



**TO COUNCILLOR:**

R H Adams  
N Alam  
S S Athwal  
L A Bentley  
G A Boulter (Chair)

F S Broadley (Vice-Chair)  
J K Chohan  
H E Darling  
F S Ghattoraya  
C S Gore

S Z Haq  
J Kaufman  
K J Loydall  
C J R Martin

I summon you to attend the following meeting for the transaction of the business in the agenda below.

**Meeting:** Service Delivery Committee  
**Date & Time:** Tuesday, 12 March 2024, 7.00 pm  
**Venue:** Civic Suite 2, Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ  
**Contact:** Democratic Services  
**t:** (0116) 257 2775  
**e:** democratic.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

Council Offices  
Oadby  
**04 March 2024**

**Anne E Court**  
Chief Executive



**Meeting ID: 2603**

**ITEM NO.**

**AGENDA**

**PAGE NO'S**

**Meeting Live Broadcast | Information and Link**

This meeting will be broadcast live.

**Press & Public Access:**

A direct link to the live broadcast of the meeting's proceedings on the Council's Civico platform is below.

<https://civico.net/oadby-wigston/18619-Service-Delivery-Committee>

**1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence from Members to determine the quorum of the meeting in accordance with Rule 7 of Part 4 of the Constitution.



**Postal Address:** Brocks Hill Council Offices, Washbrook Lane, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JJ

**Refuse & Recycling Centre:** The Depot, Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5JE

**Telephone:** (0116) 288 8961 **Email:** customer.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk



oadby-wigston.gov.uk



OadbyWigstonBC



@Oadby\_Wigston

## 2. **Appointment of Substitutes**

To appoint substitute Members in accordance with Rule 26 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Substitution Procedure Rules.

## 3. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded that any declaration of interest should be made having regard to the Members' Code of Conduct. In particular, Members must make clear the nature of the interest and whether it is 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary'.

## 4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**4 - 6**

To read, confirm and approve the minutes of the previous meeting in accordance with Rule 19 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

## 5. **Action List Arising from the Previous Meeting**

To read, confirm and note the Action List arising from the previous meeting.

## 6. **Petitions and Deputations**

To receive any Petitions and, or, Deputations in accordance with Rule(s) 11 and 12 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Petitions Procedure Rules respectively.

## 7. **Corporate Performance Update (Q3 2023/24)**

**7 - 80**

Report of the Head of Customer Service & Transformation

## 8. **Collection Rate Improvement Plan**

Presentation of the Revenue and Benefits Manager

## 9. **Extension of the Delegation and Collaboration Agreement in Relation to the Lightbulb Service**

**81 - 84**

Report of the Strategic Director

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# Agenda Item 4

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE HELD AT CIVIC SUITE 2, BROCKS HILL COUNCIL OFFICES, WASHBROOK LANE, OADBY, LEICESTER, LE2 5JJ ON TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

## **PRESENT**

G A Boulter                      Chair  
F S Broadley                      Vice-Chair



**Meeting ID: 2563**

## **COUNCILLORS**

R H Adams  
N Alam  
S S Athwal  
L A Bentley  
J K Chohan  
H E Darling  
F S Ghattoraya  
C S Gore  
S Z Haq  
J Kaufman  
K J Loydall  
C J R Martin

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

S J Ball                      Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer  
B Bull                      Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer  
C Eyre                      Housing Manager  
D M Gill                      Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer  
T Hatton                      Head of Customer Service & Transformation  
R Helliwell                      Communications and Marketing Manager  
A Hunt                      Democratic & Electoral Services Officer  
S Khan                      Interim Strategic Director  
A Thorpe                      Head of Built Environment

## **16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L M Broadley.

## **17. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES**

None.

## **18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor C S Gore declared a non-pecuniary interest with regard to item 7 of the agenda, insofar as he has an allotment.

## **19. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:**

**The minutes of the previous meeting held on 05 September 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and approved.**

**20. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:**

**The action list from the previous meeting held on 05 September 2023 be noted.**

**21. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None.

**22. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE UPDATE (Q2 2023/24)**

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (as set out on pages 8 – 70 of the agenda reports pack), which asked it to note the update on the progress made during Quarter 2 of the 2023/24 Financial Year towards achieving the priorities of the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Strategic Objectives, as agreed in the Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024.

By general affirmation of the meeting, it was

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:**

**The content of the report and appendices be noted.**

**23. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE (PRESENTATION)**

The Committee gave consideration to the presentation and appendix (as set out on pages 71 - 89 of the agenda pack) delivered by the Marketing & Communications Manager, which asked it to note the Council's Communication Strategy Action Plan Update.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:**

**The content of the presentation and appendix be noted.**

**24. PROVISION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS**

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendix (as set out on pages 90 - 96 of the agenda pack) which updated the Committee on the issues that drive the provision and management of Temporary Accommodation.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:**

**The content of the report be noted.**

**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.07 pm**

# Agenda Item 7



<b>Service Delivery Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 12 March 2024</b>	<b>Matter for Information</b>
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**Report Title:** **Corporate Performance Update (Q3 2023/24)**

**Report Author(s):** **Trish Hatton (Head of Customer Service & Transformation)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To provide an update on progress during Quarter 3 of the 2023/24 Financial Year towards achieving the priorities of the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Strategic Objectives as agreed in the Corporate Plan 2019 - 2024. The report updates Members on the Council's key performance indicators with appendices for information on service updates, items of note from working groups and future events.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	<p>This report contains KPIs which relate to continuous improvement in line with our Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024 and statutory KPIs that have to be delivered as 'business as usual'.</p> <p>There are 31 Continuous Improvement Key Performance Indicators from our Corporate Plan 2019-2024. 27 are to be reported on in this Quarter 3 2023-2024.</p> <p>There are 36 statutory Key Performance Indicators. 31 are to be reported for Quarter 3 2023-2024.</p> <p>For both continuous improvement and statutory reporting the Key Performance Indicators are categorised by each objective and service delivery arm.</p> <p>Each target has been graded using the Red/Amber/Green status ranking system. There are two other ranks, a "blue" ranking for indicators where work has yet to begin and a "white" ranking system where it is outside the control of the Council for delivery, and therefore cannot be ranked.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>That the performance of the Council against its Corporate Objectives in delivering services be noted.</b>
<b>Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):</b>	<p>Teresa Neal (Strategic Director) (0116) 257 2642 <a href="mailto:teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Trish Hatton (Head of Customer Service &amp; Transformation) (0116) 257 2700 <a href="mailto:trish.hatton@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">trish.hatton@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Strategic Objectives:</b>	Our Council (SO1)
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision) Customer & Community Focused (V1) Proud of Everything We Do (V2)

	Collaborative & Creative (V3) Resourceful & Resilient (V4)
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
<b>Statutory Officers' Comments:-</b>	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
<b>Consultees:</b>	None.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Corporate Plan (2019-2024)
<b>Appendices:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operational Update</li> <li>2. Customer Service Excellence Award Report</li> <li>3. Customer Service Statistical Analysis</li> <li>4. Forward Planning Events Calendar</li> <li>5. Collection Rate Improvement Plan Update 23/24</li> <li>6. New Collection Rate Improvement Plan 24/25</li> </ol>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2022 the LGA conducted a Peer Review. Two of the key recommendations were for a new vision and corporate plan to be created by Members. The vision was signed off in September 2022 and the new corporate plan is in development.
- 1.2 As a transition to the above Members agreed a new reporting approach on the Council's performance which was presented at the June 2022 Service Delivery Committee.
- 1.3 As part of the Council's ongoing development to service performance management and reporting, we report on KPIs in two different ways. Firstly, continuous improvement in line with our Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024 and statutory KPIs that have to be delivered as part of legislative or legal duty as a Council (alongside the standard Finance Framework).
- 1.4 The Council has produced 31 new Continuous Improvement Key Performance Measures for 2023/24, and these measures relate to each of the Council's three Corporate Objectives as part of the Council's five-year Corporate Plan (2019-2024).

- 1.4 The Council has produced 36 Statutory Improvement Key Performance Measures for 2023/2024, and these measures relate to each of the Council's three Corporate Objectives as part of the Council's five-year Corporate Plan (2019-2024). Statutory KPIs refer to those that the Council has to report and measure from a legislative or legal need or need to report to a particular body.
- 1.5 These measures are "outcome" based measures, meaning that they identify key deliverables for the authority that actively work towards meeting the Corporate Objectives, and will allow for greater accountability and transparency. This will mean that the public, Members and Officers can clearly see how the Council is performing against its objectives, and if it isn't, then why it isn't.

## 2. Corporate Performance

- 2.1 The following report provides analysis and statistics on the performance of the indicators used to monitor our progress against the Council's Corporate Objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan (2019-2024).
- 2.2 There are three main objectives, with these being:
- Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities
  - Growing the Borough Economically
  - Providing Excellent Services
- 2.3 There are Key Performance Indicators for our Corporate Plan Objectives. These are categorised by each objective and service delivery arm. Each target has been graded using the Red/Amber/Green status ranking system.

There is also a "blue" ranking and this is for indicators where work has yet to begin, and therefore cannot be ranked.

Finally, there is a "white" rating where the indicator cannot be met due to circumstances outside of the Council's control. The scoring system has been applied using the following definitions:

**Green** Target fully achieved or currently on track to achieve target

**Amber** Indicator is in danger of falling behind target

**Red** Indicator is off target or has been completed behind the deadline target.

- 2.4 **Continuous Improvement Key Performance Indicators** - Out of the 31 indicators, 27 were due for reporting as at the end of Quarter 3 (2023-2024).

Of the **27**:

**26** were Green status

**1** was Amber status

**0** was Red status

This equates to 96% Green, 4% Amber and 0% Red status.



In comparison the second quarter of 2023-2024 (July, August, September) percentages were as follows: 92% Green, 8% Amber and 0% Red status.

The following table identifies the Council's performance, by objective and service delivery section.

### Performance Chart One – Continuous Improvement - Corporate and by Objective

Quarter Three 2023/24	Green		Amber		Red	
	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage
<b>Overall Performance</b>						
All Targets Due	26	96%	1	4%	0	0%
<b>Corporate Priority</b>						
Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Growing the Borough Economically	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Providing Excellent Services	19	95%	1	5%	0	0%

### Performance Chart Two – Continuous Improvement - By Service Area

Quarter Three 2023/24	Green		Amber		Red	
	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage
<b>Overall Performance</b>						
All Targets Due	26	96%	1	4%	0	0%
<b>Department</b>						
Built Environment	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Customer Service & Transformation	8	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Finance & Resources	6	86%	1	14%	0	0%
Law & Democracy	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%

## 2.5 Statutory Key Performance Indicators

Out of the 36 indicators, 31 were due for reporting as at the end of Quarter 3 2023-2024. Of the 31:

- 27** were Green status
- 4** were Amber status
- 0** were Red status

This equates to 87% Green, 13% Amber and 0% Red status.

In comparison the second quarter of 2023-2024 (July, August, September) percentages were as follows: 90% Green, 10% Amber and 0% Red status.

The following table identifies the Council's performance, by objective and service delivery section.

## Performance Chart One - Statutory Key Performance Indicators – Corporate and Objective

Quarter Three 2023/24	Green		Amber		Red	
	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage
<b>Overall Performance</b>						
All Targets Due	27	87%	4	13%	0	0%
<b>Corporate Priority</b>						
Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities	18	90%	2	10%	0	0%
Growing the Borough Economically	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Providing Excellent Services	9	82%	2	18%	0	0%

## Performance Chart Two - Statutory Key Performance Indicators – By Service Area

Quarter Three 2023/24	Green		Amber		Red	
	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage	Number of Indicators	Percentage
<b>Overall Performance</b>						
All Targets Due	27	87%	4	13%	0	0%
<b>Department</b>						
Built Environment	17	89%	2	11%	0	0%
Customer Service & Transformation	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Finance & Resources	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%
Law & Democracy	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%

### 3. Built Environment Update

#### 3.1 Exception Reporting – Built Environment

##### Continuous Improvement Key Performance Indicators

There is no exception reporting for Quarter 3 2023 – 2024.

##### Statutory Key Performance Indicators

Corporate Objective	Measure Activity	Target	Quarter 3 Commentary	Forecast
BPE 19 (s)	Ensure all Council properties are compliant with electrical safety in terms of a valid electrical certificate	100%	80.69% (957 properties have a valid electrical certificate). The Housing Department is carrying out a major piece of work during 23/24 to bring all of our properties up to standard during the course of the year. The Contractor is moving towards the completion of inspections of those properties where tenants have cooperated and allowed first time access. Attempts by the	Amber

			contractor and housing officers to engage with tenants who are preventing access are ongoing, but as a result it is unlikely that the target will be achieved by year end.	
BPE 20 (s)	Ensure all HRA Council buildings are compliant with electrical safety in terms of a valid electrical certificate	100%	84.27% (75 blocks have a valid electrical certificate) Electric installation upgrades to 17 communal blocks is expected to be completed late Spring 2024 due to work being suspended during the winter months because the work requires electricity to be switched off to the whole block for a prolonged period of time.	Amber

#### 4. Finance Update

##### 4.1 Exception Report – Finance

In order to highlight potential areas for improvement, this section details the targets that have been given a "Red" or "Amber" Status for the Finance section.

##### Continuous Improvement Key Performance Indicators

Corporate Objective	Measure Activity	Target	Quarter 3 Commentary	Forecast
PES 9	Reduction of outstanding sundry debtors	Percentage of sundry debtors income due	Current debt over 90 days current sundry debt outstanding is 81%	Amber

##### Statutory Key Performance Indicators

Corporate Objective	Measure Activity	Target	Quarter 3 Commentary	Forecast
PES 10 (s)	Council Tax Collection rate	97.5% (end year)	Below target of 85.20% at 82.25%. Work continues to focus on this, a presentation will be given as a separate agenda item at this meeting, to provide members with an update on this. <b>Appendix 5</b> shows the progress made on the previous collection rate improvement plan 23/24, <b>Appendix 6</b> shows the new	Amber

			collection rate improvement plan for 24/25.	
PES 11 (s)	NNDR Collection rate	96.4% (end year)	Slightly below target of 82.29% at 81.03%. Work continues to focus on this, a presentation will be given as a separate agenda item at this meeting, to provide members with an update on this. <b>Appendix 5</b> shows the progress made on the previous collection rate improvement plan 23/24, <b>Appendix 6</b> shows the new collection rate improvement plan for 24/25.	Amber

**5. Exception Reporting of Customer Service and Transformation**

In order to highlight potential areas for improvement, this section details the targets that have been given a 'Red' or 'Amber' status for Customer Service and Transformation.

Continuous Improvement Key Performance Indicators

There is no exception reporting for Quarter 3 2023 – 2024.

Statutory Key Performance Indicators

There is no exception reporting for Quarter 3 2023 – 2024.

**6. Law and Democracy Update**

**6.1 Exception Reporting – Law and Democracy**

In order to highlight potential areas for improvement, this section details the targets that have been given a 'Red' or 'Amber' status for Law and Democracy.

Continuous Improvement Key Performance Indicators

There is no exception reporting for Quarter 3 2023 – 2024.

Statutory Key Performance Indicators

There is no exception reporting for Quarter 3 2023 – 2024.



## **Service Delivery Committee**

### **Operational Updates – Quarter Three (2023/2024)**

#### **BUILT ENVIRONMENT UPDATE**

##### **Planning**

The department continues to perform well in relation to statutory targets and KPI's. For Quarter 3, 70 out of 70 Planning Applications were decided in time or within an agreed extension of time and only 1 appeal decision out of a total of 3 was overturned by the Planning Inspectorate. In relation to Planning Enforcement and Tree Enforcement, there were no appeals against any of the Decisions made.

The Environment Act 2021 introduced mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as a new requirement to be delivered through the planning system. In summary, development will be required to deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity above the pre-development status of a site and this will be secured through the determination of planning applications. The mandatory requirement for BNG commenced on 12th February 2024. To prepare for the introduction of this new legislation, officers and Members have attended training focusing on the role of BNG as part of the planning determination process.

The Preferred Options new Local Plan is currently being produced and is due for public consultation commencing the first week of April 2024. An All Member Briefing took place on 13th February 2024. We are still working to a deadline of submitting our Plan for Examination by June 2025 so that it can be examined under the existing planning Legislation.

##### **Economic Development**

Over Q3, we launched the new Economic Regeneration Strategy, after approval from the Policy, Finance and Development Committee. The strategy covers the period up to 2028 although the current focus is delivery of the UKSPF.

