

Vale of White Horse District Council

Corporate Performance Report



2023/24 Quarter Two
October 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 two (01 July to 30 September 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 two 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 6.7 per cent in the 12 months to September 2023 – the same as in August (inflation peaked at 11.1 per cent in October 2022 – the highest rate since 1981). This was largely the result of the falls in September of the rate of inflation for food & non-alcoholic beverages (where prices fell on the month for the first time since September 2021) and furniture & household goods being offset by upward contributions from the rising costs for transport (the average price of petrol rose by 5.1 pence per litre and diesel by 6.3 pence between August and September) and restaurants & hotels.

The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), as part of their remit to keep inflation under control, raised interest rates to 5.25 per cent in August 2023 (the highest level since February 2008 but still below the long-term historic average of 5.9 per cent). This was the fourteenth consecutive time that the MPC had increased the Bank Rate in an effort to get inflation under control. At their meeting in September, the MPC – for the first time since the end of 2021 – voted not to raise interest rates.



In its Quarterly Monetary Policy Report (August 2023), the Bank of England forecast that inflation will fall to around 5.0 per cent by the end of the year (owing to lower energy, and to a lesser degree, food and core goods price inflation). The Bank are also predicting that inflation will not return to the 2.0 per cent target until Q2 2025 (later than they suggested in their previous quarterly report, where inflation returned to the 2.0 per cent target in Q4 2024).

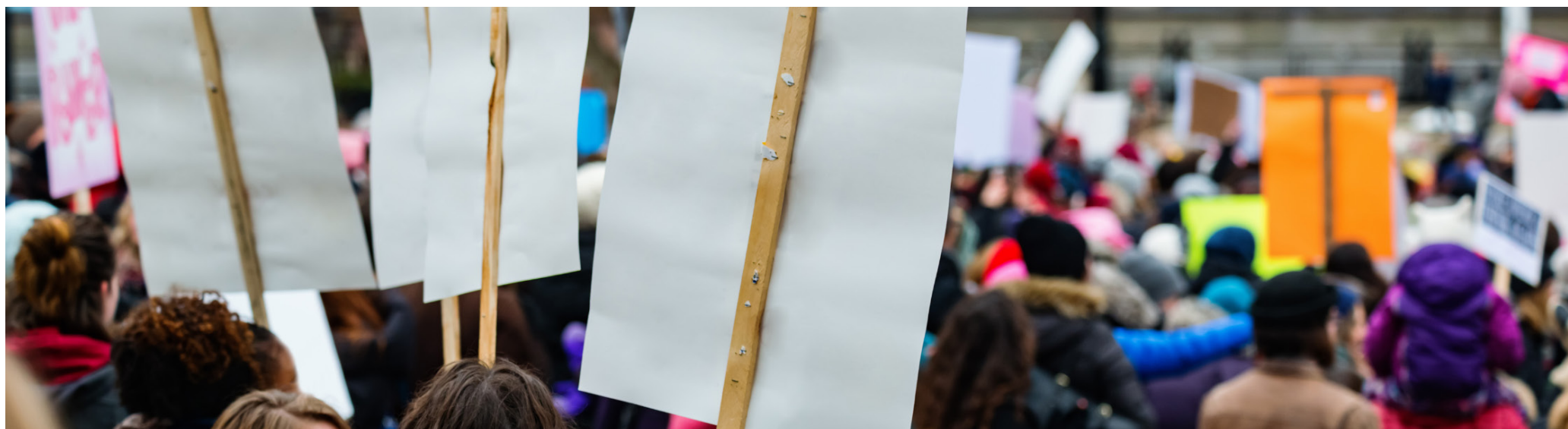
For the first time in nearly two years, average wage growth in the UK rose above the rate of inflation – easing some of the pressures of the rising cost of living. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that between June and August 2023 growth in total and regular pay rose in real terms, when adjusted for CPIH (Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs) inflation, by 1.3 per cent and 1.1 per cent respectively on the year.

In September 2023, the number of registered company insolvencies in England and Wales was 17.0 per cent higher than in September 2022. It is suggested that this increase is partly being driven by firms struggling with higher costs and rising interest rates.

In the three months to August 2023, economic growth was estimated to have increased by 0.3 per cent. Output increased across all sectors of the economy – services, construction and production.

Revised figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that the UK made a stronger recovery from the pandemic than had previously been thought. These changes added almost 2.0 per cent to the size of the economy.

Industrial action has continued to take place across 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.





The summer of 2023 was Earth's hottest since global records began in 1880 according to an analysis by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies. The months of June, July, and August combined were 0.23°C warmer than any other summer in their database and 1.2°C warmer than the average summer between 1951 and 1980.

The UK experienced its joint-warmest September on record (in a series stretching back to 1884). The average mean temperature was 15.2°C, 2.2°C higher than the usual temperature for September. There were seven consecutive days where the temperature was above 30.0°C somewhere in the UK – something that has never happened before in September.

England and Wales had their respective warmest September on record according to mean temperature. England's provisional figure of 16.7°C topped the previous record of 16.5°C set in 2006. Wales' 15.6°C also beat its 2006 figure of 15.2°C.

Northern Ireland saw its joint-warmest on record with an average mean temperature of 14.2°C putting it level with both 2006 and 2021's figures.

Scotland had its third warmest September on record, with an average mean temperature of 12.8°C. Only 2021 and 2006 were warmer according to September mean temperature.

The State of Nature Report 2023, featuring work from research and conservation organisations, showed that the UK's nature and wider environment continues to decline and degrade. Amongst its headline findings is that 16.0 per cent of species within Great Britain are threatened with extinction.

In mid-July, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs unveiled its third National Adaptation Programme. This outlines how HM Government will protect infrastructure, promote a greener economy and ensure resilient food production.

During September, the Prime Minister announced a New Approach to Net Zero. This sets out HM Government's revised plans to meet the UK's environmental targets.

Thames Water published its revised draft Water Resources Management Plan. This sets out the actions and investment it believes are needed to deliver a secure and sustainable water supply. Amongst the proposed projects is a new reservoir near Abingdon.

NHS figures show that a record 7.75 million people were waiting for planned NHS treatment in England at the end of August. The pandemic, increased demand, record staff vacancies and industrial action have all been cited as major contributory factors towards this growing backlog.



In September, the Department for Health and Social Care published a Suicide Prevention Strategy for England: 2023 to 2028. This presents HM Government's plans and ambitions in relation to reducing suicide rates, helping those affected by these tragic events and improving support for those who self-harm.

In August, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity. This lays out how HM Government will work to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be active.

The average UK house price increased by 0.2 per cent in the 12 months to August 2023 (provisional estimate) – the average house price was £291,000. In England, the average house price remained relatively unchanged at £310,000. Across the South East region (excluding London), the average house price decreased by 0.6 per cent – the average house price was £393,417.

During July, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities outlined HM Government's Long-term Plan for Housing. This sets out their approach to regeneration, inner-city densification and housing delivery across England. HM Government also announced proposals to fast-track major infrastructure projects through the planning process.

At the end the month, the Secretary of State for Transport announced The Plan for Drivers. This lays out how HM Government is working to improve the experience of driving and services provided for motorists.

Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) Planning Committee rejected the Didcot HIF1 road scheme in July. There was a further OCC meeting 27 September where they withdrew their rejection. The decision was called in for review by HM Government – the date for the inquiry into the outcome has been set for February 2024.

