



Service Delivery Committee

Operational Updates – Quarter Four (2023/2024)

BUILT ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

Planning

For the final quarter (Quarter 4) of the last financial year, the department continued to perform well in relation to statutory targets and KPI's. For Quarter 4, 72 out of 78 Planning Applications were decided in time or within an agreed extension of time and no appeal decisions were overturned by the Planning Inspectorate (the Council won 1 of 1 appeals). In relation to Planning Enforcement and Tree Enforcement, there were no appeals made against any of the Decisions made.

In addition to statutory targets and KPI's in Quarter 4 the department met all of its internal service standards, for example average response times for planning application enquiries stands at 3 working days compared to the target of 8 working days and the average time to validate valid applications is 6.4 working days compared to a target of 10 working days. However, due to organisational change, the Department has seen a decrease in staff resource. This has had knock-on impacts throughout the Department and has impacted service standards. To take account of this impact, for the 2024-25 financial year, all of the performance targets have increased, for example average response times for planning application enquiries is now 10 working days compared to the previous 8 working days and average time to validate planning applications has increased to 15 working days.

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 the 12th February 2024 for large scale development sites and the 2nd April 2024 for small scale development sites. 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. Each time a new national requirement comes into force, it puts additional resource burdens on the Department.

The Preferred Options new Local Plan has been out for public consultation which commenced on the 3rd April 2024 and ended on the 15th May 2024. As part of the consultation the Planning Policy team carried out 7 public exhibitions, where they spoke to well over 100 residents and businesses. The public exhibitions took place at different locations within the Borough, at different times (including evenings) and on different days (including weekends). 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

The focus has been on the delivery of the UKSPF funded projects and the submission of the year 2 expenditure, outcomes and outputs. 92% of the allocated funding for year 2 has been spent which is above the 80% threshold and means that we will receive 100% of our



Year 3 allocation up front. Our submission was accepted by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with no queries raised. In quarter 1 of 24/25 meetings will be undertaken with all external providers to ensure they are on track to deliver UKSPF projects for 24/25.

Climate Change

At the last Environment Working Group 11th April there was one agenda item to consider, the outputs of the consultation on the draft Climate Change Strategy. The document sets out the Council's key action areas – a broad route map for the next 5 years. The 6 week consultation had closed 22nd January and 20 representations had been received.

All comments made from the consultation were read and responded to. It was reported that there were a small number of respondents and any changes made to the draft strategy based on these comments needed careful consideration, and so only minor revisions were recommended. The strategy is high level with broad aims and objectives. A common theme from respondents was wanting specific actions with some mention of cost implications over timeframes; the strategy will be underpinned by delivery plans to include a programme of projects prioritising action as set out within the principles of this strategy to help achieve the council's climate goals. We will need to prioritise decarbonisation actions in line with available resources and look to secure further funding.

The next steps in regard of this agenda:

- Following Environment Working Group revisions have been made to the draft strategy
- Finalised strategy will need to be approved at PFD Committee
- Plans drafted to deliver short-term actions from objectives in the strategy

Other climate related action continues: a further phase of Solar Together is being finalised for July with iChoosr and district partners; a fully funded energy audit at Parklands Leisure Centre has been completed with report due; in partnership with other local authorities (Green Living Leicestershire) we have signed a Statement of Intent for Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme 4 to widen criteria for installers to access energy company funding for local energy efficiency measures for low income/vulnerable households; and we continue to provide input to LCC to develop a Local Area Energy Plan for Leicestershire to help co-ordinated net-zero action.

Leicestershire Building Control Partnership

The Partnership's focus is to continue to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022, including the training and validation of all surveying staff and achieving compliance with measures being brought in by the Building Safety regulator. The market share continues to fluctuate, for 23/24 the whole partnership sat at 56% market share. The partnership did not achieve its target income levels which means for Oadby and Wigston we will need to find an additional £3,242 to cover the cost of running the Partnership for 23/24. A total of 12,492 inspections were undertaken in 23/24 of which 464 were in Oadby and Wigston.



Housing

2023-24 Homelessness Management

As illustrated in table 1 the number homeless presentations have fluctuated month on month resulting in a 26% increase in the number of households placed into temporary and B&B accommodation from April 2023 to March 2024 (illustrated in table 1).