Introducing a Business Improvement District began in December with the inception meeting with the organisation leading the development of the BID. The aim is to hold the vote to introduce the bid in Q2 of 24/25.

Regarding UKSPF in general, the Team continue to spend the funding for 23/24 and expects to complete spending by the end of the financial year. Reporting and correspondence to DLUHC has confirmed that 80% of the funding needs to be spent to release year three funding upfront and we are on track to achieve this.

Work is underway to bring forward year 3 projects when funding is released.

##### **Climate Change**

The Climate Change Strategy is out for public consultation between 22 January 2024 and 4 March 2024. When finalised, this strategy will supersede the current Environment Strategy and Action Plan and will have more focus on climate change.



The next steps in regard of this agenda will be focused around delivering the short-term actions arising from objectives in the strategy.

Other climate related action continues: a further phase of Solar Together and Big Community (Energy) Switch group buying scheme is taking place in partnership with iChoosr; £5000 worth of consultancy funding is being made available from the Midlands Net-Zero Hub for an energy audit at Parklands Leisure Centre; in partnership with other local authorities (Green Living Leicestershire) funding has been secured to create a face-to-face service to support hard to reach households across Leicestershire access trusted energy efficiency advice and grants; and, further partnership work and grant funding is being used to increase EV chargepoint capacity in the borough.

We continue to work with other local authorities and partners to co-ordinated action on climate change which reduces duplication and prioritises limited resources.

### **Leicestershire Building Control Partnership**

The Building Safety Act 2022 is bringing about radical changes in the building control world and most construction sectors The Leicestershire Building Control Partnership is working hard to understand what these changes mean and what we will need to put in place to meet our obligations.

One of the key risks is around the loss of experienced staff given that the Act requires experienced Building Control Surveyors to undertake additional qualifications.

The Partnership is supporting existing staff to meet the new requirements and focusing recruitment on staff from within the building industry who are keen to undertake the required training/qualifications. The Partnership is also continuing to voice concerns to DHLUC regarding the lack of any new burdens funding being offered or made available to Council's burdened with meeting these new legislative requirements.

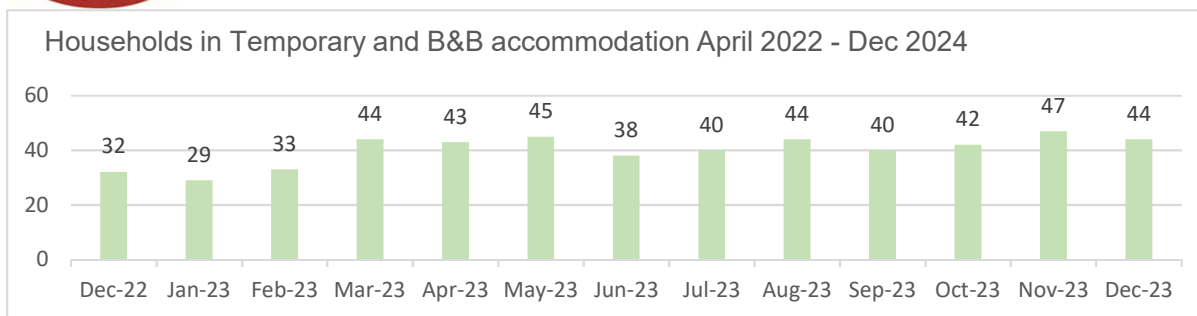
In relation to our Borough, for the period from April to September 2023 the Partnership received 65 fee earning applications; 14 non fee earning application and completed 320 inspections.

### **Housing**

#### **2023-24 Homelessness Management**

As reported in December homeless presentations are increasing. The pressures and demand for the Council's homeless services continue to increase and at the end of Q3 the total number of households in temporary and B&B accommodation was 44.

In a 12 month period there has been a 37.5% increase in the number of people being temporarily accommodated by the Council. Table 1 illustrates the number of households being accommodated on a monthly basis.



**Table 1**

Table 2 provides a breakdown of households in the types of temporary accommodation that the Council uses.

The biggest cost implication to the Council is the number of households in B&B accommodation. At the end of Q3 there were 29 household being accommodated in B&B.

2023-24	B&B	Hostel	HRA Stock	Private Lease Stock	Total
September	24	4	7	5	40
October	29	3	7	3	42
November	33	4	7	3	47
December	29	4	9	2	44

**Table 2**

The Housing Options Team secured a partnership agreement with Cedar Care which has 16 units of supported accommodation at Thorpe House on Countesthorpe Road, South Wigston.

Cedar Care provide tenancy support and work towards supporting people into more secure accommodation. The team are currently in the process of relocating 8 single households from B&B accommodation into Thorpe House.

The work to secure this arrangement is of significant benefit, both providing more suitable accommodation and a more cost effective solution compared to B&B.

### **Void Property Management**

The Housing Team continue to review the way that they manage void properties to ensure the most cost effective and efficient processes are utilised to minimise the time taken to complete works and let property.

The definition of a void period is measured using the Best Value Performance Indicator 212 which defines a void period as being;

- The time in calendar days from the date when the tenancy is terminated up to and including the date when the new tenancy agreement starts. Where a notice has been served, the tenancy will not count as terminated until the notice period has ended and the Local Authority has possession of the property.



The rationale for adopting this method of calculation is that most social housing providers use this definition when measuring and reporting on void performance, this presents opportunities to improve performance through benchmarking with others.

It is also the most effective way of identifying the total amount of rent lost through a property being void.

In terms of the performance indicator we capture;

- the sum total of void time in the year
- the total number of void properties over the year.

By dividing the total void time of all void properties by the number of voids produces an average void period.

Table 3 below provides an indication of the number of properties let in each month of the year, the number of days void and the average void time for that month. The accumulative average void time column provides average void time for the year as it stands.

### 2023-24 Average Void Time

	Number of lets	Number of void days	Monthly average void time	Accumulative average void time
April	4	123	30.75	30.75
May	2	160	80	47.16
June	3	197	65.66	53.33
July	5	204	40.8	48.85
August	5	244	48.88	48.84
September	5	145	29	44.7
October	6	271	45.16	44.8
November	5	87	17.4	40.89
December	6	151	25.16	38.59
January				
February				
March				
total	41	1582		

**Table 3**

At the end of Q3, 41 properties were empty (void) for a total of 1,582 days resulting in an average void time of 38.59 days.

The target for year end is to achieve an annual average void time of 35 days and it is positive to see that our accumulative void times are moving in the right direction.





On occasions it is necessary to carry out major works on void properties. Major works could include, for example, kitchen and bathroom replacement; asbestos removal; and, property clearance/repair due to tenant neglect and abuse. This leads to properties being empty for longer periods of time. Members have been keen to monitor the average void time with the exclusion of major works properties. Table 4 provides a breakdown the void position excluding major works properties at the end of Q3.

	Number of lets	Number of void days	Monthly average void time	Cumulative void time
April	2	27	13.5	13.5
May	1	17	17	14.67
June	1	47	47	22.75
July	4	145	36.25	29.5
August	3	116	38.66	32
September	5	145	29	31.06
October	4	110	27.5	30.35
November	5	87	17.4	27.76
December	4	67	16.75	26.24
January				
February				
March				
<b>total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>761</b>		

**Table 4**

Excluding Major work void properties the average void time at the end of Q3 is 26.24 days (29 properties divided by 761 void days).

### **Void Contractor Performance**

The Housing team procured UK Gas as the void contractor in January 2023. The contractor has carried out void work to approximately 66 properties in this period. The nature of works are inclusive of minor void works, such as gas and electrical installation testing, cleaning, and major works including kitchen and bathroom replacements and upgrades.

The Housing team meet with UK Gas on a weekly basis for operational void meetings and the contractor has played an important role in working to reduce the average void times.

Contractor performance is discussed at monthly contract meetings and the team discuss the contractor's performance against measures that include;

- Right First Time on handovers
- Accurate valuations/invoices
- Complaints handling



- Compliancy

The contractor is performing to expectations against the KPI and there are no issues of significance since the appointment of the contractor.

### Damp and Mould

The Housing department is in the final stages of drafting a Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy. The purpose of this policy is to set out Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's approach to dealing with reports of damp, mould and condensation within the Council's housing stock.

The policy is aligned with Housing Ombudsman 'Spotlight on Damp and Mould' publication and it supports the Housing Ombudsman's drive to provide a service that is better, fairer and more reasonable in managing the issues of damp mould and condensation in people's homes.

At the end of Q3 the Housing Team have carried out 2,481 day to day repair jobs. Of this number 40 (1.65%) were connected to damp, mould and/or condensation in a home.

Year	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	Total
Total Number of all repair jobs processed	2,294	4,005	3,854	3,266	2,754	3,631	1,693	2,481	21,497
Awaiting Inspection (Damp mould and or condensation reported as an issue)								6	
Job Raised (Damp mould and or condensation reported as an issue)								1	
Completed jobs/Inspections (Damp mould and or condensation reported as an issue)	50	59	40	37	36	46	27	40	280
% of jobs processed (Damp mould and or condensation reported as an issue)	2.17 %	1.47 %	1.03 %	1.28 %	1.34 %	1.26 %	0.70 %	1.65 %	1.30%

**Table 5**

The property services team have adopted a zero tolerance approach to the management of damp and mould. When a report of damp or mould is reported the inspection is categorised as urgent and attendance is usually carried out within 24 hours of having received a report. Where Officer resources are limited we will appoint a contractor to carry out inspections also.



The property service officers are trained to Housing, Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) level and in addition we have procured the services of specialist contractors including Envirovent, Rentokil.

## Lightbulb

This forms the subject of a separate report on the Agenda for this meeting.

## FINANCE UPDATE

### Revenues and Benefits

#### Benefits

The Benefits team is responsible for the administration of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Discretionary Payments.

During the period 02.10.23 to 13.11.23, the Benefits Team were responsible for completing 153 Household Support Fund referrals for Leicestershire County Council. This additional work had an impact on our Benefit processing times during this period.

Processing times for changes in circumstances remains below the Leicestershire average.

The Team have also been processing additional work which the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) funds. This involves contacting customers to carry out full case reviews to avoid the risk of fraud and error. As of (October) the team were recorded as completing 15% of Intervention work, discussions with the DWP have led to an improved focus on this and completion rates have increased to 36.47% by (December). The latest Management Information from the DWP is positive. They are satisfied with our upward trajectory.

#### General Benefits Performance

Council	New Claims (up to 31.12.23)
Oadby and Wigston BC	20.40 days

Benchmarking with other local councils shows that new claims are processed on average between 10 – 21 days.

Council	Change in Circumstances (up to 31.12.23)
Oadby and Wigston BC	3.63 days

Benchmarking with other councils shows that change of circumstances are processed on average between 3.6 – 12.1 days.

#### Benefit Calls

Quarter 3	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of calls	469	291	199
Number of calls answered	452	279	191
Percentage answered	96	96	96



Number of abandoned calls	17	12	8
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	1:07	0:17	0:20

### Finance Inclusion Officer

The Financial Inclusion Officer (FIO) works to support families and individuals who are facing financial hardship. Referrals are made to the FOI from Benefits, Council Tax, Recovery, NNDR and Housing teams.

The FIO supports customers to make claims for additional funding, through Discretionary Payments or Household Support.

From November 23, we have started to record the number of referrals being made to the FIO to demonstrate how the Revenues and Benefits Teams are providing additional financial support to customer.

FIO referrals	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of referrals	Not collected	47	38

### Business Rates

The Business Rates Team is responsible for the administration and collection of £12.2m of National Non-Domestic Rates. The Team has a duty to correctly bill over 1,400 non-domestic properties.

The Team has a number of assessments held with the Valuation Office Agency, where they have raised Billing Authority Reports to amend the Rating List or bring new assessments into Rating, for example, the VOA have attended Brocks Hill Offices to assess for Rating. Once these amendments are received the team are trying to produce bills timely, to ensure in year collection.

The Team have identified a group of new assessments on Magna Road, they are now pursuing the issue of completion notices to get these assessments rated and increase our yield.

### Business Rates Calls

Quarter 3	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of calls	50	26	15
Number of calls answered	48	26	15
Percentage answered	96	100	100
Number of abandoned calls	2	0	0
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	0:03	N/A	N/A



## Council Tax

The Council Tax Team is responsible for administering and collecting £36.5m of Council Tax. Revenue is collected on behalf of Leicestershire County Council, the Leicestershire Police Service, the Combined Fire and Rescue Service, Central Government, and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. The team have a duty to ensure the correct billing of over 24,000 households within the borough.

During Q3 the Council Tax Team reviewed our Single Person Discount caseload by comparing this to the Electoral Register data.

Additional work was carried out on Empty Properties which resulted in an increase in empty property premiums.

There was an increase of 96 additional properties within the Borough during Q3 (24,229 end of September 23 rising to 24,325 end of December 23).

## Council Tax Calls

The Customer Services Team answer the first tier of Council Tax calls, this include enquiries such as occupations and vacations of properties, simple discount/exemption and billing enquiries. The more complex queries are transferred onto the Council Tax Team. The call stats below related to these calls.

Quarter 3	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of calls	180	170	152
Number of calls answered	166	150	134
Percentage answered	92	88	88
Number of abandoned calls	14	20	18
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	0:57	1:55	2:01

## Recovery

The Recovery Team are responsible for collecting unpaid Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

The Team issue reminders, final notices, summons, and liability orders to customers for unpaid Council Tax and Business Rates.

Factors which affect the volumes of recovery documents are:

1. Payments received from customers vary each month.
2. The amount of information received which requires additional action/investigation.
3. Accounts being reviewed pending contacts e.g. reminders being removed or summonses being cancelled.

We did not have a summons run during December. This was due to the court dates not allowing sufficient time for us to write to customers before the Christmas break.



Q3 Council Tax Recovery	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reminders	336	306	239
Finals	68	69	53
Summonses	25	261	0
Liability Orders	128	26	0

Q3 NNDR Recovery	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reminders	18	27	62
Finals	17	17	1
Summonses	7	10	0
Liability Orders	3	3	0

### Recovery Calls

Quarter 3	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of calls	430	454	345
Number of calls answered	393	425	311
Percentage answered	91	94	90
Number of abandoned calls	37	29	34
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	4:25	3:30	3:14

### Collection Rates

Performance of the Council Tax and Business Rates Team is measured through a comprehensive series of indicators. Collection rates and arrears levels are also reported as part of the Council's Key Performance Indicators.

Oadby and Wigston's collection rates for Q3 are below the set target rate. The Teams will continue to work on updating the Collection Rate Improvement Plan.

Percentage of Debit Collected (Cumulative)	Oct	Nov	Dec
	%	%	%
<b>Council Tax</b>			
Target Rate	66.79	76.09	85.20
Actual Collection Rate	64.68	73.43	82.25
Actual Collection Rate 2022/2023	65.17	74.30	83.25
<b>National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)</b>			
Target Rate	65.14	73.99	82.29
Actual Collection Rate	64.42	73.08	81.03
Actual Collection Rate 2022/23	66.16	74.66	81.29



## Property Statistics

The number of properties within the Borough continues to rise month on month.

The timely working of NDR VOA Schedules of amendment to List and balancing totals and number of hereditaments ensures we bill accurately against the current 2023 Ratings List.

	Oct	Nov	Dec
No of Council Tax properties	24,250	24,288	24,325
No of Council Tax Direct Debits	18,855	18,846	18,800
No of Single Person Discounts	7,619	7,626	7,619
No of Businesses	1,416	1,418	1,417

## IT Team

Throughout Q3 the IT team have moved towards fully documenting the new infrastructure in the new offices. Following the physical transition, it is imperative to have our infrastructure fully documented and auditable.

The Teams attention has recently been on carrying out updates of key systems that had previously been on 'change freeze' due to the office move.

Bushloe House has also been fully decommissioned from an IT perspective and all contracts (relating to Bushloe House) have been terminated with immediate effect.

Although, the main focus for 6 months was transitioning to the new offices, the section were still able to maintain a good level of service provision for users, ensuring targets were met.