England's Economic Heartland published its Swindon-Didcot-Oxford connectivity study. This identifies potential interventions to improve the transport system between these three areas.

Quarter two 2023/24 performance highlights

Providing the homes people need



We updated our **Section 106 policy** to show how these funds can be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing



163

The number of **affordable homes** completed between April and August 2023



We registered with the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman that will enable us to directly provide **affordable and social housing**

Tackling the climate emergency



We finalised our **Air Quality Plan** and will be submitting it to Defra next for sign off



We published a briefing on **retrofitting homes and community buildings** for district, town and parish councils



We received **decarbonisation reports** for The Beacon and Abbey Meadows which will inform our next actions to decarbonise these sites

Building healthy communities



We held workshops and consultations as part of the Joint Local Plan development - where residents were asked to identify aspects of the local landscape that they valued and changes that might have an impact on them



We finalised the **'Nature Trails'** map for South Abingdon



2,658

The total number of people who signed up to our physical activity programmes

Building stable finances



We asked the **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy** to review finance systems and business partnering

£156,077



The amount of funding secured from the **Swimming Pool Fund** to help cover increased utility and chemical costs of our pools



We completed our **Forward Maintenance Plan** for future capital funding proposals - this will help us manage our assets more efficiently

Working in partnership



We launched the **Partnership Grant Scheme** - this will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district



We supported the development of local action plans related to the **Oxfordshire Food Strategy** and how these may benefit from the Rural England Prosperity Fund



We are a member of the **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership** steering group to help develop the Oxfordshire Destination Management Plan

Working in an open and inclusive way



We drafted the 2022/23 **Annual Consultation and Engagement Report** for discussion at cabinet and to serve as a benchmark for future engagements



We held an **online town and parish forum** on improving the energy efficiency of community buildings and the support we can offer to manage these buildings



We are investigating the potential benefits of using **newer social media channels** e.g., WhatsApp Communities, Nextdoor and Threads

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 25

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). In some cases, this activity is a prelude to the work being undertaken around the Joint Local Plan. Close liaison was also maintained with Oxfordshire County Council's highways and strategic planning teams.

An updated policy on how Section 106 funds can be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing was agreed by councillors. This is designed to make it easier for those who wish to develop and deliver affordable homes to access funds – it will go live in October.

The Vale met with representatives from housing associations to discuss whether existing clauses within Section 106 agreements are preventing the development of new affordable housing within the district. A report on this issue is expected to be considered by officers in Q3.



A cross-departmental team continued to work on developing the various housing schemes to support people from Afghanistan and Ukraine. These activities included preparations to lease property from the MOD and to purchase homes under HM Government's Local Authority Housing Fund scheme – the decision to proceed with these proposals was taken by councillors at the beginning of the quarter. To help facilitate these projects, officers have registered the council with the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman – this will enable the Vale to directly provide affordable/social housing.

Officers reviewed and updated the site layout plans for the new berths at Pebble Hill. Arboriculture and ecological consultants are currently in the process of assessing the proposal's ecological and ancient woodland implications.

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. Activities included:

- the holding of four All-Councillor Roundtable meetings to talk through the emerging policy direction for the Joint Local Plan.
- the receiving and processing of written feedback from the Joint Local Plan Steering Group.
- engaging with officers from both the Vale's Development Management team and Oxfordshire County Council to help finalise recommendations for the Joint Local Plan preferred options consultation – scheduled for January 2024.
- the receipt of the draft findings/outputs from consultancy studies on retail needs; playing pitches and leisure facilities; employment land; and specialist housing needs – all of which will underpin the special strategy of the Joint Local Plan.

In addition, Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan. They also provided assistance with the emerging preferred options and draft policy text.

Progress was made in relation to the issue of nature recovery, with the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre supplying an update to the council on the draft nature recovery network – this will feed into the Joint Local Plan.

The Vale held initial discussions, through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group, on a new phase of joint work on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.

In August, the Vale responded to Oxfordshire County Council's consultation on the Strategic Travel Network (SATN). The consultation included an interactive map of proposed cycling and walking routes, for which the council provided feedback.



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 32

During Q2 2023/24, the Vale received decarbonisation reports for The Beacon and Abbey Meadows from Concept Energy. These have helped to inform the council's approach to decarbonising these sites and have allowed for decisions to be taken about funding applications that would contribute to the potential costs of any proposed works.

The Planning Policy team have continued to make significant progress on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Activities included:

- the holding of four All-Councillor Roundtable meetings to talk through the emerging policy direction for the Joint Local Plan
- the receiving and processing of written feedback from the Joint Local Plan Steering Group
- undertaking both a sustainability appraisal and equalities assessment to understand the impacts of proposed policy options.



In addition, Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan. This included testing different archetypes to assess the feasibility of policies that deliver various levels of ambition on net zero carbon. They also provided assistance with the emerging preferred options and draft policy text.

Progress was made in relation to the issue of nature recovery, with the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre supplying an update to the council on the draft nature recovery network.

The Vale remains involved in shaping and participating in county-wide initiatives through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP). In this forum, officers and members continue to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision. During Q2 2023/24, progress was made on the creation of work programmes for the FOP's advisory groups. These programmes will include activities related to affordable housing, energy planning and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).

Work continued on operationalising the priority actions identified in the adopted Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. A proposal was submitted to Innovate UK for the FutureFit Oxfordshire project. This aims to create an 'enabling environment' for retrofitting services. The Vale is a listed partner in the FutureFit Oxfordshire project – which, if the bid to Innovate UK is successful, will start in early 2024.

Also, in Q2, the Vale published a briefing on retrofitting homes and community buildings for district, town and parish councils. This consolidated the existing information on retrofitting financing and support. The council also promoted retrofitting and grants for energy saving home improvements through its media channels.



The Climate team held an online town and parish forum on improving the energy efficiency of community buildings and the support that the Vale can offer to the groups that manage these buildings. Preparations are now underway for the next session – this will focus on retrofitting domestic properties.

Officers presented a paper to cabinet briefing on the arrangements for, and progress towards, producing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire. The council also remains actively engaged in the strategy's production, with officers actively contributing to meetings and workshops.

The draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) consultation concluded. The AQAP 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. The results of the consultation have been reviewed by officers and the council is now working with other parties to ensure that the completed AQAP can be brought forward for approval in Q3.

In addition, the Vale received feedback from Defra on the Annual Status Report (submitted during Q1). The report has now been published.

A new countywide website monitoring air quality was also launched during Q2. This can be found at www.oxonair.uk.

During September, the Vale launched its 'Check it before you chuck it' campaign. This aims to help cut down on recycling contamination by encouraging residents to verify whether things can go in their recycling bins. (This campaign will continue into Q3).

The council stressed the importance of reducing waste by marking Zero Waste Week and Second-Hand September. As part of this work, the Vale publicised community action groups, repair cafes and refill shops operating within the district – they also highlighted the benefits of composting.

The council also encouraged parents to download our Waste and Recycling Activity Pack. This contained fun activities that children can do to learn about recycling and waste reduction.

The external funding lead has been working with colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council to determine how the allocated Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding (LEVI) grant will be spent.

Officers are currently making preparations to accept the grant/money and outlining where the chargers will be located.

