social media engagement</p>	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q4 2022/23, the Vale'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>In Q1 2023/24, the Vale'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>The Vale's Twitter impressions also increased significantly during Q1 2023/24</p> <p>Facebook Reach 336,038 Posts 254 New followers 203 Total followers 7,344</p> <p>Instagram Reach 2,656 New followers 35 Total followers 660</p> <p>Twitter Impressions 143,000 New followers 120 Total followers 9,313</p>
WIOI1.3	Introduce live streaming and recordings of public meetings to increase accessibility and understanding of the democratic process	<p>Number/Percentage of public meetings streamed live</p> <p>Number/percentage of public meetings available to watch online</p>	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Legal and Democratic	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).

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIOI1.4	Review the current use of online surveys assessing their take up over time, and by subject, as well as reviewing survey design	Narrative update on survey utilisation/progress towards this review/details of any particularly successful surveys	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was finalised. 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 the Vale's future engagement activities.</p> <p>Officers are also in the process of finalising the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform.</p>
PROGRAMME 2	Increase meaningful engagement and communication with everyone	Narrative update on successful communication initiatives		Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Vale 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, 69 of these had returned with an acceptable photo ID and were allowed to vote.</p> <p>There were 10,500 visits to the election results service on the Vale website on 5 May.</p> <p>During June, the Vale helped to promote Pride Month. It also marked Refugee Week by sharing the story of Olha (a member of staff).</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the Vale championed several campaigns aimed at assisting residents struggling with the cost-of-living. As part of this work, the council promoted a community cost-of-living event –run by the Community Hub – in Wantage.</p>

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIOI2.1	Ensure the creation of community liaison groups form part of all early stages of development planning, to understand local infrastructure needs and support community cohesion	<p>Narrative update on the creation and utilisation of community liaison groups and the development of the policy</p> <p>Quantitative measure - number of community liaison groups</p>	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the timetable for the Joint Local Plan was adjusted to add in more engagement with members before the preferred options consultation. The council has published a new Local Development Scheme to reflect these changes.</p> <p>The Planning Policy team have, through an intensive period of working with members, increased its understanding of the views of residents on development within the district.</p> <p>The Vale's Planning Policy team also continued to work on the development of the Joint Local Plan in Q1.</p> <p>No community liaison groups were established between April and June.</p>
WIOI2.2	Refresh Town and Parish Forums so they are more interactive and useful for communities and develop the Connecting Communities Policy	Narrative update on Town and Parish Forums and the development of the connected communities policy	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>Following the local elections, officers started work on revamping the format of the town and parish forums. The Climate team is currently leading on an initial schedule of events – this will include a briefing on helping towns/parishes retrofit their buildings.</p> <p>In addition, after Oxfordshire County Council suggested that it may run its own county-wide town and parish engagement programme, initial conversations have been held between officers about co-ordinating our efforts.</p>



## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIOI2.3	Work with communities, schools and other local organisations on shared campaigns and initiatives that help further our corporate objectives	Narrative update on comms and engagement activities which interface with communities, schools and other local organisations	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Vale championed several campaigns aimed at assisting residents struggling with the cost-of-living. As part of this work, the council promoted a community cost-of-living event –run by the Community Hub – in Wantage.</p> <p>The Vale promoted its Climate Action Fund to town/parish councils and local groups.</p> <p>The Vale 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 publicised the launch of Ride Revolution, a project that takes unwanted bikes and gets them restored/repaired.</p> <p>In the run up to half-term, the Vale promoted a range of free and low-cost activities for families.</p> <p>In April, the Vale promoted Earth Day through their website and social media channels. It 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.</p> <p>During June, the Vale helped to promote Pride Month. It also marked Refugee Week by sharing the story of Olha (a member of staff). In addition, the council highlighted Volunteers Week, Loneliness Awareness Week, Learning Disabilities Week and Armed Forces Day across its communications channels – it also marked the religious celebration of Eid Al-Adha.</p>

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIOI2.4	Reinstating residents surveys in a refreshed form - deliver effective ways for the public to have their say, to reach more people, mechanisms for feedback, more timely dialogue, educate and provide subject matter information to facilitate opinions being more informed	Narrative update to be provided on the progress of this work	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was finalised. 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 the Vale's future engagement activities.</p> <p>Officers are also in the process of finalising the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform.</p>
WIOI2.5	Explore initiatives to increase voter registration and turnout levels at elections, especially amongst young people	Narrative update on individual initiatives and opportunities to encourage voter registration	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Vale 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, 69 of these had returned with an acceptable photo ID and were allowed to vote.</p> <p>There were 10,500 visits to the election results service on the Vale website on 5 May.</p> <p>The new guide for first time voters is also still available on the council's website.</p>
WIOI2.6	Ensure council's consultations engage specifically with young people and other under-represented groups	A narrative report with input from the engagement/ comms teams and the equalities officer on activity to encourage these groups	Cllr Neil Fawcett	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was finalised. 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 the Vale's future engagement activities – especially in relation to young people and other under-represented groups.</p>

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 3	Strengthen our governance framework and address our policy gaps, improving transparency	Narrative update on policies/ strategies currently in development/awaiting approval/recently approved.		Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress on overall policy framework to report, but individual policies in development and approved as reported within individual aim/project lines of this report.
WIOI3.1	Work to adopt new CIPFA financial management code to enhance our financial governance	Narrative update detailing the elements of the code which have been implemented, which are underway and which are yet to be started	Cllr Andrew Crawford	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q1 2023/24.
WIOI3.2	Council reporting and decision-making templates to include impact on the climate emergency	Narrative update on significant decisions which have key environmental considerations, additionally any updates to key policies which have an focus on the climate emergency	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Legal and Democratic	No update required, action completed.
WIOI3.3	Review the councils constitution and scheme of delegation annually	Narrative update with the outcome of the review	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>The council's constitution has remained under constant review throughout Q1 2023/24.</p> <p>Officers are currently in the process of arranging meetings of the Constitution Review Group and have prepared a new Planning Protocol and Code of Corporate Governance for their consideration.</p>

## Theme 6: Working in an open and inclusive way - performance updates against reporting measures

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q1 Performance Update
WIOI3.4	Increase and improve publicly available information – e.g.- code of conduct complaints (decision noted) FOIs (responses), corporate complaints (data) Improve accessibility of corporate information through publishing on our website	<p>“Narrative update on relevant reviews/newly available information/website improvements and metrics</p> <p>Quantitative - FOI/ Complaints data”</p>	Cllr Andy Foulsham	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q1 2023/24, the performance management report for Q4 2022/23 and the 2022/23 annual corporate plan performance review were published on the Vale’s website. This is intended to increase the public’s understanding of what the council does, how it works and how decisions are made.</p> <p>In Q1 2023/24, the Vale received 255 FOI/EIRs. 96.0% of these were responded to within the target time of 20 working days – this is above the ICO’s target.</p> <p>The council received 17 stage one complaints and seven stage two complaints between April and June 2023 – it did not receive any complaints from the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>




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