See key information of service delivery below:

	Type	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of contacts	Email	151	166	87
	Phone	10	25	12
	Walk in	15	35	9

Standard	Target	Oct	Nov	Dec
Response time for urgent issue	Within 1 day	Less than 1 day	Less than 1 day	Less than 1 day
Response time for routine issue	3 working days	0.9 days	1 day	0.7 days
Turn-around time for new starters set up	5 working days	All within 5 days	All within 5 days	All within 5 days
Overall system uptime	99.90%	100%	100%	100%
Monitoring of system/software issues to drive improvements	Monthly Monitoring completed	Yes	Yes	Yes



Major	Oct	Nov	Dec
changes completed by IT team	<p>Completed final elements of office move, including CCTV, Building management system and Depot works</p> <p>Completed upgrades to relevant systems following the change freeze that was implemented during the office move phase of the project.</p>	<p>Planning large infrastructure change relating to resilience with dual running firewalls – which includes load balancing and giving resilience for hardware failure.</p>	<p>Approval for firewall works, scheduled for January.</p> <p>Monitoring VPN connections to improve stability in WFH.</p> <p>Change freeze implemented from 15<sup>th</sup> December due to Christmas break – ensuring no works leave the Council vulnerable over a 2 week break.</p>

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

### **Policy Performance and Transformation**

The Policy Performance and Transformation Team played a key role in helping the Council achieve the Customer Service Excellence award for the fourth consecutive year. The 2 day assessment took place in December 2023 and was year 1 of the three-year cycle. All 57 elements of the award were examined and extensive evidence was presented. The Assessors full reports can be found at Appendix 2.

In addition to passing the award, the Council achieved 8 compliance pluses, for areas in which we have excelled. This is the highest number of compliance pluses we have ever achieved in the first year of the cycle. Six of the compliance pluses were awarded for new areas of progress, meaning improvements continue to be made over different sections and areas of the Council.

Various improvements have contributed to our success with the award, including the expansion of customer-facing services through the hubs and Brocks Hill reception, increasing the number of customer satisfaction surveys driven by customer insight and subsequent improvements made because of them.

As well as recognising the work that has already been achieved in the authority, the award provides a framework for driving continuous improvement.

In addition to the work on the award, the team has played a lead role with the Corporate Assets/Clean & Green Service Review. Recommendations have been made and an implementation report has been issued. The team have already made big improvement to handling customer contact, specifically by simplifying the process through which enquiries are routed to a single entry point. This has resulted in improved customer contact times and a reduction in associated complaints. Further improvement work is ongoing within the team driven by an action plan and review meetings.





## **Communications and Marketing**

### **Our Email Subscription Service**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Q3 Totals</b>	<b>Comparison to previous quarter</b>	<b>Percentage of possible subscribers</b> (based on 42,000 adults registered to vote)
Total subscriptions	10,502	+6.6%	25%

#### Please note

Whilst there are 42,000 registered voters in the borough, it is unlikely that every adult in each household will sign up to our email subscription service. It is more realistic to aim toward one adult in each property signing up. There are currently 24,038 household properties in the borough.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Q3 Totals</b>	<b>Comparison to previous Quarter</b>
Average subscriptions per subscriber	2.0	-0.0
Engagement rate	76%	-2%
Open rate	52%	+0.7%
Bulletins sent (in quarter)	46	+2
Emails delivered (in quarter)	114,602	+96%

### **Subscribers by Topic (email subscription service)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Number of subscribers</b>	<b>Comparison to previous Quarter</b>
Citizen's Panel	106	-2.7%
Community & Voluntary Sector	2525	+13%
Community Safety, Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour	948	+44.7%
Consultations & Surveys	2663	+10.5%
Council News & Information	5331	+2.4%
Health, Wellbeing, Sport & Leisure	4195	+7.2%
News for Businesses	1037	+7.6%
News for Council Tenants*	805	+14.8%
Private Sector Housing News	574	No change
Recycling, Refuse & Bin Collections	4684	+5.3%
Sports Clubs	13	No change
What's On & Events	2923	+12%

\* There are 1,203 council properties in the borough



## Press Releases

The following links are to press releases sent by the authority during this time period.

[Armed Forces Breakfast - Tuesday 7 November](#)

[Get involved with our fang-tastic town centre trails this half-term!](#)

[Grant scheme launches to support community projects in Oadby & Wigston](#)

[Christmas light switch on events - save the dates!](#)

[Oadby & Wigston's flower power celebrated in national competition](#)

[Borough veterans are invited to an Armed Forces Breakfast - Sunday 19 November](#)

[Remembrance parades planned for Oadby & Wigston](#)

[New app launches to boost Oadby & Wigston businesses](#)

[Borough council making tough decisions to deliver balanced budget](#)

[The Handmade Elephant scoops top prize in borough's annual Christmas shop front competition](#)

[1,000 free trees gifted to residents and community groups in Oadby & Wigston](#)

## Social Media

Measure	Facebook	Comparison to previous Quarter
Number of Followers	4280	87
Number of posts	138	18.90%
Post reach*	52,986	-9.80%
Engagement – reactions, comments, likes and shares likes and shares	14,984	97.40%
Measure	Twitter	Comparison to previous Quarter
Number of Followers	2,682	10
Number of posts	42	-2.30%
Post impressions*	15,506	-21.20%
Engagement – reactions, comments, likes and shares	80	-56.20%

\*Facebook and Twitter use different terminology to track similar figures. In using 'Reach', Facebook are telling us the number of **unique people** that saw at least one of our posts. In using 'Impressions', Twitter is telling us the number of times our tweets were seen overall.



## **HR Team Update**

The HR team have been working on a number of different projects/areas of work in Quarter 3.

The new appraisal and 121 processes were launched in Q3. This process has given us a much better understanding of our performance and training needs across the organisation.

Of those completed appraisals the split of ratings across the Council were as follows:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Number of Ratings</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Excellent	45	30%
Good	95	63%
Requires Improvement	10	7%

In terms of training needs this was mostly concentrated on mandatory health & safety training, professional/job specific training and management development training.

New probation forms and induction guidance were also developed earlier in the year and training on these processes along with more general training on managing performance outside of probation and motivating staff will take place in February and March 2024. This was postponed from November due to other pressures.

### Payroll

The HR team implemented the April 2023 pay award in December and also commenced the 2023-2024 internal payroll audit.

### HR Policies

The Organisational Change Policy and associated guides have been updated.

A Recruitment and Retention Initiatives Policy and associated forms were also drafted for further consideration.

### People Strategy

Work continues on the People strategy to progress on its action plan.

## **HR Management Information**

### **Headcount**

<b>Quarterly Comparison Current Year 2023/24 Actual Headcount as at end of Q3 (31.12.23)</b>			<b>Quarterly Comparison Previous year 2022/23 Actual Headcount as at end of Q3 (31.12.22)</b>	
Headcount	Full Number	FTE	Full Number	FTE
Number of Permanent/Fixed Term Staff	186	178.77	173	165.6



Number of Temporary Staff (Agency Workers)	6	6	14	13.6
Total	192	184.77	187	179.2

There has been a reduction in the number of agency workers within Planning, Finance and Revenue & Benefits within the previous 12 months.

In addition to the agency workers listed above there were also 276 days covered by agency workers within the Waste & Recycling team. These can be summarised as follows:

Reason for cover	Number of agency days worked
Sickness	22
Annual Leave/Contractual Bank holidays in lieu	91
Replacement for Permanent Staff	60
Extra Agency staff to cover extra Monday & Tuesday rounds & compost	103
Total	276

## Leavers

Quarterly Comparison Q3 2023/24 Leavers between 1/10/23 – 31/12/23		Quarterly Comparison Q3 2022/23 Leavers between 1/10/22 – 31/12/22
Number of Permanent/Fixed Term Staff	3	9
Number of Temporary Staff (Agency Workers)	4	6
Total	7	15

Leavers (Permanent/Fixed Term Employees) by Service Area Quarterly Comparison		
Teams	Q3 2023/2024 Leavers between 1/10/23 – 31/12/23	Q3 2022/23 Leavers between 1/10/22 – 31/12/22
Clean & Green	0	0
Communications & Marketing	0	0
Community & Wellbeing*	0	2
Corporate Assets	0	1
Customer Services	0	1
Economic Regeneration	1	0



Finance	0	0
Health & Safety	0	0
Housing	0	1
HR	0	0
IT, Projects & Procurement	0	1
Legal & Democratic Services	0	0
Planning Policy & Development	1	1
Regulatory Services	0	0
Revenue & Benefits	0	0
Waste Services	0	2
Built Environment	0	0
SLT	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>

\*In Community & Wellbeing typically the majority of these positions are grant funded and this is awarded on a 12 month contract.

As you will see from the table below staff turnover has decreased. We are now in line with the sector average which is 16.2%.

<b>Staff Turnover - Yearly comparison</b>		
	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Average Head Count for the period	178	171
Number of Leavers	29	32
Staff Turnover	16.29%	18.71%

## **LAW AND DEMOCRACY UPDATE**

### **Regulatory Services – Q3 Update**

#### **Environmental Health**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have made it clear that delivering food inspections and regulating businesses must be a priority going forward. We have two Officers who are competent to undertake such inspections and we are on track to ensure all our high risk premises are completed in the current financial year.

During Quarter 3, 17 inspections took place. There has been some staff absence due to sickness during the quarter which has slightly delayed our inspection schedule. Outstanding inspections will therefore be programmed during Quarter 4 by either the use of a self-assessment questionnaire or visit as necessary.

The sampling plan continues in line with the regional programme set out by the UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England).

Overall compliance rates are high, with 98% of all registered food businesses achieving a score of 3 (generally satisfactory) and over 60% achieving a score of 5 (very good). In terms of the poorer performers there are 5 (1%) who fall below the generally satisfactory standard and work continues with these to improve standards. New businesses to be triaged is 40.

There have been 23 food and health and safety complaints investigated in this period.

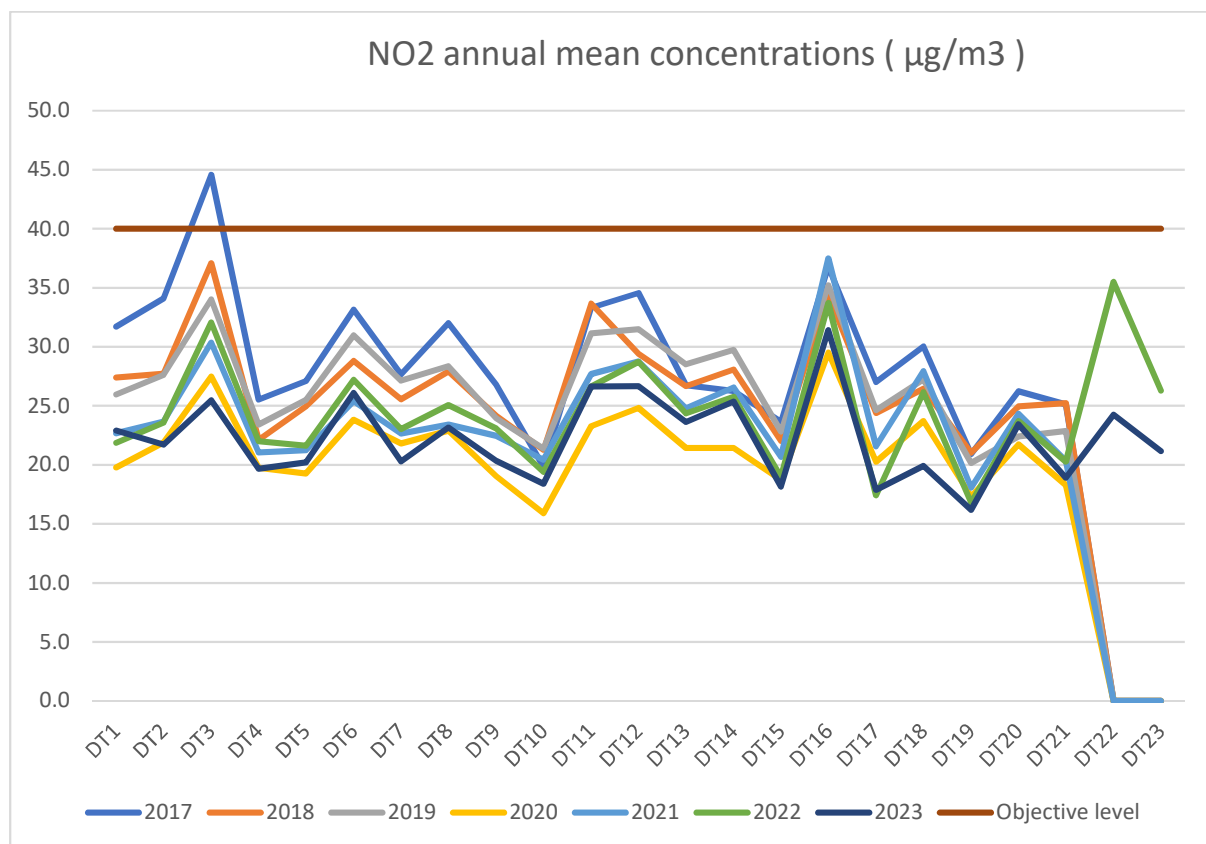


Day to day work was busy and wide ranging with a further 4 welfare burials handled, fly tips to investigate and service requests to action.

The midland mainline electrification project continues and we have now been consulted on the provisional proposals for the bridge works along the line.

Following the receipt of complaints about alleged vibration damage arising from works to the prison extension, investigations are ongoing with the principal contractor.

Air quality monitoring continues throughout the area and the chart below is a summary of the 23 diffusion tube readings showing the annual mean concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> for the years 2017 to 2023 compared with the objective level of 40ug/m<sup>3</sup>. The highest levels are measured along the A6, Canal Street/Blaby Road junction and along Blaby Road in South Wigston.



The Blaby Road air quality project run jointly with Public Health, Leicestershire County Council, GPs, CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups), the South Leicestershire School Sport Partnership and the Respiratory Working Group continues. Key work so far:

- Student ambassadors are supporting the project (6 year 5 pupils).
- Parkland Primary School is taking part in the school gates banner competition.
- Press releases are ready to go, awaiting parent/guardian permission to use photos.
- Move it March (the "Move It March" project aims to encourage children and young people across South Leicestershire to become more physically active and increase the number of children achieving the recommended guidelines of at least 60 minutes of exercise every day) where pupils will have access to an activity tracker is ready to launch.
- WOW activity tracker current engagement is 48%. A summary report will be produced in the spring term and the team are looking at ways to increase participation.



- f. The Modeshift (travel plans) and Gearing you Up (educational programme for year 6 pupils which is delivered in school by the Safe & Sustainable Travel Team to teach them how to maintain and fix their own bikes) projects are scheduled for delivery in the spring terms.
- g. The anti-idling campaign is set up ready for delivery in February 2024.
- h. Data from the new zephyr monitor will be shared with the school and lead teacher who is also taking a proactive role in looking into linking wellbeing, mental health, community youth, and healthy eating initiatives.
- i. Monitoring and evaluation will continue throughout the school year.

### Private Sector Housing

The team are dealing with 108 ongoing cases linked with empty homes, disrepair, energy standards and houses in multiple occupation.

#### Selective Licensing Scheme

Summary in the table below

Number of rented properties	828
Applications received	868
Number of exemptions, empty homes undergoing renovation	20
Licenses pending	129
Licenses issued	702
Licenses withdrawn	37
Income	£634,354.01
Enforcement cases	7 penalties served (£3,000 each) with 3 currently under investigation

#### Empty Homes

There are currently 53 empty properties we are engaging with to try and bring them back into use (this figure may vary from figures provided by revenues due to property not being liable for Council Tax, this could be due to an internal exemption, or the property being deleted by the valuation office).

#### Energy Grants

Summary below of the energy efficiency grant projects the Council is delivering.

Project	Funding Awarded	Additional Narrative	Suitable Properties	Number	Number of measures	Status
Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3)	£528,000 + £327,000 additional funding secured due to successful	Projected underspend of £29406.47 due to withdrawing prior to install, any	Private properties with mains gas supply (owned	72	110	Fully closed down, passed audit and now in process of returning underspend



Project	Funding Awarded	Additional Narrative	Suitable Properties	Number	Number of measures	Status
	delivery of program	outstanding properties	or rented)			of £29,406.47
Better Care Fund	£150,000	Funding agreed by lightbulb to be spent in line with LAD3 project used to supplement Solar Panels with batteries for energy storage which was not included in the original brief	Can be used for either LAD3 or HUG1 properties	20	20	LAD 3 now closed, £138,156.02 spent on 10 Solar PV measures and 10 Solar Panel Batteries
Home Upgrade Grant, Phase 1 (HUG1)	£55,000	£6,436.30 underspend due to approved properties falling through and cost of measures, further research has been conducted prior to HUG2 to ensure successful delivery.	Private properties without mains gas supply (owned or rented)	4	5	Closed and audited
Home Upgrade Grant, Phase 2 (HUG2)	£335,000	N/A	Private properties without mains gas supply (owned	TBC	TBC	In process of submitting batches of properties and measures for approval to





Project	Funding Awarded	Additional Narrative	Suitable Properties	Number	Number of measures	Status
			or rented)			Department for Net Zero and Energy Security prior to installation
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Wave 2.1 (SHDF)	£579,501.18	Requested value of funds as per approved project plan, awaiting formal award letter. SHDF funding is match funded by the Authority.	Only OWBC stock	128 forecast	To be confirmed following assessment	Project team has been established, contractor has been procured and proactive engagement with tenants in progress.