In addition, the council promoted the use of electric vehicles by contributing to a countywide press release (published around World EV Day) highlighting offers for EV charging and car clubs.

The Vale tendered for a research study on understanding the net zero challenge for SMEs in the district. This will increase the council's understanding of the attitude of local businesses to the concept of net zero and their awareness of decarbonisation goals. It will also allow the Vale to critically assess the available tools/resources in this area – and will help to inform its use of 2024/25 UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding.



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 39

At the end of Q2 2023/24, the council recorded four rough sleepers at the end of Q2 2023/24 – an increase on the previous quarter and a reflection of the rising number of incidents of rough sleeping being seen nationally. Nevertheless, the still low levels of rough sleeping in the district reflects the success of the council's preventative approach.

The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) on 30 September 2023 was 22 – six higher than the previous quarter (a result of the increasing pressures on the service – the council is currently dealing with a record homelessness caseload – caused by the cost-of-living crisis and the demands of refugee resettlement schemes).

The rolling six-month average length of stay in emergency accommodation was 70 nights, above the ceiling target of 42, and a reflection of the number and complexity of the cases.



During Q2 2023/24, the rate of successful homelessness prevention in the Vale was 76.0 per cent. This was marginally below 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 work closely with partners across Oxfordshire to tackle homelessness and is an active member of the countywide Homelessness Steering Group, the Young Persons Steering Group and the Homelessness Directors Group.

The Community Hub has continued to work with communities across the district in response to the cost-of-living crisis (particularly in relation to food initiatives and the provision of support for those in most need). The Vale has also supported the development of local action plans related to the Oxfordshire Food Strategy – with officers from Economic Development specifically exploring links to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

The council launched the Partnership Grant Scheme during Q2. This will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district. Award decisions are scheduled to be made in Q4.

Officers have developed a local policy for the fourth round of the Household Support Fund. It has been designed to ensure that the council can support residents through the cost-of-living crisis in the most appropriate/effective way. The policy is scheduled for approval in Q3.

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. During Q2, the council's consultants LUC held a series of workshops and an interactive landscape consultation. This allowed residents to identify aspects of the local landscape that they value and highlight any changes that might have an impact/affect.

The Vale also received the draft findings/outputs from consultancy studies on retail needs; playing pitches and leisure facilities; employment land; and specialist housing needs.

Preparatory work started on a paper exploring the provision of community centres in the Vale and the potential future options for those that the council directly operates on Great Western Park. An Arts Centre Review paper is also in the process of being developed. This will discuss possibilities for the Beacon and is due to be finalised/delivered in Q3.



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.

With the intention of promoting healthy place shaping and active communities, officers have written a revised, more concise version of the Active Communities Strategy Delivery Plan. It will be shared with members in Q3.

During the quarter, Active Oxfordshire confirmed that their bid for an additional three years of funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes had been successful. As a result, the council will be able to continue this work with residents who have long-term health conditions and families on low incomes.

The Ride Revolution project received a large number of donated bikes. These are now being refurbished by TRAX before being distributed. The project also has some repaired bikes that are ready to be given to families in need.

Active Communities are working with colleagues from the Climate and Property teams to establish a procedure for community groups to use green spaces for community gardens.

The draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) consultation concluded. The AQAP 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. The results of the consultation have been reviewed by officers and the council is now working with other parties to ensure that the completed AQAP can be brought forward for approval in Q3.

In addition, the Vale received feedback from Defra on the Annual Status Report (submitted during Q1). The report has now been published.

A new countywide website monitoring air quality was also launched during Q2. This can be found at www.oxonair.uk.



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 47

With the aim of managing the council's resources responsibly and making more effective use of its assets, the Vale began revenue budget setting for 2024/25 – base budgets are due to be completed by early October. A budget challenge exercise has also been scheduled for Q3. This will review the council's income budgets.

The council's Forward Maintenance Plan (and project delivery planning) for future capital funding proposals was completed. A working version of this will be used for capital planning in Q3.

An Arts Centre Review paper is in the process of being developed. This will consider potential future options for the Beacon and is due to be finalised/delivered in Q3.



The Vale engaged CIPFA to review the council's approach to finance business partnering – including its use of finance systems. CIPFA will share their findings with core SMT members in Q3.

With the intention of building financial resilience to protect the council against future uncertainties, the Vale recruited a new Transformation Programme Manager – due to start in Q3. They will help to shape and drive the council's programme of transformational projects and activities.

In addition, during Q2, the Transformation team has been benchmarking the Grounds Maintenance service. They have been examining process maps and KPIs to determine the next stage of the process – the intention is for them to recommend ways of improving performance and flexibility.

In Q2 2023/24, the Vale successfully secured £156,077 from the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF). The SPSF aims to prevent swimming pool closures/a reduction in provision by helping to cover increased utility and chemical costs. The funding will go to GLL.

The Vale (in conjunction with South Oxfordshire) also submitted an application to the Planning Skills Delivery Fund for £89,050. If successful, this money will be used to provide online and in-person training to upskill the existing Planning and Planning Policy teams.

Preparatory work has been undertaken on developing proposals for an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Phase 3c.



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 51

The Vale tendered for a research study on understanding the net zero challenge for SMEs in the district. This will increase the council's understanding of the attitude of local businesses to the concept of net zero and their awareness of decarbonisation goals. It will also allow the Vale to critically assess the available tools/resources in this area – and will help to inform its use of 2024/25 UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding.

TSE Research, as part of the initial stages of the development and promotion of the visitor economy research project, presented data from a public engagement exercise undertaken during the quarter. Businesses, residents and visitors were surveyed, and a full draft report will be shared with the council in Q3.

An expression of interest process for organisations to pitch projects for Rural England Prosperity Funding closed during Q2 – there were 17 submissions from the Vale (and a further four covering both South and Vale).



Officers from Economic Development continued to assist in the development of the draft Employment Land Needs Assessment for the Joint Local Plan. This work will help to ensure that the assessment and resulting draft policies are relevant to the needs/requirements of the area's business community.

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 them together to collaborate and share experiences – during the quarter, the pilot groups worked with officers to provide feedback to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the project.

The Vale asked for progress updates on the projects awarded CIL funding in the Q1 update. They also requested submissions for schemes seeking CIL funding for 2024/25.

The Community Hub has 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). The Vale has also supported the development of local action plans related to the Oxfordshire Food Strategy – with officers from Economic Development specifically exploring links to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

Applications for the 2023/24 Climate Action Fund closed in Q2. The Vale received 20 submissions, with award decisions scheduled to be made during Q3.

The council launched its Partnership Grant Scheme. This will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district. Award decisions are scheduled to be made in Q4.



The council continued to support the White Horse Community Lottery Scheme. Throughout the quarter, 13,041 lottery tickets were sold generating an annual estimated income of £30,981 for the voluntary sector.

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

The Vale 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.

Progress was made on the creation of work programmes for the Future Oxfordshire Partnership's advisory groups. These programmes will include activities related to affordable housing, energy planning and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).

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

The Vale was actively engaged in the production of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with officers actively contributing to meetings and workshops throughout Q2.

Officers continue 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 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 60

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 Q2 2023/24, the performance management report for Q1 2023/24 was 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 drafted for discussion at Cabinet. It includes data on the council's level of engagement with different communities and demographics (e.g., by age) which will be used to provide a benchmark for the Vale's future engagement activities.