## Licensing

As part of the ongoing service transformation the next stage will be to integrate back office systems and digitise forms to improve productivity. This work will commence during Quarter 4.

A review of all our premises licenses is largely complete with approximately £44,000 received in respect of payments owed. Work continues to resolve outstanding cases and as and when necessary suspend licenses. A review of all our hairdressers and barbers has started and will be completed in Quarter 4.

The Licensing and Regulatory Committee in December 2023 approved the updated Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy which came into effect on 1 January 2024.

### Q3 Licenses Processed

New and renewal vehicles	98
New and renewal drivers	39
New and renewal operators	0
<u>Street collections</u>	7
Small society lottery	1
House to house	5
Other licences	2
Licensing Act	18



## **Community Lottery**

The lottery started on 5 August 2023 and we now have 22 approved causes who have joined with 562 tickets currently sold weekly which is generating an annual £17,534.420 for good causes. This has been boosted by Christmas special draws.

## **Corporate Assets**

Corporate Assets has had multiple demands on its resources in period Q3.

CA underwent an internal service review, all members of the team fed into this process.

Ongoing longer term sickness has put a strain on staff deployment in operational services as had the restriction on recruitment within the CA team

CA received 278 customer enquiries through the DASH system. Numerous further enquiries came direct to CA team members through calls, and other communications channels. In addition the routine FOI's, complaints, request and members enquiries were also received.

As with Q2, DASH and other enquiries are currently flagging up many land ownership searches and concerns.

There was continued input from the team into the office move to Brocks Hill, from both the property management, building compliance and Health and Safety implications, and significantly dealing with the ongoing process of 'snagging'. Ongoing period of communications continue with Kier.

Property related general and one-off maintenance was ongoing as usual – but with the added pressure of the transition between offices.

Capital works featured significantly with the team committed to completing all works prior to the end of Q4. The Brocks Hill Play Area will be commissioned in Q4 for completion after Easter.

The Clean & Green Team have had a challenging period in which the weather has had a significant impact on where resource is directed. Ongoing periods of rain has hampered some winter works as well as access to some sites and sports pitch marking and maintenance.

Vehicle breakdowns and being off the road have had an impact. Replacement fleet items are overdue and being planned for. Nevertheless, the winter maintenance is underway.

The Clean & Green team Supervisor had unexpectedly been away from the role for much of the period due to illness.

A substantial programme of training and competency has been completed to ensure operations compliance across most works. The H&S officer has supported with a suite of H&S and related training within the team.

The cemeteries service Sexton is settled into post now and continues duties along with the cemeteries operative. A cemeteries action plan is being drafted to provide areas of focus



and priority. Cemetery maintenance has been under increased scrutiny this past year, particularly on the grounds maintenance and winter works are underway in many sections.

Parking continues to provide the regular enquiries.

The Assistant Corporate Assets Manager was appointed from within the team – although has not yet eased the pressure on the team overall due to the CA admin role not yet being backfilled.

## **Community and Wellbeing**

### **Leisure Services – Provided by SLM Ltd**

The last quarter has continued the trend of the previous quarters this year with reduction again in the user numbers month on month and also on like for like from the previous year.

Everyone Active raise concerns that despite their teams pushing a strong service delivery with an activity package at a competitive price, car parking charges are having a heavy influence on new customers joining.

It is upsetting to see this is the case despite the site teams pushing to deliver a strong service delivery with an activity package at the right price, however it is still the trend that the Car Parking Charges are the biggest issue and challenge to people joining and using the centres which are predominantly outside of our hands.

Everyone Active will continue to deliver on a wide ranging offering of facilities and activities which is without doubt the widest in the area and we also look to develop this with our Active Communities Manager to whom we are looking at increasing the community offering providing for more activities and one that is tailored to delivering on the councils health and wellbeing strategies and initiatives.

Review:

An average attendance of 58,500 per month, came to the leisure centres during the quarter which in contrast to the previous year where the average attendance was over 60,000 customers per month coming through the doors.

Notable decreases, predominantly in October and November with December consolidating like for like on the previous year. These decreases were heavily weighted towards swimming in October and November, and gym use every month.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Oct-22</b>	<b>Nov-22</b>	<b>Dec-22</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Oct-23</b>	<b>Nov-23</b>	<b>Dec-23</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Swimming	30,816	29,488	17,142	77,446	27,818	24,355	18,874	71,047	-6,399
Gym/Fitness Classes	20,345	21,289	17,626	59,260	21,504	19,526	16,206	57,236	-2,024
Sports/Activities	6,006	3,578	6,062	15,646	4,863	4,546	4,880	14,289	-1,357
Activity Total	57,167	54,355	40,830	152,352	54,185	48,427	39,960	142,572	-9,780
Spectators	8,479	12,652	7,369	28,500	12,843	12,306	8,791	33,940	5,440
Grand Total	65,646	67,007	48,199	180,852	67,028	60,733	48,751	176,512	-4,340



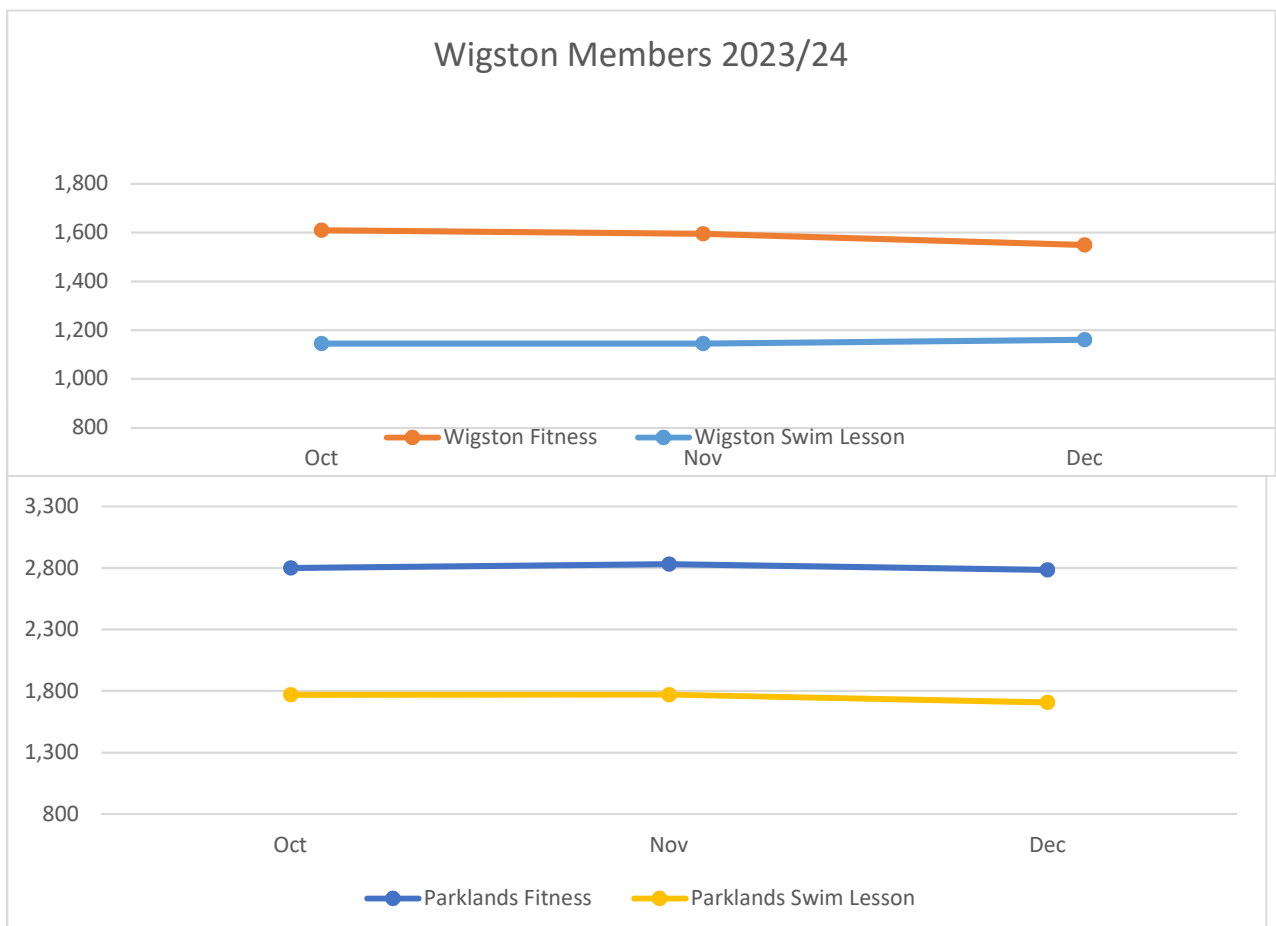
**Membership:**

Fitness and Health Membership numbers have decreased over the last quarter by 205, and is still significantly lower than at the same period last year and we are showing currently 215 down like for like at Parklands.

Membership numbers dropping particularly at Parklands despite our maintaining of the price point throughout the year is in stark contrast to the other Everyone Active contracts in Leicestershire and further afield nationwide which have all showed continued growth.

Membership	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Total	Variance
Gym	4,728	4,672	4,385	4,595	4,409	4,426	4,334	4,390	-205
Swim Lessons	3,007	2,994	2,938	2,980	2,913	2,916	2,868	2,899	-81
Total	7,735	7,666	7,323	7,575	7,322	7,342	7,202	7,289	-286

**Wigston: Total Members:**



**Community Well-Being:**

The Leisure Centres have been very busy this Quarter looking to deliver the years Community Well Being Plan and this has been shown in one of the major positives of our delivery with increases across the board in all health and wellbeing categories, hitting



targeted groups from young people to ageing adults and people with health inequality issues.

- **Healthy Communities**

- In Q3 we started a partnership with Vita Health who run the talking therapies contract for Leicester NHS. This partnership seen us have their talking therapies bus at 6 of our Leicestershire sites, then building on this partnership we held mental health upskilling workshops for our centre staff.
- In November we launched a new pan-inclusive football session at Parklands. The attendance has been very slow coming into the new year, but we have started to create partnerships with local day centres. So, this will start to pick up in Q4.
- In Q3 the women's no strings session has had 90 attendances at Parklands.
- In Q3 the health classes that we run had 927 attendances. This is broken down into 847 for Heartsmart and 80 for steady steps maintainers.

- **Healthy Ageing**

- Through Q3 the senior sessions are running very well with 530 attendances across the various sessions. These included 335 for senior badminton and 195 for new age kurling.
- In November we launched a new walking football session at Parklands. This was funded through the Leicestershire County FA. Through this quarter we have had 34 attendances, which is a great start. We will hopefully grow the attendance for this session in Q4.

- **Healthy Lives**

- In Q3 we are working to support the district councils with the exercise referral self-referring process. This means a client no longer requires a GP sign off to be cleared to take part in exercise, they can refer themselves.
- Through Q3 we have had 53 starting the programme as GP referral clients. Currently we have 133 GP fitness members with 113 at Parklands, 77 of these are paying by DD and 20 at Wigston with 4 paying by DD.
- Specific health campaign memberships delivered across both sites with 54 current Parkinson members, 6 registered carer memberships and 2 PARS memberships.

	Qtr3	Qtr3		
Targeted Groups	2022-23	2023-24	Variance	% Variance
Exercise Referral	1,799	2,087	288	16%
Children and Young People	12,388	14,760	2,373	19%
Community	588	1,113	525	89%
Older Adults	1,824	1,937	113	6%



Total	16,599	19,897	3,299	20%
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This is on top of the below activities we deliver for free in the local community.

- Free Weekly Children's soft play sessions for the Memphies Charity Group.
- Free Coffee for VASL Carers
- Free Memberships for PARS
- Free Memberships for Parkinsons Sufferers and their Carers with over 40 free memberships provided for.

The Leisure Centres have provided for over £6000 of free activities included within the above and it is pleasing to be able to offer these activities / memberships at small to no cost across to the community as we identify the value that this brings to increase the health and well-being benefits of the whole community.

General:

Everyone Active continued to be pleased with the centres delivering a vital community role and engaging with many thousands of people throughout the year but note as in previous reports that from history that we could be a lot busier.

There are a number of factors as discussed which has continued to drive the numbers down, including but not exhaustively

- The budget gym on the doorstep of the sites with FREE Parking
- The cost of living crisis which is certainly making users look at their leisure spend more so than ever before.
- The Christmas period which notoriously sees spend down year on year.

The Active Communities Manager is a real asset to the team with their role to increase community usage (much of which is free) is hopefully having an impact on the overall health and well-being picture in the Oadby and Wigston area which is certainly showing success in the short term on numbers attending our services and in particularly the social value that our sites bring to the borough which is said to be worth over £725,000 in the last quarter alone.

Everyone Active commitment to work with in the local community continues and we will push the customer service level of our delivery to local people with our aim to become the customer number one choice for activity in the area once again.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

The stakeholder engagement event for the Borough's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan that took place in November and was led by the Integrated Care Board. Over 40 partners who work across the Borough in health, education and community services attended.

After an afternoon workshop delivered at Brocks Hill Council Offices, discussions around priorities for the Borough highlighted the following for development of actions, some of which will interlink;

- Communications



- Housing and health
- Reducing loneliness and isolation
- Improving mental health
- Physical activity
- Physical health; dementia, cancer screening, muscular skeletal health
- Focus on vulnerable children and young people; obesity, poverty, poor mental health

Engagement of residents and action planning will now take place over the next quarter and be discussed and developed with the Health Partnership group.

Meetings took place with the Children, Family and Wellbeing Team, Parklands Primary School and Beauchamp College to respond to concerns around family mental health concerns. Discussions surrounded young people and vaping, substance misuse and staff and parent mental wellbeing. Insights from these meetings will direct actions for the Oadby & Wigston Mental Health Action Plan which will be delivered by the Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) at the NHS Trust whilst being supported by the Council and local partners from the next financial year.

A wellbeing audit has been drafted and will soon go live to both primary and secondary schools across south Leicestershire. The aim, to gather insight into young people's and staffs mental health and what demand this has on current service provision.

### **Sport and Physical Activity**

Since Q2, further work has been undertaken to integrate the physical activity service with local partners, such as GP surgeries, the Primary Care Network, Integrated Neighbourhood Team, leisure providers and local community groups and services, with this being driven by the launch of a new, central physical activity referral pathway.

Blaby have received a total of 108 referrals to programmes from residents, with offers consisting of gym-based exercise and community offers such as walking sports (hockey, netball, cricket and football), walks, Steady Steps and Steady Steps Plus amongst others. Parklands Leisure Centre have been integrated onto Blaby's database system, so referrals can now be transferred and accessed by the Leisure Centre, improving information sharing and reporting.

Just Get Involved, a programme which encourages women aged 18+ to join physical activity sessions ran by community instructors, was launched across Oadby and Wigston for the first time. The team are working with 4 instructors who deliver sessions including

Karate, Yoga and 55+ exercise classes to encourage participation in the Borough through incentives and rewards. So far, 95 women have signed up to take part in the programme.

Promotion of programmes and campaigns has continued on the Active Oadby and Wigston accounts, seeing continued growth of 75 new followers and a 23% increase in post engagement, resulting in 1031 Facebook page visits over the quarter.



### Participation Numbers - Level 2 Programmes

Session	Location	Started	Attendance
Walking Football	Wigston Academy	Ongoing	70
Walking Netball	Wigston Academy	Ongoing	97
Walking Cricket	Beauchamp College	Ongoing	46
Walking Hockey	Uni of Leicester Sports	Ongoing	78
<b>Total</b>			<b>291</b>

### Participation Numbers- Level 3 Programmes

Activity	Location	Started	Attendance
Seated Activity	Freer Centre	Ongoing	187

<b>Exercise Referral - Leisure Facility</b>	Parklands Leisure Centre	Ongoing	92 Referrals Sent
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### Participation Numbers- Level 4 Programmes

Steady Steps			Participants	Attendance
Oadby 2	Barnabas Centre (Oadby)	28-October	7	127
Wigston 1	Wigston (Freer Centre)	20-Nov	10	156

### Youth Engagement

Leicester Riders continued their Positive Future sessions on Blaby Road Park until the end of October. Numbers of young people attending since the summer sessions however did drop. Strong factors that would have influenced this would be the darker and colder evenings.

The proposed Development Day at the Morningside Area was postponed until numbers at the sessions increase to that similar to the summer months.

The Community and Wellbeing Team are looking to utilise the sports hall located at the rear of South Wigston High School to relocate the Leicester Riders sessions. This to attract increased numbers during the colder months in Q4.

Boxing sessions to support students at South Wigston High School once again commenced in October after the successes of the previous school year. This has been extended to engaging boys as well as continuing the girls' sessions. The aim still to accommodate students who are struggling mentally or the school are concerned with their behaviour.

At the Children and Young People's Forum in October proposals for youth engagement in the Borough were put forward, and suggestions made as to which other parties or services it would be beneficial to have input into the Forum in future. A second meet of the CYP





Forum is planned for late January 2024 where a draft Youth Engagement Strategy is to be discussed for further development ahead of submission to the Council's PFD Committee later in the year.

### **Community Safety**

During Q3 the Community Safety Partnership was informed that its Safer Streets 5 bid, made at the end of August, had been successful with the Home Office agreeing to fund all approaches put forward within the bid. The Home Office agreed that the match funding elements proposed met the remit of Safer Streets, and the OPCC crucially agreed with this releasing the Partnership's funding allocation through the Police and Crime Plan for use with Safer Streets.

Approx. £90,000.00 will be made available to the Partnership in the first year of Safer Streets, with an additional £32,000.00 of OPCC funding, for investment in target hardening, 15 additional HD CCTV units, 2 ANPR-equipped speed indicator displays for deployment in the Borough, personal safety items such as alarms, purse bells, and key pouches, and associated costs for all listed plans.

These workstreams must either be completed, or underway with funds exchanged, by the end of March 2024 which will make this the Partnership's priority through 2023-24 Q4.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The ASB Officer has logged and investigated **10** reports of ASB in Q3, please see chart below for monthly breakdown:

<b>Q3</b>		
Number of ASB logged/investigated by ASB Officer: 10		
Number of incidents per month		
October 23	November 23	December 23
3	4	3

Of these 10 ASB reports, issues remained that of a wide range. Most common reports included 'Noisy neighbours', 'Verbal abuse' and 'Taking drugs'. Incidents were also reported that included, 'Damage to buildings' and 'Racing cars'.

Investigations into each report lead to:

- **6** perpetrators being identified
- **1** perpetrator after investigations took place received no further action
- **4** perpetrators received words of advice
- **1** perpetrator was then reported to have continued the ASB and therefore was served a written warning
- **1** organisation has been served a Community Protection Warning Notice

2 of the 10 reports were referred and are sitting on the Joint Action Group.



The Council's Tenancy and Estates Manager received training on Sentinel and will be supporting a member of staff to gain access to the system to ensure cases are logged and investigated efficiently.

The Council's Housing Department continue to log ASB on the Sentinel system, please see chart below for monthly breakdown:

<b>Q3</b>		
Number of ASB logged on Sentinel by Housing Department : 0		
Number of report logged per month		
October 23	November 23	December 23
0	0	0

The Council therefore in Q3 have recorded and investigated **10** reports of ASB, please see chart below for number per area breakdown:

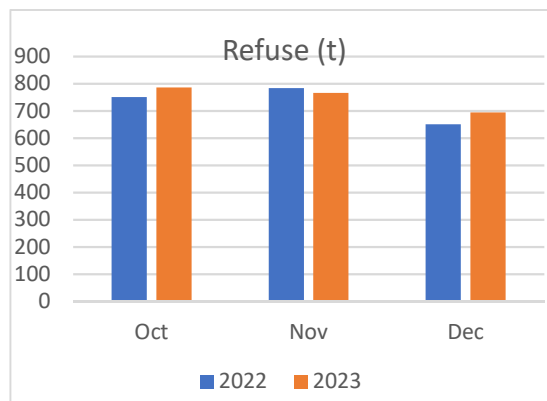
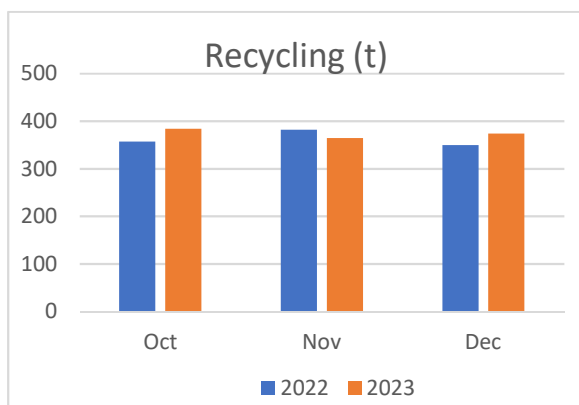
<b>Q3</b>		
Total number of ASB reports: <b>10</b>		
Oadby	South Wigston	Wigston
3	0	7

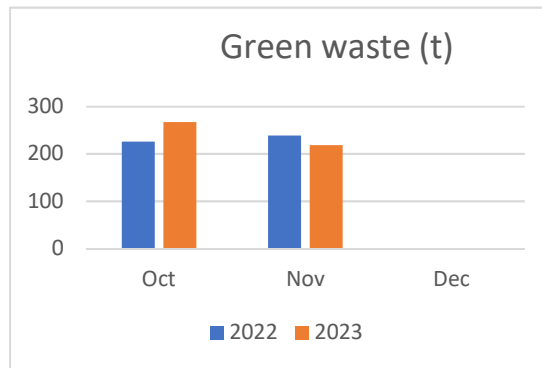
### **Refuse and Recycling**

In Qtr3 2023-24 there has been an overall increase of 61.34 tonnes in the refuse collected, this is a 2.81% increase compared to Qtr3 2022-23.

For the recycling tonnages, there has been an increase of 34.07 tonnes in Qtr3 2023-24 compared to Qtr3 2022-23. This translates to a 3.13% increase of recycling collected between these periods.

For the green waste collected there was an increase of 20.78 tonnes in Q2 2023-24 compared to the Q2 2022-23, which equates to a 4.48% increase. There were no collections in December as the service is suspended for 3 months during the winter months.





The chart below shows the breakdown of tonnage of the total waste collected per month.

Waste Type	October		November		December	
	Weight (t)	%	Weight (t)	%	Weight (t)	%
Green Waste	266.76	17.64%	217.90	15.34%	0.00	0%
Recycling	383.80	25.38%	364.50	25.66%	374.04	33.18%
Refuse	785.42	51.94%	765.66	53.89%	694.68	61.63%
Other	76.10	5.03%	72.64	5.11%	58.49	5.19%

# Appendix 2



**Oadby & Wigston**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ORGANISATION/SERVICE ASSESSED

**OADBY AND WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

PREPARED BY

**NEIL POTENTIER, ASSESSOR**

REPORT TYPE

**REVIEW 3 (C 3)**

PROJECT NUMBER

**DEAL ID - 11575826031**

DOCUMENT REVIEW DATE

**6TH DEC 2023**

EVIDENCE GATHERING ACTIVITY DATE

**13TH DEC 2023**

## MAINTAIN CERTIFICATION

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### 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 2. METHODOLOGY

### 3. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

### 4. AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### 5. ASSESSOR'S FINDINGS

CUSTOMER INSIGHT

THE CULTURE OF THE ORGANISATION

INFORMATION AND ACCESS

DELIVERY

TIMELINESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICE

### 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7. COMPLIANCE AGAINST THE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARD

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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (the Council) is one of the seven district councils that make up the two-tier system of local government in Leicestershire together with Leicestershire County Council. The Council delivers the full range of services that all district councils provide. These are delivered through a combination of arrangements that are direct, contracted, shared or delegated. The four main services are Built Environment, Law & Democracy, Customer Service & Transformation and Finance services. These sub-divide into more finite services. The Council employ 184 staff. The Council also owns and manages its own housing stock of 1,200 homes. The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is a compact Borough which has a total population of 55,800 in an area of which approximately two thirds is urban in nature.

In July 2023, the Council moved to new premises at Brocks Hill, with the premises refurbished and modernised to provide a very attractive environment. In addition, the organisational values have been refreshed with a high degree of staff involvement. The outcome was that 'Putting the Customer First' has become the number one value - 'These are the staff's values'. This three-year review provided the opportunity to witness the Council's refreshed approach to delivering excellent services.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The Council submitted evidence via Assessment Services Online Self-Assessment tool prior to this three-year review. A desktop review was undertaken on the 6th December 2022, with the review taking place onsite on the 12th and 13th December 2023.

Day one commenced with a tour of the new premises at Brock Hill. This was followed by a meeting with the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) to look at how the Council had maintained and improved on the commitment to putting customers at the heart of service delivery. A meeting with the Head of Customer Service and Transformation, the Customer Service Improvement Manager and the Customer Service Improvement Officer then took place. The meeting addressed the questions arising from the desktop review. The Leader of the Council was then interviewed.

Four meetings with representatives from various Teams followed. The first was with four representatives from the Customer Service and Transformation Team, followed by two members from the Community and Wellbeing Team, five members from the Finance Team and four members of the Law and Democracy Team. A presentation was given by two members of the Customer Service Improvement Team.

Day two commenced with a meeting with representatives from the Built Environment Team. After this, four customers were contacted by telephone to discuss their satisfaction with services they had received from the Council. A presentation was then given on the Customer Experience Strategy. Two partners were then interviewed via Microsoft Teams. These were a Health and Arts Team Leader and the University of Leicester. A further presentation was then given by the Communications and Marketing Manager.

Day two concluded with feedback to the Head of Customer Service and Transformation, the Customer Service Improvement Manager and the Customer Service Improvement Officer. Feedback included strengths, areas for improvement and the overall position against the CSE (Customer Service Excellence) Standard.

### 3. SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

Sections: **1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 3.3.3, 4.1.3, 5.1.1**

Over the last three years the Council have embedded a survey mentality, which results in every service using regular surveys to obtain feedback and derive customer satisfaction scores. There have been 17 service surveys since 2020, with 11 ad hoc surveys on specific initiatives, such as various grant schemes. This approach has led to the establishing of customer satisfaction scores for every service area, as well as finite services. In addition, a comprehensive action plan of improvements for all areas surveyed has been created. Satisfaction scores and the progress with improvement actions, are promoted to residents via the newsletter and website. (Reference Compliance Plus for Elements 1.3.1 & 1.3.2)

The vast majority of questions in surveys are based on customer insight. The survey mentality is based out on 'let's test our assumptions'. For example, several comments about waiting times in Revenues and Benefits, led to a survey which included questions around this aspect. Similarly, comments from food establishments about not knowing how to move to a five-star rating, led to a survey with questions around this - 'All our surveys are informed by customer insight'. (Reference Compliance Plus for Element 1.3.3).

A corporate commitment to putting customers at the heart of service delivery, has been refreshed and strengthened through the creation of the new values, with staff deciding 'Putting Customers First' should be the number one value. In addition, this statement is common to the organisational purpose and the corporate objectives. It is also integral to the appraisal process. A comprehensive Customer Experience Strategy has also been created to ensure everyone is accountable for putting the customer first. (Reference Compliance Plus for Element 2.1.1).

The comprehensive Customer Experience Strategy incorporates every aspect of delivering excellent services, such as consultation and feedback, measuring customer satisfaction, targets, standards and complaints. as well as a Customer Charter. It was produced in consultation with customers and staff - 'This Strategy sets out how we want to deliver an outstanding service'. The Strategy makes people accountable, and as such supports the rights of customer to expect excellent levels of service. (Reference Compliance Plus for Element 2.1.3).

The new premises at Brocks Hill are modern, attractive and light, with numerous private rooms for customer conversations. The reception is particularly attractive, warm and inviting, with great use made of pop-up banners promoting services and initiatives. In addition, there is a large video screen providing up to date information, with a telephone in reception for customers to use to ring service areas with the help of a permanent receptionist. (Reference Compliance Plus for Element 3.3.3).

There has been a massive consultation with all stakeholders in the creation of the Customer Experience Strategy, which defines the standards for delivering excellent services. In addition, staff in all service areas have been consulted on how to raise the stretch for their standards for timeliness. As a result, 17 targets for response times have been increased. (Reference Compliance Plus for Elements 4.1.3 & 5.1.1).

## 4. AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Sections: **1.3.1, 1.3.4, 2.1.6, 4.3.4, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.5**

Targets for the timeliness of service are not currently being achieved, and consideration may be given as to how this can be addressed. Any actions could further demonstrate the delivery of excellent services. (Reference Partial Compliances for Elements 4.1.2 & 5.3.2).

The main measure for overall satisfaction with services is derived from the score for satisfaction with Customer Services, with a target of 90%. However, satisfaction scores are also obtained for the main service areas as well as finite services. Consideration may therefore be given as to whether to set targets for these areas as well. This could help further drive continuous improvement. (Reference Element 1.3.4).

The Council have been considering the creation of a Continuous Improvement Strategy over the last two years, but other work has taken precedent. Consideration may now be given as to whether this should be resurrected and how it might be achieved. Several organisations have introduced strategies, which outline to continuous improvement tools which can be used. Staff are already empowered to deliver excellent services, and any actions could further enhance this empowerment and drive continuous improvement. (Reference Element 2.1.6).

Along with many other organisations, the Council share the belief that first-time resolution is now extremely important for customers. Consideration may therefore be given as to whether first-time resolution targets could be set where appropriate. Consideration may also be given as to how the achievement of first-time resolution could be supported by scripts, updates and team meetings. Any actions could improve the quality of customer service. (Reference Element 5.1.2).

There is only one person currently staffing the reception area at Brocks Hill. At the moment service has been delivered without wait times for visiting customers. However, volume may increase, and consideration may be given as to how 'queue-busting' could be introduced involving other staff. This could ensure that excellent face-to-face services are maintained at the reception desk. (Reference Element 5.2.5).

Some negative comments were made about Planning, and consideration may now be given as to how to check out with Planning customers if they have similar concerns. Actions could help identify and prioritise the issues to be addressed. (Reference Element 4.3.4).

There is an excellent Customer Charter. However, it is displayed on a small poster in reception, out of the eyesight of customers. Consideration may be given as to how to make this more prominent. This could help make customers more aware of the Charter. (Reference Element 5.2.1).

In addition, two Areas for Improvement are carried over from 2023, as the Council's priorities were a) moving to new premises, and b) introducing a comprehensive Customer Experience Strategy. These are: -

Although methods to measure customer satisfaction are comprehensive (see Areas of Strength), the Council are still considering the possible use of 'Smiley Faces' on email footers. Consideration may be given as to whether to pursue this line of action and where and how it could be used. This could potentially result in further increases to response rates. (Reference Element 1.3.1).

There is a possibility that Live Chat may be introduced. Consideration may therefore be given as to how the standards for Live Chat could be set for both the timeliness and quality of responses. Many organisations have experienced problems with out-of-hours live chat, and the Council may also wish to consider how they can avoid these. This could help ensure a high quality Live Chat service. (Reference Elements 5.1.1 & 5.1.2).



## 5. ASSESSOR'S FINDINGS

- Not Compliance
- Partial Compliance
- Compliance
- Compliance Plus
- N/A

### I - CUSTOMER INSIGHT

#### 1.1 Customer Identification

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- **1.1.1 We have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.**  
The Council conducted a new demographic analysis of all customers in December 2022. The resultant Demographic Insight document contains a very comprehensive breakdown of customer categories and behaviours. The document will be regularly updated.
- **1.1.2 We have developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences.**  
Through extensive consultation with local residents, the Council identified a strong need for face-to-face contact to be available on reception at Brocks Hill. This has been accommodated. In addition, appointment hubs in Community Centres in local town centres, have also been set up to meet the need for face-to-face contact.
- **1.1.3 We make particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.**  
The Council have several initiatives to engage with hard-to-reach groups. An example shows how the Community and Wellbeing Team engage with young people involved in anti-social behaviour through sporting projects, such as Leicestershire Riders.

#### 1.2 Engagement & Consultation

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- **1.2.1 We have a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.**  
A specific strategy was created for the recent large-scale consultation to create a Customer Experience Strategy. Extensive consultation was undertaken using a wide range of methods. Examples include 'Thursday Pop-Ups' at various locations throughout the Borough - 'Take part in our survey about the future of customer services'.
- **1.2.2 We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.**  
Through creating the new Customer Experience Strategy through consultation, the Council now have a comprehensive action plan of planned improvements, which comprises 23 actions. For example, to explore the use of virtual appointments and improve digital inclusion.
- **1.2.3 We regularly review our strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.**  
The consultation for the Customer Experience Strategy was based on a review of what would work best. One decision was to use 'Thursday Pop-Ups'. In addition, a new consultation protocol has been created. The protocol aims to standardise and improve consultation, and makes a clear distinction between consultation and engagement. It also lists the issues on which the Council will consult.