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 Q2. These recordings will remain available on the Vale's YouTube channel for a year.



Officers finalised the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform. This system will enable more tailored engagement to be undertaken. Work on the implementation of the new systems has now commenced.

A new telephony platform for Customer Services went live on 26 September. The transition caused minimal levels of disruption and will allow for improved access to call management data.

Work has continued on scoping how best to utilise the Customer Relationship Management system to automate/improve the council's garden waste processes and its online enviro-crime reporting.

Officers are preparing to carry out a review and refresh of the council's webpages. Work has already started on evaluating the waste and recycling section.

The Vale is beginning to explore the potential opportunities offered by newer social media channels e.g., WhatsApp Communities, Nextdoor and Threads.

In order to increase meaningful engagement with everyone, the council publicised the work of its newly appointed Vale champions. These councillors will not only highlight the work that Vale is doing in key areas but also help to ensure that residents and communities feel included/represented.

The Climate team held an online town and parish forum on improving the energy efficiency of community buildings and the support that the Vale can offer to the groups that manage these buildings. Preparations are now underway for the next session – this will focus on retrofitting domestic properties.



Also, in Q2, the Policy and Programmes teams held induction sessions for new members to introduce their work on the Joint Local Plan, neighbourhood planning and climate action. These provided an opportunity for officers to receive feedback/comments on the council's work in these areas.

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. Meetings of the Constitution Review Group have taken place and they are currently considering/working on the council's Code of Corporate Governance.

Vale of White Horse quarter one independent cabinet member decisions

Date	Description
04/07/2023	Blewbury Conservation Area Appraisal
12/07/2023	Leader's Vale Outside Body appointments May 2023 to May 2027
14/07/2023	Provision of the Home Improvement Agency Service – to award a new contract(s)
20/07/2023	UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund - to approve a draft action plan to deliver the scheme
03/08/2023	The Council Tax 'top up' Support Award
04/08/2023	Section 106 fund to Marcham Parish Council
07/08/2023	Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy: to award a contract for property management and tenancy management
13/08/2023	Section 106 funds to Faringdon Town Football Club
14/08/2023	Section 106 funds to refurbish outdoor tennis courts at White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre
14/08/2023	Section 106 funds for A420 junction improvements near Faringdon
15/08/2023	Section 106 funds to Wantage Gymnastics Centre
01/09/2023	Wantage Leisure Centre and White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre - to award a consultancy contract for the decarbonisation project
04/09/2023	Funding agreement for Housing Support Fund, Discretionary Housing Payment, and Council Tax Support

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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q2 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 preparations to lease property from the MOD and to purchase homes under HM Government's Local Authority Housing Fund scheme – the decision to proceed with these proposals was taken by councillors at the beginning of the quarter. To help facilitate these projects, officers have registered the council with the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. They have also progressed the development of a repairs and maintenance contract.</p> <p>An updated policy on how Section 106 funds can be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing was agreed by councillors in Q2. This is designed to make it easier for those who wish to develop and deliver affordable homes to access funds – it will go live in October.</p>
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)	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Master Planning Lead	During Q2 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). In some cases, this activity is a prelude to the work being undertaken around the Joint Local Plan. Close liaison was also maintained with Oxfordshire County Council's highways and strategic planning teams.

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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale registered with the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. This will enable the council to directly provide affordable/social housing.</p> <p>The council has met with representatives from housing associations to discuss whether existing clauses within Section 106 agreements are preventing the development of new affordable housing within the Vale. A report on this issue is expected to be considered by officers in Q3.</p> <p>An updated policy on how Section 106 funds can be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing was agreed by councillors in Q2. This is designed to make it easier for those who wish to develop and deliver affordable homes to access funds – it will go live in October.</p> <p>The council has publicised this revised policy through its media channels and by direct contact with the major housing associations operating within the district.</p> <p>The Vale has continued to partner with Collaborative Housing to help deliver more community-led housing.</p>
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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>An updated policy on how Section 106 funds can be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing was agreed by councillors in Q2. This is designed to make it easier for those who wish to develop and deliver affordable homes to access funds – it will go live in October.</p> <p>The council has publicised this revised policy through its media channels and by direct contact with the major housing associations operating within the district.</p> <p>Progress continued to be made on the development of the Joint Local Plan.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	"Narrative report on s106 spend, focusing on the stated aim and any updates to the existing strategy Additional quantitative elements - s106 spend/ units provided from spend	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Housing and Environment	An updated policy on how Section 106 funds can be used to support the delivery of new affordable housing was agreed by councillors in Q2. This is designed to make it easier for those who wish to develop and deliver affordable homes to access funds – it will go live in October. The council has publicised this revised policy through its media channels and by direct contact with the major housing associations operating within the district.
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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q2 2023/24, officers reviewed and updated the site layout plans for the new berths at Pebble Hill. Arboriculture and ecological consultants are currently in the process of assessing the proposal's ecological and ancient woodland implications.
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.	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q2 2023/24, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) agreed, following delays to the Oxfordshire Mobility Model, to create their own transport modelling for Dalton Barracks Garden Village. This will help to advance the project, with a planning application – incorporating the site already covered by the Supplementary Planning Document – scheduled to be submitted in early 2025.

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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, continued progress was made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Significant work was undertaken on creating the draft preferred options and policies. Activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the holding of four All-Councillor Roundtable meetings to talk through the emerging policy direction for the Joint Local Plan. • the receiving and processing of written feedback from the Joint Local Plan Steering Group. • undertaking both a sustainability appraisal and equalities assessment to understand the impacts of the proposed policy options. • engaging with officers from both the Vale's Development Management team and Oxfordshire County Council to help finalise recommendations for the Joint Local Plan preferred options consultation – scheduled for January 2024.
PHPN2.1	Develop a s106 obligations strategy to inform negotiations between planners and developers	Narrative report on strategy development/adherence (once delivered)	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	Action completed
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>	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Finance	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale received no amendments to the projects allocated funding in the Quarter 1 update. The council have now requested progress updates on these schemes.</p> <p>The Vale has also requested submissions for projects seeking CIL funding for 2024/25. (Details of the number of projects that directly address the climate emergency will be included as part of the Q3 update).</p> <p>All district council projects delivered using CIL funding will now be required to consult with the Climate team. This will help to ensure that all of the environmental implications are considered.</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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q2 2023/24, Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan. They also provided assistance with the emerging preferred options and draft policy text to ensure that the Vale's sustainable construction proposals are robust and up-to-date.
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	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Housing and Environment	No progress to report Q2 2023/24 – action completed.
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.	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, continued progress was made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the holding of four All-Councillor Roundtable meetings to talk through the emerging policy direction for the Joint Local Plan. • the receiving and processing of written feedback from the Joint Local Plan Steering Group. • engaging with officers from both the Vale's Development Management team and Oxfordshire County Council to help finalise recommendations for the Joint Local Plan preferred options consultation – scheduled for January 2024. • the receipt of the draft findings/outputs from consultancy studies on retail needs; playing pitches and leisure facilities; employment land; and specialist housing needs – all of which will underpin the special strategy of the Joint Local Plan.