#### 1.3 Customer Satisfaction

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- **1.3.1 We use reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.**  
This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).

- **1.3.2** **We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.**  
This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).
- **1.3.3** **We include in our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access, and the quality of customer service, as well as specific questions, which are informed by customer insight.**  
This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).
- **1.3.4** **We set challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.**  
The main indicator for customer satisfaction is the score for overall satisfaction with Customer Services. The target is for over 90%, with the most recent score being 99%. This has increased on the previous score of 97%. Where satisfaction scores are available for finite services, these have also increased. Private Housing are currently at 100% satisfaction.
- **1.3.5** **We have made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.**  
The creation of a permanently manned reception at Brocks Hill, was based on feedback that customers wanted this facility. Positive changes have been made to the call transfer rates between Customer Services and Council Tax. The Customer Service Improvement team introduced a priority form for customer services to complete on behalf of the customer. The Customer Service Team were also upskilled to resolve more enquiries at first point of contact. This saw 71% of calls answered and dealt with by the Customer Service Team, and allowed the Council Tax team to reduce their processing times.

## 2 - THE CULTURE OF THE ORGANISATION

### 2.1 Leadership, Policy and Culture

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- **2.1.1** **There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.**  
This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).
- **2.1.2** **We use customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.**  
Extensive consultation, mentioned previously, has influenced the creation of the new Customer Experience Strategy - 'You can help us shape our future customer services provision'. As part of this process, the decision has been taken to offer a face-to-face service at Brocks Hill reception - 'Its what residents wanted most'.
- **2.1.3** **We have policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service.**  
The Council have a Customer Charter, comprehensive Service Standards and a Vexatious Customer Policy. In addition, there is an Equality and Diversity policy, as well as Safeguarding policies for adults and young people. A Compliment, Comments and Complaints policy exists, and through comments and complaints, customers can give feedback if they have not received excellent levels of service.
- **2.1.4** **We ensure that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience.**  
The policies and procedures outlined in Element 2.1.3, are also designed to uphold fairness. An example of the Council's fairness agenda shows how funding for community projects is weighted so as to favour the areas with the highest level of deprivation. The philosophy around the new Customer Experience Strategy, is also based around fairness - 'We want to do what they want us to do'.

- **2.1.5 We protect customers' privacy both in face-to-face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information.**  
A tour was undertaken of the Brocks Hill offices. This revealed that there were numerous sound-proofed rooms which afforded customer privacy and confidentiality. The Council also have policies and procedures to ensure Data Protection and these are compliant with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). These include an IT Software Security and Licensing Policy and two RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) Policies for Human Intelligence and Directed Surveillance. All staff have received appropriate training with regard to Data Protection, GDPR and the implications for customers.
- **2.1.6 We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.**  
This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).

## 2.2 Staff Professionalism and Attitude

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- **2.2.1 We can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.**  
New starters confirmed a strong focus on customers within their recruitment experience - 'From the onset I could see they really do put customers first'. There is also a dedicated Customer Focus section in induction. 'Putting Customers First' and 'Connecting with our Customers' are now mandated training courses for all staff. A People Strategy document also has a strong customer focus.
- **2.2.2 Our staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.**  
Politeness and friendliness are referred to within the Customer Charter under the Promises heading - 'Ensure our staff are polite and friendly'. Within the content of the mandatory 'Putting Customers First' training there are key messages on understanding customer needs and being polite and friendly. Telephone calls to Customer Services are also regularly monitored for this aspect, with tips to improve given where necessary. Questions relating to politeness and friendliness are also incorporated in surveys where appropriate.
- **2.2.3 We prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.**  
The Council has recently reviewed the staff performance management approach and have designed new 121 forms and appraisal forms. There is also a section to review how staff are working towards the 'Putting the Customer First' value - 'Give some examples of how you have demonstrated our organisational values and vision'. In addition, progress against agreed objectives is reviewed - 'The majority of my objectives relate to customers'.
- **2.2.4 We can demonstrate how customer facing staff insights, and experiences are incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.**  
All staff interviewed felt their opinions, suggestions and comments are encouraged and valued. This also applies to new starters. An example of listening to staff and using their insight is the adoption of the 'Putting the Customer First' value - 'This is what the staff wanted. We didn't impose it' The Council has created a suggestions form on the intranet, which allows staff to give their views and ideas - 'These might relate to improving customer satisfaction'.
- **2.2.5 We value the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours.**  
The Council hold quarterly staff briefings. The CEO uses these as an opportunity to highlight achievements and give a particular team a special mention. There is also a Values Award nomination scheme, as well as 'Thanks Badges', which are also linked to the Values. Staff feel leaders are role models for customer focused behaviours because they treat staff as customers, and conduct surveys to establish staff satisfaction and identify areas for improvement - 'The management here really care about us'.

- **3.1.1 We make information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge.**

The Council have a comprehensive website, and this provides information on all the finite services in an A-Z section. There is a 'contact us' banner at the foot of all pages, and details are provided on who is in charge. Increasing use of social media is also allowing the Council to put out up to date information on services. There are also leaflets available at the Customer Service Centre as well as noticeboards, pop-up banners and a video display screen.

- **3.1.2 Where there is a charge for services, we tell our customers how much they will have to pay.**

A full schedule of charges are published on the website. Fees are also stated on the appropriate page, for example the Garden Waste and Building Control pages. Fees and charges are also stated at the beginning of any forms which need to be submitted, e.g. for Garden Waste. All payment options are listed on a 'Payments to the Council' webpage. Payment options have recently been extended to include Paypoint.

3.2 Quality of Information

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- **3.2.1 We provide our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels.**

Many channels are used to provide information. These include the website, social media, leaflets, newsletters, noticeboards and face-to-face. There are noticeboards throughout the Borough, with three electronic noticeboards in town centres. The Council also use an interpreter service (Language Line) and can arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter where appropriate.

- **3.2.2 We take reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received and understood the information we provide.**

To check out if customers have received and understood information provided on the website, there is a "Did you find this page useful?" function. There is an E learning training course for staff to understand effective writing. This was in response from feedback from customers that letters to customers were confusing and created lots of unnecessary contact. The Communications Team have also produced a Writing Style guide.

- **3.2.3 We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.**

In conjunction with the Communications Team, Customer Services have created a new online form so that information can be quickly changed. Email templates for Customer Service Officers, have also been introduced for responding to customer emails to ensure a consistent quality response. The business newsletter has been improved, with a new business app introduced. A Members Panel has been set up to oversee all communications with residents - 'They know best what residents want to hear about'.

- **3.2.4 We can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested.**

All of the steps mentioned in Elements 3.2.1, 3.2.2 & 3.2.3 previously have also contributed to making information more current and accurate. An ASB (Anti Social Behaviour) Community Trigger Process was introduced to allow customers to ask for an independent review on ASB investigations. The review will look at the accuracy of information, fair judgements and if there were any missed opportunities to progress the investigation. The Council treat staff as a distinct customer group, and provided them with guidance information on how the new appraisal process works.

3.3 Access

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- **3.3.1 We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels.**

Access channels to services include telephone, email, via the website using online forms, in writing and via social media. As a result of the comprehensive consultation, face-to-face contact has been preserved, with a physical presence at Brocks Hill reception. There is also a telephone near reception so that customers can contact any department, with assistance from the receptionist if required. Appointment Hubs are also used in three town centres.
- **3.3.2 We evaluate how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements and offer better choices.**

The creation of a face-to-face service at Brocks Hill, was based on an evaluation of what residents want. In addition, the Council conduct an ongoing evaluation of enquiry type via their CRM system. This allows adjustments to be made to increase and improve information on the most popular topics. An example of this was identifying a high rate of enquiries on a Household Enquiry form which had been sent via email. As a result, a further email was sent to reassure customers that this was genuine, with guidance given on how to use the Household Enquiry form.
- **3.3.3 We ensure that where customers can visit our premises in person, facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible.**

This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).

#### 3.4 Co-operative working with other providers, partners and communities

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- **3.4.1 We have made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers.**

Two partners interviewed, the University of Leicester and the Blaby Community and Wellbeing Partnership, described very positive and beneficial working relationships with the Council. Through a long-standing partnership with the University, residents have access at no cost to University owned areas and facilities, including the Botanical Gardens. Working with the Blaby Partnership allows residents to receive funding for various community projects. Part of this process involved a weighted allocation of funds so that areas of deprivation benefit.
- **3.4.2 We have developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of services.**

Both partners confirmed how they agreed responsibilities with the Council. There is a Shared Service Level Agreement with the Blaby Partnership. This details how funding will be allocated to partners and who is responsible for evaluating the impact of any projects. Weekly meetings and quarterly reports take place to ensure partners are fulfilling their responsibilities. There is a University Partnership Agreement to define responsibilities. The Borough was seen as a 'cultural dessert', so objectives were agreed as to what the Council and the University needed to do to raise the profile.
- **3.4.3 We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.**

Essentially, the work of the Council impacts on wider communities in numerous ways. Examples include economic regeneration through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and renewed engagement with the business community through networking events and a new app. The Housing Team have arranged a pantomime for this Christmas, and the Council are working in collaboration with VAL (Voluntary Action Leicester) to increase the amount of volunteers within the Borough. Sporting initiatives are being used to engage with young people at risk of ASB.

## 4 - DELIVERY

### 4.1 Delivery Standards

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- **4.1.1 We have challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets.**  
The Council now have service standards for its main services as well as many finite services. In addition, there are corporate KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) which are contained within the Corporate Plan. Many of these are based on the national agenda for local government. There are 31 continuous improvement KPIs and 36 statutory 'business as usual' KPIs.
- **4.1.2 We monitor and meet our standards, meet departmental and performance targets, and we tell our customers about our performance.**  
This Element is a Partial Compliance. (See Areas for Improvement).
- **4.1.3 We consult and involve customers, citizens, partners and staff on the setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards.**  
This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).

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#### 4.2 Staff Professionalism and Attitude

- **4.2.1 We agree with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide.**  
A Customer Charter lays out what customers can expect with regard to the quality of services. The Service Standards show what customers can expect in terms of the timeliness of service. Any online forms clearly indicate the turnaround times so customers know what to expect and how quickly their enquiry will be processed. The Customer Service Team advise customers of the Service Level Agreements in place for individual enquiry types. A Member Guidance document also gives details of turnaround times.
- **4.2.2 We can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers.**  
To supplement the high customer satisfaction scores, customers were asked for their comments on the satisfaction with services they had received - 'I have had dealings with some wonderful people. So understanding, kind and helpful'. Another customer said - 'Their listening skills are excellent. They totally understood my problem and resolved it'. One customer had serious issues with neighbours and commented - 'They showed empathy and support in a very difficult situation. I can enjoy my Christmas thanks to them'.
- **4.2.3 We can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against that of similar or complimentary organisations and have used that information to improve our service.**  
Benchmarking is conducted across the Council, and Customer Services participate in a local benchmarking group with other Leicestershire Councils. There are several other specific benchmarking groups, for example, the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) Benefits Performance Management Group. As a result of benchmarking with regard to planning processes, the Council have streamlined their process so that now they lead in terms of decision times. The management of extensions has also been improved.
- **4.2.4 We have developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.**  
The Head of Customer Service & Transformation and the Customer Service Improvement Manager did a presentation to a group of other Councils, sharing their approach to Service Reviews. The Strategic Director has introduced best practice from East Staffordshire Council by way of 'Star Chambers- which are a means whereby budgets are scrutinised in order to establish if they provide good value for money.

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#### 4.3 Deal effectively with problems

- **4.3.1 We identify any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to customers, together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence.**

A dip in performance was recently experienced with regard to the processing of Council Tax. This was caused by staff shortages, labour turnover and sickness. As a result, a call-back process was introduced, and staff were upskilled so as to increase right-first-time resolution, which increased from 36% to 70%. A new Service Level Agreement was created for the team, and customers were told of the new processing times.
- **4.3.2 We have an easy to use complaints procedure, which includes a commitment to deal with problems fully and solve them wherever possible within reasonable time limit.**

There is a Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy. This is clearly accessible via the website and is displayed within the Customer Service Centre. The complaints process is focused on early resolution. The Customer Service Team triages all complaints with the aim of resolving issues at first point of contact. If this is not possible, a stage 1 complaint will be raised with the relevant service manager for investigation and resolution. If this is not possible, a full investigation will take place and a response letter will be issued within 10 working days.
- **4.3.3 We give staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively, and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right.**

Training on complaints is mandatory for all staff. All managers and senior officers also have mandatory training on handling and Investigating complaints, and have also undergone a recent face-to-face refresher course on this. A Brief Review document has also been issued to managers and senior officers. The Policy, Compliance and Data Protection officer attends external training by the Ombudsman and other outside agencies, to ensure the Council is providing the best possible complaints guidance.
- **4.3.4 We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.**

The Council produce a Complaints Trends Analysis document and a Lessons Learnt Register. There is also a You Said We Did page on the website to show how they have reacted to comments and suggestions. The most recent Trends Analysis document shows that Revenues and Benefits billing errors is the predominant trend with 16 complaints over the last 12 months. The majority of these were not upheld. However, the process for reviewing bills and sending out reminders has been amended.
- **4.3.5 We regularly review and improve our complaints procedure, taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff.**

The Council conduct a survey on the complaints procedure, and results are scrutinised, with changes made where appropriate. A Complaints Review document is produced annually for this purpose. The 2023 versions shows that a template is being developed to help improve response times for stage two complaints with Planning.
- **4.3.6 We ensure that the outcome of the complaint process for customers, whose complaint is upheld, is satisfactory for them.**

The Complaints Survey results show that 89% of complainants are satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. This is an increase from 70% last year.

## 5 - TIMELINESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICE

### 5.1 Standards for Timeliness and Quality

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- **5.1.1 We set appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e-communications and personal callers.**

This Element is Compliance Plus. (See Summary of Strengths).

- **5.1.2 We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation.**

Standards for the quality of services are basically incorporated in the Customer Charter. This includes a list of promises to customers under headings for finite aspects of service. For example, 'When you visit our offices we will'. There is then a list of undertakings such as 'greet you politely and promptly' and 'provide a comfortable and pleasant environment for you to wait and be seen in'. One of the main measures for the quality of service, is the score for overall satisfaction with each finite service.

## 5.2 Timely Outcomes

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- **5.2.1 We advise our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service.**

Both the Customer Charter and the Service Standards are available on the website. Turnaround times are also clearly stated on all forms that are required to be submitted by customers. Examples include a Garden Waste application/renewal form as well as a Planning form. With the latter it states 'you will be contacted within five working days'.
- **5.2.2 We identify individual customers needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person who can address the reason for contact deals with the customer.**

Staff within Customer Services are trained in identifying customers needs at first point of contact. In addition, there is a questions technique guide for staff. The overarching objective is to achieve first time resolution at the first point of contact. If a Customer Service Officer is unable to resolve an enquiry at point of contact, they can pass the enquiry through to individuals or teams instantly via a DASH system. This ensures that the enquiry is dealt with by the correct person in a timely fashion.
- **5.2.3 We promptly share customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers.**

The CRM system allows Customer Service Officers to immediately pass enquiries (that they cannot resolve) to back office teams, thus reducing unnecessary contact customers. A Tell Us Once form is also used when a death is registered. Information is then passed to all relevant departments. First Contact Plus is a referral system delivered by Leicestershire County Council in partnership with GPs, the Police, health organisations, voluntary groups and social care departments. This helps referrals much easier for customers who only have to complete one form.
- **5.2.4 Where service is not completed at the first point of contact we discuss with the customer the next steps and indicate the likely overall time to achieve outcomes.**

There are instances where services are not completed at the first point of contact. Examples include Large Bin and Assisted Collections Assessments. The Customer Service Officers taking the initial call will check eligibility and if the customer is eligible, they will pass details on to the Waste Team. The Customer Service Officer then explains the next steps of each process and timescales to customers. Staff use Process Control charts to ensure they adhere to the correct procedure.
- **5.2.5 We respond to initial enquiries promptly, and if there is a delay we advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem.**

There are occasional instances when unexpected delays can occur. These are usually due to call management within the Customer Service Centre. Staff use a Keeping the Customer Informed procedure to ensure they tell customers about any problems that are currently being experienced with call centre performance. A call centre telephony system displays real time call performance, and allows managers to address the situation by re-deploying staff to take calls.