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	Q2 Performance Update
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.	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, officers engaged with colleagues from Oxfordshire County Council on the emerging Joint Local Plan – including the chapter(s) relating to infrastructure needs. In addition, the council received the draft findings/outputs from consultancy studies on retail needs; playing pitches and leisure facilities; employment land; and specialist housing needs.</p> <p>Also, in Q2, the Vale held initial discussions, through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Infrastructure Advisory Group, on a new phase of joint work on the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy.</p>
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.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan. They also provided recommendations for the Joint Local Plan preferred options consultation.</p> <p>Also, in Q2, the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre supplied an update to the council on the draft nature recovery network – this information 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>	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>Between April and August 2023, 163 affordable homes completions have been reported to the council – the figures for September are not yet available.</p> <p>Quantitative measures regarding housing mix, tenure and affordability remain determined on a site-by-site basis at the point that they are brought forward.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	In August, the Vale responded to Oxfordshire County Council's consultation on the Strategic Travel Network (SATN). The consultation included an interactive map of proposed cycling and walking routes, for which the council provided feedback.

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	Q2 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 Q2 2023/24, the Vale received decarbonisation reports for The Beacon and Abbey Meadows from Concept Energy. These have helped to inform the council's approach to decarbonising these sites and have allowed for decisions to be taken about funding applications that would contribute to the potential costs of any proposed works.
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.	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	During Q2 2023/24, the Quarter 1 2023/24 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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	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.	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q2 2023/24.

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	Q2 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 Q2 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"> • Marking Plastic Free July – and encouraging residents to take part. • Promoting the use of electric vehicles by contributing to a countywide press release (published around World EV Day) highlighting offers for EV charging and car clubs. • Continuing to promote the Climate Action Oxfordshire website – especially the sections on the energy saving benefits of insulating properties. • Creating new web pages – on the Economic Development section of the council's website – to support businesses to take climate action. • Promoting retrofitting and grants for energy saving home improvements through the council's media channels – this also included highlighting local events such as Energy Saving Homes. • Publicising Second Hand September and Zero Waste Week.
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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	Action complete.
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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan. This included testing different archetypes to assess the feasibility of policies that deliver various levels of ambition on net zero carbon.</p> <p>Bioregional also provided assistance with the emerging preferred options and draft policy text to ensure that the Vale's sustainable construction proposals are robust and up-to-date.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, continued progress was made on the development of the Joint Local Plan. Significant work was undertaken on creating the draft preferred options and policies. Activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the holding of four All-Councillor Roundtable meetings to talk through the emerging policy direction for the Joint Local Plan. • the receiving and processing of written feedback from the Joint Local Plan Steering Group. • undertaking both a sustainability appraisal and equalities assessment to understand the impacts of proposed policy options. <p>Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base for the Joint Local Plan. This included testing different archetypes to assess the feasibility of policies that deliver various levels of ambition on net zero carbon.</p> <p>Also, in Q2, the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre supplied an update to the council on the draft nature recovery network – this information will feed into the Joint Local Plan.</p>
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	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, Bioregional (the council's net zero carbon consultants) continued to work on the evidence base regarding sustainable construction. This included testing different archetypes to assess the feasibility of policies that deliver various levels of ambition on net zero carbon. This information will be used to shape and underpin the policies in the Joint Local Plan.</p>
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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	Action completed.

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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale's new Air Quality Plan was finalised by the council's air quality consultants. Officers are currently adding in details from the public consultation (which took place over the summer) before submitting it to Defra for sign off.</p> <p>Once the Plan is accepted by Defra, it is scheduled to go through the council's democratic processes before being adopted by the Licensing Committee later this year.</p> <p>Real Time Air Quality Data for sites within Vale of White Horse is available at https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk.</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.	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) consultation concluded. The AQAP 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. The results of the consultation have been reviewed by officers and the council is now working with other parties to ensure that the completed AQAP can be brought forward for approval in Q3.</p> <p>In addition, the Vale received feedback from Defra on the Annual Status Report (submitted during Q1). The report has now been published.</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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	Action completed.
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	No progress to report Q2 2023/2024