## 5.3 Achieved Timely Delivery

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- **5.3.1 We monitor our performance against standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we take action if problems are identified.**

Managers are responsible for reporting on their team’s performance against Service Standards on a monthly basis using a Service Standard dashboard. Monthly performance review meetings are held, where the results are discussed, problems are identified and solutions put in place. Calls to the Customer Service Team are monitored regularly for quality purposes. Remedial action, such as further training, is taken where appropriate.
  
- **5.3.2 We are meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards.**

This Element is a Partial Compliance. (See Areas for Improvement).
  
- **5.3.3 Our performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations.**

Through the benchmarking exercises mentioned in Element 4.2.3, the Council can be seen to be ahead of other local Councils with regard to planning decision times. Comparisons with two local Councils, also show that the Council are ahead on quality, with their score of 99% customer satisfaction.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no actions that require immediate attention and I am pleased to pass on to Assessment Services Ltd's Certification Committee my recommendation that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council be certificated as meeting the Customer Service Excellence Standard. Certification is valid for three years from the Certification Committee's decision date and subject to ongoing annual reviews as follows:

Annual Review Year 1 – December 2024

Annual Review Year 2 - December 2025

3-Year Review - December 2026

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your kind hospitality and cooperation during this assessment.

Neil Potentier

CSE Assessor for Assessment Services Ltd

21st December 2023

# 7. COMPLIANCE AGAINST THE CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARD

## 1 - Customer Insight

	Element	Accreditation
1.1	1.1.1	● Compliance
	1.1.2	● Compliance
	1.1.3	● Compliance
1.2	1.2.1	● Compliance
	1.2.2	● Compliance
	1.2.3	● Compliance
1.3	1.3.1	● Compliance Plus
	1.3.2	● Compliance Plus
	1.3.3	● Compliance Plus
	1.3.4	● Compliance
	1.3.5	● Compliance

## 2 - The Culture of the Organisation

	Element	Accreditation
2.1	2.1.1	● Compliance Plus
	2.1.2	● Compliance
	2.1.3	● Compliance
	2.1.4	● Compliance
	2.1.5	● Compliance
	2.1.6	● Compliance Plus
2.2	2.2.1	● Compliance
	2.2.2	● Compliance
	2.2.3	● Compliance
	2.2.4	● Compliance
	2.2.5	● Compliance

## 3 - Information and Access

	Element	Accreditation
3.1	3.1.1	● Compliance
	3.1.2	● Compliance
3.2	3.2.1	● Compliance
	3.2.2	● Compliance
	3.2.3	● Compliance
	3.2.4	● Compliance

	Element	Accreditation
3.3	3.3.1	● Compliance
	3.3.2	● Compliance
	3.3.3	● Compliance Plus
3.4	3.4.1	● Compliance
	3.4.2	● Compliance
	3.4.3	● Compliance

#### 4 - Delivery

	Element	Accreditation
4.1	4.1.1	● Compliance
	4.1.2	● Partial Compliance
	4.1.3	● Compliance Plus
4.2	4.2.1	● Compliance
	4.2.2	● Compliance
	4.2.3	● Compliance
	4.2.4	● Compliance
4.3	4.3.1	● Compliance
	4.3.2	● Compliance
	4.3.3	● Compliance
	4.3.4	● Compliance
	4.3.5	● Compliance
	4.3.6	● Compliance

#### 5 - Timeliness and Quality of Service

	Element	Accreditation
5.1	5.1.1	● Compliance Plus
	5.1.2	● Compliance
5.2	5.2.1	● Compliance
	5.2.2	● Compliance
	5.2.3	● Compliance
	5.2.4	● Compliance
	5.2.5	● Compliance
5.3	5.3.1	● Compliance
	5.3.2	● Partial Compliance
	5.3.3	● Compliance

**Customer Service Statistical Analysis – Quarter 3 2023-2024****Introduction**

This document gives a detailed analysis of all the tasks undertaken by the Customer Service Centre and the role of the Technical Officer. This includes volumes of calls or items processed, an explanation and any action that has been taken to address where performance is not meeting the required standard or where improvements have been made.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is committed to delivering a high standard of service to all our customers and to improving the services we provide. We have a Customer Charter which covers the whole Council which is available on the website. The Customer Service Centre also has a published service standards agreement along with all other front facing services.

While the Customer Service Centre offers the traditional call centre provision it also provides far more. Our Technical Officers are multi-disciplined staff, trained with expertise in all the key services areas provided by the Council.

**Email/Contact Us Online**

The Customer Service team is targeted to acknowledge receipt of customer email and contact forms within 1 working day and to fully reply within 3 working days.

The vast majority of online/email enquiries are answered the same day.

Quarter 3	October	November	December
Number of emails	400	359	276
Number of contact us forms processed	82	130	89
Number of complaints triaged	13	12	8
Average response time	1 Day	1 Day	1 Day

**Online Forms**

Our digital customer group continues to grow, and we offer a range of online forms for customers to use to self-serve.

Online Forms Q3	October	November	December
Garden Waste Renewal	4	0	0
Garden Waste Sign up	7	0	0
Contact Us Form	112	130	89
Direct Debit Form	46	58	50
Council Tax Occupation Form	56	43	36
HB & CTS Application	51	44	38
Council Tax Vacation Form	29	34	34
Arrange Clinical Waste Collection	29	39	17
Taxi Vehicle Application	37	31	22
Single Person Discount	11	13	10
Other Council Tax Discount/Exemptions	14	12	7
Council Tax Moving within the Borough	14	15	14
ASB online report	4	2	3
DHP Application	23	18	7

Selective Licence Payment	0	0	0
Compliments, Comments & Complaints form	22	15	12
Book a Competency Test	45	41	48
Abandoned Vehicle Report	9	7	5
New Noise Complaint	7	2	1
Garage Waiting List Enquiry	5	5	4
Taxi Driver Renewal	16	8	5
HB Change of Circumstances	6	0	0
Electoral Job Enquiry	0	0	0
<b>Monthly Total</b>	547	517	402
<b>Q3 Total</b>	1466 online forms completed by customers in Q3		

### Calls

Although channel shift has taken place, telephone contact remains the most popular access channel to the Council. The Customer Service Team work hard to reduce waiting times and answer calls quickly.

The primary role of the Customer Service Technical Officer is to answer customer enquiries. However, as previously stated they also provide essential admin support to other service areas in the Council and to reflect this they are targeted to answer at least 85% of calls with an average wait time of no longer than 5 minutes.

It does not include onward transmission to other service areas such as Benefits or Housing repairs which is considered a secondary contact point, and a further wait could be incurred.

<b>Quarter 3</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>
Number of calls	4267	3924	2397
Number of calls answered.	4001	3692	2332
Percentage answered.	94%	94%	97%
Number of abandoned calls*	266	232	65
Average wait time	0.59	0.47	0.35

### Definition of Abandoned Calls

Abandoned calls are calls that are terminated by the customers before they are answered by a customer service technical officer.

There are many reasons for customers choosing to abandon their call, the most common ones include:

- The wait time being too long.
- The customer has picked wrong option or has misdialled.
- The customer changes their mind and hangs up.
- Systems stating that calls are recorded, and callers are reluctant to have their calls recorded.

All call centres have abandonment rates. Benchmarking with other councils shows us that these vary between 10% and 20%.

### Face to Face

As part of the work on our Customer Experience Strategy and following on from customer feedback we have increased our face-to-face service provision. At the start of June 2023 Appointment Hubs were introduced in the following locations in each of our town centres:

Location	Day	Time
<b>South Wigston</b> Elliot Hall	Tuesday	9am – 12pm
<b>Oadby</b> Trinity Methodist Church	Wednesday	10am – 1pm
<b>Wigston</b> King's Centre	Thursday	1pm – 4pm

We continue to promote the appointment hubs in the following ways:

- Prominent signage and information leaflets provided in all hub locations.
- Council contact us page has details on how to book an appointment.
- Regular posts about hubs on our social media accounts including Facebook and twitter.
- All staff signatures display information about appointments.
- Reminders about appointment hubs are included in relevant emails to email subscribers through Gov Delivery.

Hub Appointment Stats			
Quarter 3	October	November	December
Number of appointment request enquiries	4	3	0
Number of booked appointments.	1	1	0

The two appointments which were booked were for customers who needed assistance from Housing Options. Both appointments took place at the King Centre in Wigston. Of the other appointments requested:

- Planning x1 - a site visit was offered.
- Revenues x2 - Both Enquiries were resolved with over the telephone.
- Housing Options x2 – Both enquiries dealt with over the telephone.

### **Reception**

Our reception point at Brocks Hill deals with basic customer enquiries.

Reception Stats			
Quarter 3	October	November	December
Number of Quick Enquiries	310	273	197
Full Enquiries (Waste, Housing, Clean & Green enquiries/requests)	44	53	19

Quick Enquiries Breakdown			
Enquiry Type	October	November	December
Visitors/contractors	133	108	77
General basic council enquiries	76	69	59
Handing in post/documents & photo copying proofs	26	28	15
Request to use toilet	12	5	0
Jenno's enquiry	2	0	2
Refer to back office/assistance with customer phone	23	18	12
Key Collection/drop off	7	9	2
County Council Issue	7	2	1
Issue Pride of Borough card	0	0	10
Appointment Hub Enquiry	2	0	0
Form issued	0	4	1
Delivery	22	30	16
Signpost to another Agency	0	0	2

Customer feedback regarding the reception point remains positive. To monitor this our receptionist at Brocks Hill is asking customers to score them out of ten in relation to the following factors:

- Officer Customer Care Skills
- Wait Time
- Officer Knowledge
- Overall Satisfaction with reception

During Q3 overall performance rating was 100% in all areas.

The following comments were also given.

- Customer felt welcomed and was pleased that we acted on her behalf with pride of the Borough application.
- Customer states that we (Customer Services, reception) have all been so helpful during this difficult time.
- New customer to the borough, is so pleased with how OWBC customer services and reception handle email and verbal enquiries and has been made to feel welcome, very quick responses.

#### Service Area Administration Support

The Customer Service Team carry out a variety of admin tasks for teams across the council.

This involves them:

- Running/producing reports to direct work e.g., the depot like delivery/collection of bins and issuing garden waste permits
- Logging/allocating work to the Environmental Health team, registering food businesses.
- Booking appointments for the Licensing team
- Raising invoices
- Processing applications for housing and taxi vehicles
- Acting upon referrals and information received via First Contact and Tell Us Once.

Quarter 3	October	November	December
Number of Taxi vehicle apps processed	37	31	22
Number of competency tests booked	45	41	50



Number of EH admin tasks	54	43	52
Number of Waste reports run/processed	286	286	209
Number of Housing apps processed	49	41	30
Number of Homelessness admin tasks	68	65	51
Number of First Contact Requests	0	0	0
Number of Tell Us Once Requests	45	44	35
Number of Sport Pitch Invoices raised	14	8	5
Number of Facilities email/contact forms	67	83	41

### Customer Service Centre Team - Output Summary

Quarter 3	October	November	December
Number of emails/online contacts answered	482	489	365
Number of calls answered.	4267	3924	2397
Number of admin work items processed.	665	642	495

### Customer Service Satisfaction

Monthly Customer Satisfaction Surveys are carried out across the Council. These are conducted via various mediums:

- Telephone
- E Mail
- On-line

Customers are asked to score our Customer Service Team performance out of ten in relation to each factor. Our overall customer satisfaction target is 97% for 2023-2024.

Quarter 3	Waiting time	Customer Service skills	Knowledge of advisor	Treated fairly as a valued customer	Enquiry resolution	Quality of service
Oct 23	95%	99%	99%	99%	98%	99%
Nov 23	96%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Dec 23	98%	100%	100%	100%	98%	99%

### Other Updates

In November we launched a 'Customer callback' option on our phonelines. This feature allows customers to select an option to receive a callback instead of waiting in the queue for an available agent to answer their call. When a customer's select this, they can hang up and keep their place in the virtual queue, an Agent will call them back when it would have been their turn. Our wait times have been lower towards the end of the year, so we haven't seen much use yet, however in our peak periods we expect to see this service being useful to our customers.

The team has also been working alongside IT and System Support to implement a virtual video call back service for our residents. This will enable customers to see a member of the Customer Services via Teams. The customer will be able to request a call back for the same day or a pre book an appointment. The customer will need to advise the nature of their enquiry, and an allocated Customer Service Office will call them at the allotted time an

speak to them via webcam. We aim to launch this new access channel in March 2024, and will provide further updates on this in our Q4 report.

The Customer Service Team has also been working on the introduction of QR code to our Garden Waste Permits. This has been done in partnership with our permit provider Permiserv. The QR code allows residents to access information about:

- The Garden Waste service
- Our terms and conditions
- How to report a missed collection
- Information on what items they can/cannot put in their Garden Waste bin.

The page will also display a link straight to our website and our contact details.

The screenshot below shows what the customer will see if they use the QR code:

The screenshot displays the Oadby & Wigston Borough Council website interface. At the top, the council's logo and name are visible. The main content area is titled "Your Garden Waste Collection Details" and is divided into two columns. The left column contains "Collection Information" and "What can be placed in the garden waste bin?". The right column is titled "Need to get in touch?" and provides contact details. The "What can be placed in the garden waste bin?" section is further divided into "Yes Please!" and "No Thanks!" categories.

**Oadby & Wigston**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Your Garden Waste Collection Details

#### Collection Information

If your bin has not been emptied on the collection day and you are sure that there were no incorrect items within, please contact Customer Services on (0116) 288 8961 no later than the next working day.

#### What can be placed in the garden waste bin?

Yes Please!	No Thanks!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grass cuttings</li><li>• Hedge clippings</li><li>• Twigs and small branches</li><li>• Weeds with soil are shaken off</li><li>• Flowers and plants</li><li>• Leaves</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cardboard, paper or plastic of any description</li><li>• Large quantities of soil</li><li>• Bricks or rubble</li><li>• Any household waste</li><li>• Animal waste</li><li>• Any food waste, including fallen fruit</li></ul>

#### Need to get in touch?

☎ 0116 288 8961

✉ [CSC@oadby-wigston.gov.uk](mailto:CSC@oadby-wigston.gov.uk)

🌐 VISIT OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL WEBSITE

📄 GARDEN-WASTE-SERVICE-TERMS-&-CONDITIONS-2024



## OWBC Event Calendar 1 February – 30 June 2024

Events			
Date	Overview	Type	Details
Saturday 17 February	Armed Forces Breakfast	Breakfast hosted at Oadby Royal British Legion	Partner event supported by the borough council
Monday 18 March onwards	Easter Shop Front Competition - The Great Egg-Scape Trail	Town centre trail	Themed family trails in all three town centres
Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 April	Big Craft Weekend at Wigston Framework Knitters Museum	Event	Event being finalised and will be confirmed in due course
24, 25, 26, 27 May	Funfair on Blaby Road Park	Event	Event subject to provision of safety and insurance documentation and will be confirmed in due course
Saturday 1 June	St Wistan's Walk and Medieval Fair in Wigston	Event	Peace Memorial Park, Wigston. 11am
Thursday 6 June	D Day 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Beacon Lighting at Brocks Hill	Event/service	Oadby – from 2pm
Friday 28 June	Armed Forces Flag Raising at Brocks Hill flagpole	Service	Wigston – from 10.15am

Observance *all be will acknowledged on the council's social media channels		
Date	Overview	Details
10 March 2024	Ramadan Begins	Muslim observance
25 March 2024	Holi	Hindu holiday
28-31 March 2024	Easter	Christian observance/national holiday
10 April 2024	Eidal-Fitr	Muslim holiday
13 April 2024	Vaisakhi	Sikh/Hindu observance



<b>Observance</b> *all be will acknowledged on the council's social media channels		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Overview</b>	<b>Details</b>
22-30 April 2024	Passover	Jewish holiday
23 April 2024	St George's Day	National observance
16 June 2024	Eid al-Adha	Muslim holiday



# **Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Collection Rates Improvement Plan 2022/23**

## Update on Collection Rate Improvement Plan 2022/23

### 1. Processes

	Activity	Date	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
P1	Review and improve payment on account processes/provisions.	Mar 23	Senior Council Tax Officer	Ability to take payments immediately improves collection rates.  Customer contact and complaints reduce because payments can be arranged at the first point of contact regardless of the status of the property.	Complete	Process has been reviewed and additional training delivered in November 2023.
P2	Review and improve procedures for holding bills and recovery, including a review of all currently held accounts.	Oct 22	Senior Recovery Officer	Holds are kept to a minimum increasing the speed of collection.  Faster progression through debt recovery stages improves collection rates.	Complete	Procedure reviewed and task included on the workplan to regularly check held accounts.
P3	Review and improve procedures for tracing customers that leave no forwarding address.	Dec 22	Senior Recovery Officer	Collection costs increases as enforcement agent are used. Enforcement agent fees are less likely to be incurred if customers are identified through routine tracing at the earliest opportunity.  Routine tracing at the earliest opportunity increases the likelihood of successful recovery without the need for paying external enforcement agents.	Complete	Tracing procedure are now in place.