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	Q2 Performance Update
TCE3.1	Complete the CEAC Year One Action Plan and plan for future years	Narrative report on progress	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	No update required, action completed
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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>The June 2023 recycling rate was 58.99%, the landfill rate was 0.0% and the contamination rate was 12.97%. These figures were not available for Q1 2023/24 reporting.</p> <p>The July 2023 recycling rate was 63.52%, the landfill rate was 0.0% and the contamination rate was 11.09%.</p> <p>The August 2023 recycling rate was 66.12%, the landfill rate was 0.01% and the contamination rate was 10.21%.</p> <p>The figures for September are not yet available.</p> <p>Across Q2, the Vale shared a series of messages across its social media channels urging people to not put fire-risk items in their bins. These posts were seen over 10,000 times.</p> <p>During September, the Vale launched its 'Check it before you chuck it' campaign. This aims to help cut down on recycling contamination by encouraging residents to verify whether things can go in their recycling bins. (This campaign will continue into Q3).</p> <p>The council encouraged parents to download our Waste and Recycling Activity Pack. This contained fun activities that children can do to learn about recycling and waste reduction.</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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q2 2023/2024
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.	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, officers provided an update to Cabinet members on the arrangements for, and progress towards, producing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The council also remains actively engaged in the strategy's production, with officers actively contributing to meetings and workshops.</p>
TCE3.5	Work with partners to provide electric charging points in Vale car parks and at our buildings, and increase charging infrastructure across Oxfordshire	<p>A narrative update to include work to promote and develop EV infrastructure across the district.</p> <p>Quantitative element - breakdown of existing/ planned EV charging points</p>	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q2 2023/24, the external funding lead has been working with colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council to determine how the allocated Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding (LEVI) grant will be spent within the districts. Officers are currently making preparations to accept the grant/money and outlining where the chargers will be located.
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>No update required.</p> <p>The Vale does not support the proposed development of a pan-regional partnership across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>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 (FOP). In this forum, officers and members continue to work for the realisation of the Good Growth Principles in the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision.</p> <p>During Q2 2023/24, progress was made on the creation of work programmes for the FOP's advisory groups. These programmes will include activities related to affordable housing, energy planning and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS).</p>
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.	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, work continued on operationalising the priority actions identified in the adopted Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan. A proposal was submitted to Innovate UK for the FutureFit Oxfordshire project. This aims to create an 'enabling environment' for retrofitting services. The Vale is a listed partner in the FutureFit Oxfordshire project – which, if the bid to Innovate UK is successful, will start in early 2024.</p> <p>Also, in Q2, the Vale published a briefing on retrofitting homes and community buildings for district, town and parish councils. This consolidated the existing information on retrofitting financing and support.</p> <p>In addition, the Climate team held an online town and parish forum on improving the energy efficiency of community buildings and the support that the Vale can offer to the groups that manage these buildings. Preparations are now underway for the next session – this will focus on retrofitting domestic properties.</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	Q2 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 Q2 2023/24, work continued on the development of the Joint Local Plan.</p> <p>The council's consultants LUC held a series of workshops and an interactive landscape consultation. This allowed residents to identify aspects of the local landscape that they value and highlight any changes that might have an impact/affect.</p> <p>The council also received the draft findings/outputs from consultancy studies on retail needs; playing pitches and leisure facilities; employment land; and specialist housing needs.</p> <p>The Vale continues to support neighbourhood planning. As of 30 September 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> <p>The council 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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q2 2023/24, preparatory work has started on a paper exploring the provision of community centres in the Vale and the potential future options for those that the council directly operates on Great Western Park.</p> <p>An Arts Centre Review paper is also in the process of being developed. This will discuss possibilities for the Beacon and is due to be finalised/delivered in Q3.</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	Q2 Performance Update
BHC1.2	Establish a Public Arts policy	Narrative update on the progress towards developing a public arts policy	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q2 2023/2024.
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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Vale launched the Partnership Grant Scheme during Q2. This will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district. Award decisions are scheduled to be made in Q4.</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>
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>	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the 'Nature Trails' map in South Abingdon was finalised. In addition, the raised beds in Canal Walk are now ready to be installed – the Active Communities team are working with Abingdon and Witney College on a gardening project for students which will utilise these.</p> <p>The Ride Revolution project has received a large number of donated bikes. These are now being refurbished by TRAX before being distributed. The project also has some repaired bikes that are ready to be given to families in need.</p> <p>In August, the Vale responded to Oxfordshire County Council's consultation on the Strategic Travel Network (SATN). The consultation included an interactive map of proposed cycling and walking routes, for which the council provided feedback.</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	Q2 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>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 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 September 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	Cabinet Member for Climate Action and the Environment	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) consultation concluded. The AQAP 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. The results of the consultation have been reviewed by officers and the council is now working with other parties to ensure that the completed AQAP can be brought forward for approval in Q3.</p> <p>In addition, the Vale received feedback from Defra on the Annual Status Report (submitted during Q1). The report has now been published.</p> <p>A new countywide website monitoring air quality was also launched during Q2. This can be found at www.oxonair.uk.</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	Q2 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 2	Promoting healthy place shaping and active communities, for everyone	Narrative update	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>Between July and September, 2,658 people took part in the Vale's regular activities.</p> <p>During Q2 2023/24, Active Oxfordshire confirmed that their bid for an additional three years of funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes had been successful. As a result, the council will be able to continue this work with residents who have long-term health conditions and families on low incomes. The Vale now has 1,304 people signed up to the 'You Move' project (aimed at families with children and in receipt of benefits). It also has 1,107 people enrolled on the 'Move Together' project (designed to help people with long-term health conditions become more active).</p> <p>Also, in Q2 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>
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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, a revised, more concise version of the Active Communities Strategy Delivery Plan was written. It will be shared with members in Q3.</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>Between July and September, the Active Communities team worked with 28 different organisations (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	Q2 Performance Update
BHC2.2	Work with Active Oxfordshire to target get active projects in our most deprived communities	Narrative update on proposals form Active Oxfordshire	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	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 Q2 2023/24, Active Oxfordshire confirmed that their bid for an additional three years of funding for the Move Together and You Move programmes had been successful. As a result, the council will be able to continue this work with residents who have long-term health conditions and families on low incomes.</p> <p>The Vale now has 1,304 people signed up to the 'You Move' project (aimed at families with children and in receipt of benefits). It also has 1,107 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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the 'Nature Trails' map in South Abingdon was finalised. In addition, the raised beds in Canal Walk are now ready to be installed.</p> <p>Active Communities are working with colleagues from the Climate and Property teams to establish a procedure for community groups to use green spaces for community gardens.</p>
BHC2.4	Identify councils owned land for community gardening and allotments projects	Narrative update on the work/outcomes from the Strategic Property Review	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Strategic Property and Climate teams began developing a robust process/procedure for ascertaining whether council assets (land) can be used for meeting climate emergency actions (e.g., community gardens, allotments). This will be presented to the working group for consideration.</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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Health Improvement Partnership Board met on 7 September 2023 and considered reports on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance monitoring of the current Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. • An update from Healthwatch Oxfordshire. • Mental Wellbeing Hubs. • Mental Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention. • South and Vale Active Communities Strategy. <p>A Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy workshop was also held on 7 September to discuss the development of the new Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p> <p>The Oxfordshire Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee met on 21 September 2023 and considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfordshire County Council SEND report. • An update from Healthwatch Oxfordshire. • Oxfordshire Health Weight – Tackling Obesity. • Updating Oxfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. • Winter Planning – Emergency Care.
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)	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>During Q2 2023/24, 20 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>Two new closure orders were issued during Q2 (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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>The data from the domestic abuse service for Quarter 2 2023/24 will be available in Q3 2023/24.</p> <p>During Q1 2023/24, the countywide service received 969 calls to their helpline, a decrease on the previous quarter (1,111). 218 of these calls were new contacts, 94 of whom came from South and Vale.</p> <p>In Q2 2023/24, there were 14 referrals to the South and Vale domestic abuse sanctuary scheme. This was a slight increase on Q1 2023/24 (13).</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	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>The Community Hub has 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> <p>Officers have developed a local policy for the fourth round of the Household Support Fund. It has been designed to ensure that the council can support residents through the cost-of-living crisis in the most appropriate/effective way. The policy is scheduled for approval in Q3.</p> <p>The council also launched the Partnership Grant Scheme during Q2. This will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district. Award decisions are scheduled to be made in Q4.</p>
BHC3.3	Review and Revise the Joint Taxi Licensing Policy	Narrative update on the JTLP	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Legal and Democratic	<p>Action completed.</p> <p>The work to review, revise and embed the new Joint Taxi Licensing Policy was completed during Q2 2021/22</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	Q2 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>	Cabinet Member for Community Health and Wellbeing	Head of Housing and Environment	<p>Vale of White Horse recorded four rough sleepers at the end of Q2 2023/24 – an increase on the previous quarter and a reflection of the rising number of incidents of rough sleeping being seen nationally. Nevertheless, the still 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 September 2023 was 22 – six higher than the previous quarter (a result of the increasing pressures on the service – the council is currently dealing with a record homelessness caseload – caused by the cost-of-living crisis and the demands of refugee resettlement schemes).</p> <p>The rolling six-month average length of stay in emergency accommodation was 70 nights, above the ceiling target of 42, and a reflection of the number and complexity of the cases.</p> <p>During Q2 2023/24, the rate of successful homelessness prevention in the Vale was 76.0 per cent. This was marginally below 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 work closely with partners across Oxfordshire to tackle homelessness and is an active member of the countywide Homelessness Steering Group, the Young Persons 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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	During Q2 2023/24, the Vale began revenue budget setting for 2024/25 – base budgets are due to be completed by early October. A budget challenge exercise has also been scheduled for Q3. This will review the council's income budgets.
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q2 2023/24
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale successfully secured £156,077 from the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF). The SPSF aims to prevent swimming pool closures/a reduction in provision by helping to cover increased utility and chemical costs. The funding will go to GLL.</p> <p>Also, in Q2, the Vale (in conjunction with South Oxfordshire) submitted an application to the Planning Skills Delivery Fund for £89,050. If successful, this money will be used to provide online and in-person training to upskill the existing Planning and Planning Policy teams.</p> <p>In addition, preparatory work has been undertaken for an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Phase 3c.</p> <p>The external funding lead has also been working with colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council to determine how the allocated Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding (LEVI) grant will be spent within the districts.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	During Q2 2023/24, the Vale began revenue budget setting for 2024/25 – base budgets are due to be completed by early October. A budget challenge exercise has also been scheduled for Q3. This will consider the council's capital programme and the revenue income associated with its assets.
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q2 2023/24. 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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	During Q2 2023/24, the Vale engaged CIPFA to review the council's approach to finance business partnering – including our use of finance systems. CIPFA will share their findings with core SMT members in Q3.
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	The Strategic Property Review was completed during 2021/22. No further progress on related initiatives to report Q2 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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	No progress to report Q2 2023/24. Following internal discussions there are no plans to update the recently introduced procurement policy.
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	No update required, action completed
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q2 2023/24, the Forward Maintenance Plan (and project delivery planning) for future capital funding proposals was completed. The working version of this will be used for capital planning in 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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	No update required, action completed
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	An Arts Centre Review paper is in the process of being developed. This will discuss potential future options for the Beacon and is due to be finalised/delivered in Q3.