OWBC Collection Rate Improvement Plan 2022-23

	Activity	Date	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
P4	Scheduling and delivery of quarterly small balance reviews.	Oct 22	Senior Recovery Officer	Collection increases through early contact on small balances when the liability is fresh in the mind.  Customer contact reduces as more pay immediately without wanting to discuss the debt first.	Complete	This is now included on the Recovery Teams workplan.
P5	Review and update the forms and letters used in Revenues and Benefits for consistency, efficiency, and best use of digital channels.	Dec 23	Senior Revenues and Benefits Officer	Efficient data gathering allows fast and accurate billing, which leads to increased collection and more efficient recovery.  Forms will capture all information first time reducing time spent on repeat contact, resulting in a better service for customers and more efficient handling of accounts.	Ongoing	Carried forward onto the new Collection Rate Improvement plan as an ongoing activity.
P6	Review and improve the processes for high value debtors in Council Tax and Business Rates, including stronger links with the Economic Regeneration team.	Dec 22	Senior Recovery Officer	Recovery increases with a streamlined process and a defined schedule of works allowing faster conclusion of cases, whether through arrangement or execution of further action.	Complete	Review undertaken and links with the Economic Regeneration Team have been forged.

**2. Inspections**

	Activity	Date	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
I1	Implement a risk-based visiting schedule	Dec 22	Senior Business Rates Officer	Collection increases as OWBC becomes more quickly aware of changes to liable parties allowing faster billing and collection.  Rates avoidance becomes more difficult.	Reviewed and Revised	Following a review, this has not been carried forward onto the new plan. Alternative rates avoidance activities could be more effective.
I2	Implement mandatory visits for new businesses, owners and leaseholders, including liaison with the Economic Regeneration team to utilise and strengthen their relationship with business owners.	Jun 23	Senior Business Rates Officer	OWBC can more quickly establish the identity of the liable party for business rates, resulting in faster and more efficient collection.	Reviewed and Revised	Following a review and taking into consideration our limited resources, this has not been carried forward onto the new plan. Joint working and regular meetings have been established with the Economic Regeneration Team.
I3(a)	Reintroduce reviews for mandatory and discretionary charitable exemptions, Small Business Rates Relief, and empty properties for business rates.	Mar 23	Senior Business Rates Officer	An accurate picture of liability and liable parties enables efficient billing and increases collection and recovery.	Ongoing	Work is continuing to review the different reliefs.
I3(b)	The discretionary relief policy will be checked and updated	Mar 23	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Up to date policy for staff and customers to follow	Under review	The Policy is under review.



OWBC Collection Rate Improvement Plan 2022-23

	Activity	Date	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
14	Reintroduce completion notices for residential properties.	Mar 23	Senior Council Tax Officer	<p>Collection rates increase as builders are liable from the point the completion notice is served.</p> <p>Increased collection is either directly from the builders or from tenants/owners being found and becoming liable more quickly to reduce the builders' liability.</p>	Complete	Established links with the Leicestershire Building Control Partnership. We are now being proactive in recognising stages of the builds so completion notices could be issued.

### 3. Systems

	Activity	Date	Responsible	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
S1(a)	Review Academy usage to ensure best use is being made of the system including consideration of previously unused elements.	Mar 23	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Streamlined processes and account insights improve collection and recovery through more efficient use of time and data.	Complete	System review has been completed.
S1(b)	Implement development fund modules monthly to maximise system functionality.	Dec 23	Senior Revenues and Benefits Officer	Streamlined processes and account insights improve collection and recovery through more efficient use of time and data.	Reviewed and revised	Following a review, this has not been carried forward onto the new plan due to costs and resources limitations.
S2	Engage a third party to deliver the outgoing post for the department.		Revenues and Benefits Manager	Collection and recovery increase as officers can focus on their customers and reports.	Complete	New provider CFH appointed.
S3	Procure and deliver Revs and Bens workflow system	Mar 24	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Collection and recovery increase as work management is taken care of by the system.  Accurate management information at the touch of a button allows performance management, demand profiling, and instant reprioritisation when necessary.	Reviewed and revised	Alternative options are currently being considered with systems already available within the Council.
S4	Review and evaluation of existing systems for suitability and best practice through visits to other authorities and system health checks with software providers.	Mar 23	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Streamlined processes improve collection and recovery through more efficient use of time.	Ongoing	Reviews ongoing with Service Transformation



# Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Collection Rates Improvement Plan March 2024

## New Collection Rate Improvement Plan March 2024

### 1. Improve the Council Tax Collection Rate

	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
1.1	Review and update the forms and letters used in Revenues for consistency, efficiency and best use of digital channels.	Ongoing	Increased collection rates and customer satisfaction.	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Efficient data gathering allows fast and accurate billing, which leads to increased collection and more efficient recovery.  Forms will capture all information first time reducing time spent on repeat contact, resulting in a better service for customers and more efficient handling of accounts.	Ongoing	Work has started to review letter templates and update forms. The Severe Mental Impairment and Disabled Band Reductions forms have already been updated.
1.2	Review different schemes of Local Council Tax Support to see how this could affect collection rates.	September 24	Reduction in the amount of CTS assessments resulting from Universal Credit changes. Increase in collection rates.	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Reduces the frequency of amendments to Council Tax bills for our customers. Improves collection rate.	Ongoing	Ongoing discussions with other Leicestershire authorities about a banded scheme.
1.3	Implement a new method for identifying missing or altered properties.	March 2024	Increase number of properties in ratings lists.	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Identifying rateable properties or adjusting current ratings increases our income and ensures our records are accurate.	On target	Through sourced funding and working with our Enforcement Agents work has started in this area.

OWBC Collection Rate Improvement Plan 2024/25

	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
1.4	Additional payment date added for Direct Debit customers – 25 <sup>th</sup> month	February 2024	Increase DD uptake.	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Increasing the direct debit dates gives customers more flexibility to be able to pay later in the month.	Complete	Annual bills amended to include the 25 <sup>th</sup> month DD to increase up take.
1.5	Review and improve our use of the Academy system by setting up the ‘tasks’ module.	September 2024	Fewer reports needing to be manually created.	Senior Revenues and Benefits Officer	Assess volumes of work outstanding from reports and reviews. Allows easier allocation of tasks and monitoring.	Work yet to begin	Work to start after end of year process has been completed.
1.6	Utilise the Money Advisor Network to provide free debt advice referrals to customers.	April 2024	Monitor the volume of customers being referred for money advice on a monthly basis.	Revenues and Benefits Manager and Financial Inclusion Officer	Understanding our customers’ journey into debt and offering advice allows customers to priorities debts like Council Tax which increases collection rates.	On target	Discussions held with Money Advisor Network and the Cost of Living Working Group. SLT approval received rollout plan being created
1.7	Engage with local agents e.g. Age UK and Citizens Advice Bureau to further understand what local support is available for our customers.	Ongoing	Regular meetings with local service providers and partners to build a strong working relationship.	Revenues and Benefits Manager and Financial Inclusion Officer	Customers feel supported and can access help through their local council.	Ongoing	Schedule initial meeting with local partners after end of year process has been completed.
1.8	Review the process and letters sent following failed direct debit payments.	June 2024	Increase in collection rates.	Revenues and Benefits Manager and Senior Council Tax Officer	Consistency with our process and clear messaging for customers will increase collection of unpaid instalments.	Ongoing	A review of the direct debit process has been completed. The next stage is to review how we respond to failed direct debit instalments.

**2. Improve Business Rates Collection rates**

	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsibility	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
2.1	Additional payment date added for Direct Debit customers – 25 <sup>th</sup> month	February 2024	Monitor the volume of uptake for the 25 <sup>th</sup> Month DD.	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Increasing the direct debit dates gives customers more flexibility to be able to pay later in the month.	Complete	Annual bills amended to include the 25 <sup>th</sup> month DD to encourage take up.
2.2	Review and update the Ratings letters and forms for consistency, efficiency and best use of digital channels.	February 2025	Measure volume of online forms being received and reduction in call volumes.	Senior Business Rates Officer	Forms will capture all information first time reducing time spent on repeat contact, resulting in a better service for customers and more efficient handling of accounts.	Ongoing	Website updates are already underway and online forms to be developed.
2.3	Review the Discretionary Relief Policy to ascertain any changes needed.	March 2024	Review undertaken and decision taken as to whether a revised policy is needed.	Senior Business Rates Officer	Up to date policy for staff and customers to follow	On target	Policy being reviewed by the Senior Business Rates Officer.
2.4	Increase Inspections and the issue of completion notices.	March 2025	Number of inspections and completions notices increased by 10%	Senior Business Rates Officer	Reduces risk of rates avoidance and allows accurate billing and collection.	Ongoing	Work is ongoing to make improvements to our Visiting arrangements.

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### 3. Improve Housing Benefit Overpayment rates

	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact	Progress	Update comments March 2024
3.1	Housing Benefit overpayment arrangements to be collected by DD, this is currently not an option available to customers.	December 2024	Measure the uptake of this method and monitor improvements to the recovery of HBOP's.	Senior Recovery Officer	Increased recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments.	On target	Initial contact with the Finance and IT Teams made.
3.2	Implement an online arrangement offer form for customer to use.	June 2024	Reduction in the volume of calls. Increased arrangements.	Senior Recovery Officer and Financial Inclusion Officer	Assist customers to make an online payment arrangement offer without having to contact us by phone.	On target	Discussions about how this should look and work are ongoing.
3.3	Explore other contact methods for payment reminders to increase proactive customer contacts.	September 2024	Increase collection rates of Housing Benefit overpayment recovery.	Senior Recovery Officer	Customers reminded of missed or late payments through channels which are tailored to them.	On target	Commenced with calling customers and will explore text messaging and email reminders.

# Agenda Item 9



<b>Service Delivery Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 12 March 2024</b>	<b>Matter for Decision</b>
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**Report Title:** **Extension of the Delegation and Collaboration Agreement in Relation to the Lightbulb Service**

**Report Author(s):** **Teresa Neal (Strategic Director)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To seek a five-year extension to the existing delegation and Collaboration Agreement in relation to the Lightbulb Service.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report proposes that the existing two-year Delegation and Collaboration Agreement in relation to the Lightbulb Service which currently run from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024 be extended for a further five years for the reasons outlined in this report.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<p><b>a) That the existing Delegation and Collaboration agreement in relation to the Lightbulb Service be extended by five years to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2029;</b></p> <p><b>b) Note the funding for the Lightbulb Service; and</b></p> <p><b>c) Note the performance up to quarter three.</b></p>
<b>Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):</b>	<p>Teresa Neal (Strategic Director) (0116) 257 2642 <a href="mailto:teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">teresa.neal@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 2645 <a href="mailto:adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Strategic Objectives:</b>	<p>Our Communities (SO2)</p> <p>Our Environment (SO4)</p> <p>Our Partners (SO5)</p>
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	<p>"Our Borough - The Place To Be" (Vision)</p> <p>Customer &amp; Community Focused (V1)</p> <p>Proud of Everything We Do (V2)</p> <p>Collaborative &amp; Creative (V3)</p> <p>Resourceful &amp; Resilient (V4)</p>
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are set out in Paragraph 3 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	<p>Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1)</p> <p>Reputation Damage (CR4)</p> <p>Regulatory Governance (CR6)</p> <p>Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)</p>



Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
<b>Statutory Officers' Comments:-</b>	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
<b>Consultees:</b>	None.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Appendices:</b>	None.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Lightbulb Service has been running for over seven years and brings together a range of housing support into a single service. Its purpose is to help vulnerable residents in Leicestershire to remain safe and well in their own home and aid transition from hospital to home. During its existence Lightbulb has been recognised nationally for the difference it is making to the lives of Leicestershire residents having won seven awards and recognised as good practice in several articles and at innovation conferences.
- 1.2 OWBC have been part of the Lightbulb Service since it was launched in October 2017. The last Delegation and Collaboration Agreement that was signed was for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024. During the last 12 months work has been undertaken to produce an updated delivery document to consider the next five years and options for development of the service further. Alongside this a review of the demand data has been undertaken to inform the amount each partner should pay for the service.
- 1.2.1 The agreement sets out that the Lightbulb Service delivers the following functions through a hub and spoke model:
- Assessment and ordering of minor adaptations and equipment
  - Assessment and delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants
  - Holistic Housing MOT
  - Referrals for additional grants such as a home support grant
  - Wider housing support needs (warmth, energy, home security)
  - Housing related health and wellbeing (Assisted Technology, falls prevention)
  - Planning for the future (Housing Options)

- Housing related information & advice
  - Support with urgent referrals with a hospital discharge grant
- 1.3 Quarterly performance and financial updates are provided to Oadby and Wigston and the authority has representatives which are part of the Lightbulb governance structure, Executive Board and Delivery Group. On an annual basis representatives of the Lightbulb Service will attend Service Delivery Committee to provide an update on the provision of the service in Oadby & Wigston.

**2. Extension of the Delegation and Collaboration Agreement in relation to the Lightbulb Service.**

- 2.1 Six of the District councils are fully integrated within the Lightbulb service, and it has the support of the County Council. Charnwood Borough Council operates a hybrid model, independently managing their Disabled facilities Grant, they pay a proportion towards the hub, but run their own locality services. It is agreed by all partners that running a hybrid model is unsustainable and the service needs to get to a point where Charnwood Borough Council are either fully integrated into Lightbulb or exit from the arrangement. Either option will take some time to complete.

Over the last few months Blaby District Council has been consulting with partners on the future of the Lightbulb Service leading to the production of a visioning document. Alongside this, Charnwood Borough Council employed Foundations for an independent review of their services. Charnwood has identified that before they are willing to fully commit, they want Lightbulb to consider offering more services to residents, in particular a Builders Framework to assist residents to get quotes for works and manage contractors.

- 2.2 It is proposed that a short piece of work is undertaken to assess that proposal, to identify whether it is something that could become part of the Lightbulb service offer. The current Lightbulb contract between BDC and the district councils expires on 31 March 2024. On that basis, it is necessary to extend the existing arrangements in order to carry out that piece of work. The work will proceed in the first quarter of 2024/25. At that point Charnwood Borough Council will be asked to determine whether they are to be fully integrated into the Lightbulb Model or whether an Exit Strategy is implemented ready for the commencement of the 25/26 financial year.

- 3.** It is proposed that a new delegation and Collaboration Agreement be signed for the next twelve months from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, with the option to extend this up to a period of five years in total taking the period up to 31 March 2029.

The cost of the Lightbulb Service for Oadby and Wigston for 2024/25 is £28,309, this covers the central hub costs and the locality team. This represents good value for money as Oadby and Wigston get access to a Housing Support Coordinator, Technical Officer, administrative officer and also a management team for a lesser cost than one full time Officer.

- 4.** The latest performance information up to the end of Quarter 3 is detailed below.

At the end of Quarter 3 the number of adaptation requests processed by the team were

- **88** minor adaptations
- **7** major adaptations

The average completion time was within the 20-week target.

In terms of the pilot projects offered through Lightbulb, the number of referrals below have been made for residents on Oadby and Wigston are detailed below.

- **Safespaces** - This pilot supports individuals who are hoarding or have been identified as self-neglecting. The team works with residents at a pace that is suitable to them. This may be clearing a bed so someone can get a good night's sleep or cleaning a room so they can use cooking facilities. For the period from December 2022 to December 2023 **17** residents of Oadby and Wigston have been supported through this pilot.
  - **Home Gadgets** – using assisted technology to support individuals in their own homes who have a long-term condition such as dementia to live independently and as safely as possible by providing items of equipment that helps them manage everyday life. Alongside this the pilot also offers support to disabled children and families to develop Smart Homes that help the family now and in the future. Between April to December 2023 **87** residents in our Borough have been supported.
- 5.** The request regarding the extension of the Delegation and Collaboration Agreement has been put to all local authorities within the Lightbulb Partnership.