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

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q2 Performance Update
BSF2.6	Insource 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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	During Q2 2023/24, the Transformation team have been benchmarking the Grounds Maintenance service. They have been examining process maps and KPIs to determine the next stage of the process – the intention is for them to recommend ways of improving performance and flexibility.

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

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 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 is currently working with the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office to deliver transitional accommodation for the ARAP residents following 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 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>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 aligns 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>The council has supported the development of local action plans related to the Oxfordshire Food Strategy with the officers from Economic Development specifically exploring links to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	No progress to report Q2 2023/24 – This work was completed during Q4 2021/22. It will now be subject to an annual review.
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>	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>"During Q2 2023/24, the Vale responded to the following external consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Didcot Central Corridor Consultation •Strategic Active Travel Network Consultation •Consultation on additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, high streets, open prisons; and a call for evidence on nature-based solutions, farm efficiency projects and diversification. <p>The council's submissions are available at https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/external-planning-consultations-our-response/.</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	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Master Planning Lead	During Q2 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 have focussed on the delivery of new homes, employment floorspace and supporting infrastructure, including green space, and 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	Q2 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>	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>In Q2 2023/24, Economic Development continued to assist in the development of the draft Employment Land Needs Assessment for the Joint Local Plan. This work will help to ensure that the assessment and resulting draft policies are relevant to the needs/ requirements of the area's business community.</p> <p>TSE Research, as part of the initial stages of the development and promotion of the visitor economy research project, presented data from a public engagement exercise undertaken during the quarter. Businesses, residents and visitors were surveyed, and a full draft report will be shared with Economic Development in Q3.</p> <p>The council tendered for a research study on understanding the net zero challenge for SMEs in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. This will increase our understanding of the attitude of local businesses to the concept of net zero and their awareness of decarbonisation goals. It will also allow the Vale to critically assess the available tools/resources in this area – this will help to inform the council's use of 2024/25 UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding.</p> <p>Between July and September, Economic Development responded to 170 e-mailed enquiries – mainly about funding.</p> <p>The expression of interest process for organisations to pitch projects for Rural England Prosperity Funding closed during Q2 – there were 17 submissions from the Vale.</p>
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>During Q2 2023/24, Economic Development sent 10 newsletters. These achieved a 55.0 per cent open rate and a 14.0 per cent clickthrough rate – both of which were higher than the industry standards (the most clicked link was the Rural England Prosperity Fund expression of interest form).</p> <p>On social media, Economic Development shared 80 posts. These created 8,315 individual impressions and 403 engagements.</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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<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>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>The council has supported the development of local action plans related to the Oxfordshire Food Strategy with the officers from Economic Development specifically exploring links to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).</p>
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)	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	Action complete.

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

Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q2 Performance Update
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>“In Q2 2023/24, the Vale 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 them together to collaborate and share experiences – during the quarter, the pilot groups worked with officers to provide feedback to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the project.</p> <p>As of 30 September 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> <p>The Vale launched the Partnership Grant Scheme during Q2. This will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district. Award decisions are scheduled to be made in Q4.</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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Development and Corporate Landlord	<p>TSE Research, as part of the initial stages of the development and promotion of the visitor economy research project, presented data from a public engagement exercise undertaken during the quarter. Businesses, residents and visitors were surveyed, and a full draft report will be shared with Economic Development in Q3.</p> <p>The council tendered for a research study on understanding the net zero challenge for SMEs in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. This will increase our understanding of the attitude of local businesses to the concept of net zero and their awareness of decarbonisation goals. It will also allow the Vale to critically assess the available tools/resources in this area – this will help to inform the council's use of 2024/25 UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding.</p> <p>The expression of interest process for organisations to pitch projects for Rural England Prosperity Funding closed during Q2 – there were 17 submissions from the Vale (and a further four covering both South and Vale).</p> <p>Unfortunately, at the beginning of Q3, the Vale was informed that ShopAppy had ceased trading – thus, negating some of the specific ShopAppy related activities undertaken by the council in Q2. The Economic Development team are currently liaising with the council's local market town and retail contacts to discuss their priorities for support (particularly in the run up to Christmas). This work will help to guide our future plans.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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>	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 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 has been paused since Q1 while officers focused on progressing submitted neighbourhood plans and responding to neighbourhood planning statutory consultations. Preparations for the workshops are expected to be picked back up in Q3.</p> <p>As of 30 September 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	Q2 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>	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Planning	<p>During Q2 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>The Vale have continued with the Town and Parish Council Surgeries during Q2 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 July and September 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.07.2023 – 59 views • 26.07.2023 – 73 views • 16.08.2023 – there was IT issue with meeting. View numbers are, therefore, not available. • 27.09.2023 – 69 views
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>	Cabinet Member for Development and Infrastructure	Head of Finance	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale received no amendments to the projects allocated funding in the Quarter 1 update. The council have now requested progress updates on these schemes.</p> <p>The Vale has also requested submissions for projects seeking CIL funding for 2024/25. (Details of the number of projects that directly address the climate emergency will be included as part of the Q3 update).</p> <p>All district council projects delivered using CIL funding will now be required to consult with the Climate team. This will help to ensure that all of the environmental implications are considered.</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	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the council continued to support the White Horse Community Lottery Scheme. Throughout the quarter, 13,041 lottery tickets were sold generating an annual estimated income of £30,981 for the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Applications for the 2023/24 Climate Action Fund closed in Q2. The Vale received 20 submissions, with award decisions scheduled to be made during Q3.</p> <p>The council also launched the Partnership Grant Scheme during Q2. This will offer up to five years of funding to information and advice services within the district. Award decisions are scheduled to be made in Q4.</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	Q2 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.	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale introduced new contact centre software to support its agreed Customer Contact Centre model.</p> <p>Work also continued on scoping how best to utilise the Customer Relationship Management system to automate/improve the council's garden waste processes and its online enviro-crime reporting.</p>
WIOI1.1	Provide and maintain a new Vale website with increased accessibility to services and information, on multiple devices	Quantitative report on website usage	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, there were decreases in both the number of unique website visitors (-22.0%) and page views (-24.0%) compared to the previous reporting quarter. It is believed that this is possibly due to a seasonal drop-off, with fewer people visiting the council's website over the summer months. (Nevertheless, over the same period, the page bounce rate and the average visit duration increased).</p> <p>The Vale is now preparing to carry out a review and refresh of its webpages, with work having already started on evaluating the waste and recycling section. In addition, the council is also looking to increase promotion of the website.</p> <p>Q2 Web Usage Figures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 163k unique web visitors. • 185k total visits. • 419k page views. • 2.27 views per visit. • 57.0% bounce rate. • 2m 05s visit duration.

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	Q2 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>	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale's social media activity continued to be impacted by the absence of a social media management system – an issue which officers are currently working to address. In addition, the ongoing flux at both Facebook and X/Twitter is still affecting the council's activities/performance in this area. (Levels of engagement on social media may also have been impacted by a seasonal drop off over the summer months).</p> <p>On Facebook, the Vale's reach has slightly declined compared to the benchmark set in Q1. Follower growth, nevertheless, remains steady.</p> <p>Facebook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach – 100,580. • Posts – 268. • New Followers – 171. • Total Followers – 7,572. <p>A similar picture can be seen in relation to the Vale's presence on Instagram. Compared to Q1, reach is down but follower growth is up (this is an encouraging sign, given the younger demographic on the platform).</p> <p>Instagram</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach – 1,193 • Posts – 143 posts, 13 stories, 12 reels. • New Followers – 59. • Total Followers – 708. <p>X/Twitter impressions were down compared to Q1 – follower growth was also significantly down. Elon Musk's takeover, and the changes that have been introduced, continue to negatively impact upon this channel. The Vale will, therefore, monitor performance with a view to assessing its future.</p> <p>(update continues on page 62)</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	Q2 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>	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>Twitter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions – 89,500. • Tweets – 204. • New Followers – 6. • Total Followers – 9,319. <p>The Vale is also beginning to explore the potential opportunities offered by newer social media channels e.g., WhatsApp Communities, Nextdoor and Threads.</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>	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Legal and Democratic	With the exception of the Full Council (due to logistical/ IT issues), all other meetings during Q2 2023/24 were livestreamed (they will also remain available to view on the council's YouTube channel for a year).
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was drafted for discussion at Cabinet. It includes data on the council's level of engagement with different communities and demographics (e.g., by age) which will be used to provide a benchmark for the Vale's future engagement activities.</p> <p>Officers finalised the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform. Work on the implementation of the new systems has now commenced.</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	Q2 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 2	Increase meaningful engagement and communication with everyone	Narrative update on successful communication initiatives		Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale championed several campaigns aimed at assisting residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. In July, the council promoted its advice role as part of BBC Oxford's cost-of-living clinic in Abingdon. This generated a large level of interest on social media, with the event being well-attended and heavily publicised.</p> <p>In Q2, the Vale also highlighted a community cost-of-living and grants event at Crowmarsh Gifford. In addition, the council continued to share information about its Food Action Working Group with the aim of encouraging participation from across the community.</p> <p>The council introduced the work of its newly appointed Vale champions in Q2. These councillors will not only highlight the work that Vale is doing in key areas but also help to ensure that residents and communities feel included/represented.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council made statements on several important topics during Q2 – including on the importance of the Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 transport projects for the district and the Vale's opposition to the proposed Abingdon reservoir.</p> <p>The Vale also continued to engage with stakeholders about road closures in Botley.</p> <p>Over the summer, the Vale proactively promoted the district's splash pads and outdoor pools. (This included messaging regarding end-of-season closures and any potential re-openings during September's heatwave). The council also shared information on the Didcot Garden Party's free activities.</p> <p>(update continues on pages 64)</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	Q2 Performance Update
PROGRAMME 2	Increase meaningful engagement and communication with everyone	Narrative update on successful communication initiatives		Head of Corporate Services	<p>Across Q2, the Vale shared a series of messages across its social media channels urging people to not put fire-risk items in their bins. These posts were seen over 10,000 times.</p> <p>The council encouraged parents to download our Waste and Recycling Activity Pack. This contained fun activities that children can do to learn about recycling and waste reduction.</p> <p>During September, the Vale launched its 'Check it before you chuck it' campaign. This aims to help cut down on recycling contamination by encouraging residents to verify whether things can go in their recycling bins. (This campaign will continue into Q3).</p>
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>	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Policy and Programmes teams held induction sessions for new members to introduce their work on the Joint Local Plan, neighbourhood planning and climate action. These provided an opportunity for officers to receive feedback/comments on the council's work in these areas.</p> <p>Also, in Q2, four All-Councillor Roundtable meetings were held to talk members through the emerging policy direction for the Joint Local Plan and to allow officers to get a better understanding of the views of councillors (and residents) on development within the district.</p> <p>No community liaison groups were established between July and September.</p> <p>Progress continued to be made on the development of the Joint Local Plan.</p>

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Corp Plan ID	Stated Aim/Project description	Reporting Measure	Cabinet Lead	Officer Lead Title	Q2 Performance Update
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Policy and Programmes	In Q2 2023/24, the Climate team held an online town and parish forum on improving the energy efficiency of community buildings and the support that the Vale can offer to the groups that manage these buildings. Preparations are now underway for the next session – this will focus on retrofitting domestic properties.
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Vale launched/promoted numerous grants designed to support residents, businesses and community groups. These included – but are not limited to – the Rural England Prosperity Fund, the Partnership Grant and the Climate Action Fund.</p> <p>The council also continued to publicise the White Horse Community lottery. The Vale raised awareness of the groups/ good causes this initiative supports and encouraged residents to get involved/participate.</p> <p>Over the summer, the council launched a comprehensive campaign highlighting the exciting activities (for all ages) taking place across the district. The Vale also continued to promote You Move with the goal of encouraging more people to get active.</p> <p>Between July and September, the council celebrated/ recognised several significant days (including World Car Free Day and Youth Mental Health Day) and raised awareness of a number of campaigns (e.g., Plastic Free July and Alcohol Awareness Week).</p> <p>Preparations for the upcoming Joint Local Plan consultation continued throughout the quarter, with the Comms team reaching out to local colleges and sixth forms to encourage young people to participate. Work has also started on laying the engagement groundwork for the new Corporate Plan.</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	Q2 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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was drafted for discussion at Cabinet. It includes data on the council's level of engagement with different communities and demographics (e.g., by age) which will be used to provide a benchmark for the Vale's future engagement activities.</p> <p>Officers finalised the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform. This system will enable more tailored engagement to be undertaken. Work on the implementation of the new systems has now commenced.</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	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Corporate Services	No progress to report Q2 2023/24.
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	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the Annual Consultation and Engagement Report for 2022/23 was drafted for discussion at Cabinet. It includes data on the council's level of engagement with different communities and demographics (e.g., by age) which will be used to provide a benchmark for the Vale's future engagement activities.</p> <p>Officers finalised the contractual arrangements for the council's new consultation platform. This system will enable more tailored engagement to be undertaken. Work on the implementation of the new systems has now commenced.</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	Q2 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	During Q2 2023/24, work continued on updating the council's waste strategy. Progress was also made on developing the Vale's new Corporate Plan.
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	Cabinet Member for Finance and Property	Head of Finance	During Q2 2023/24, the Vale engaged CIPFA to review the council's approach to finance business partnering. CIPFA will share their findings with core SMT members in Q3.
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	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	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	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Legal and Democratic	The council's constitution has remained under constant review throughout Q2 2023/24. Meetings of the Constitution Review Group have taken place and they are currently considering/working on the Code of Corporate Governance.

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	Q2 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	“Narrative update on relevant reviews/newly available information/ website improvements and metrics Quantitative - FOI/ Complaints data”	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Transformation	Head of Corporate Services	<p>During Q2 2023/24, the performance management report for Q1 2023/24 was 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 Q2 2023/24, the Vale received 244 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 July and September 2023 – it did not receive any complaints from the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>




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