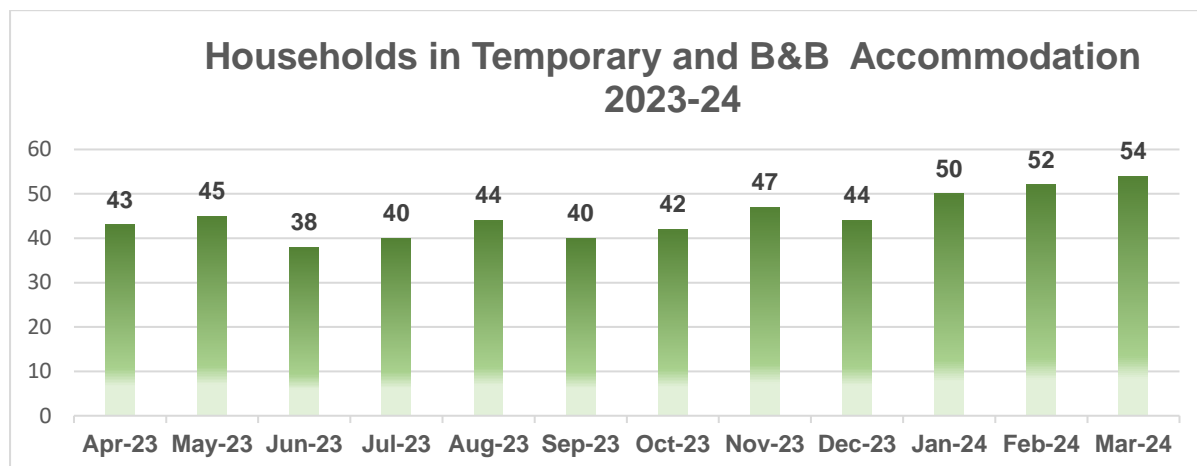


Table 1

The Council has a supply of properties consisting of housing stock, private leased properties and the hostel accommodation that is used to temporarily accommodate homeless families.

B&B establishments throughout Leicestershire are used to accommodate single people and couples, although on occasions out of necessity have to be used to accommodate families as an interim arrangement.

As can be seen in table 2, the biggest impact of homelessness is in the use of B&B accommodation. This accommodation is primarily used to accommodate single/couple households. There is no one particular reason for the increase in single/couple households presenting as homeless. However, what is clear is that there is a significant lack of 1 bedroom properties in the social housing sector becoming available to let. In addition, flats and apartments in the private sector are at a premium and are unaffordable to those on low incomes.

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
January	31	4	12	3	50
February	34	4	11	3	52
March	36	4	11	3	54

Table 2



The Housing Options Team will be working more closely with the private sector market particularly with those landlords who have houses of multiple occupation and we will be encouraging single/couples homeless households to take up offers and tenancies in shared houses in order to address their homelessness.

Void Property Management

Collectively the Housing Team have worked to improve the ways in which they manage void properties, to deliver a cost effective and efficient void management which minimises 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.

In terms of the performance indicator, the average void time month on month can vary from month to month as can be seen in table 3.

2023-24	Number of void properties	Total void time in days	Average void time
April	4	119	29.75
May	2	87	79
June	3	134	44.66
July	5	200	40
August	5	161	32.2
September	5	140	28
October	6	216	36
November	5	82	16.4
December	6	145	24.16
January	4	238	59.5
February	3	116	38.66
March	6	161	26.83

Table 3

The performance indicator is measured as the sum total of void time in the year divided by the number of void properties in the year.

At the end of Q4 the total number of void days was 1,799 divided by 54 void properties producing an average void time of 33.31 days.



As table 4 illustrates this is the fourth year in succession where the average void time has been reduced.

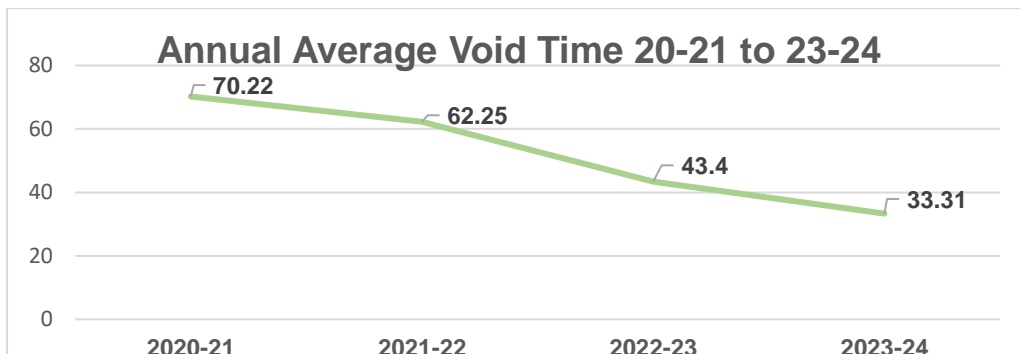


Table 4

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)

The SHDF scheme is a joint Council/Government funded programme designed to improve energy efficiency within the Council's housing stock. In short the programme identifies properties in the housing stock that have an energy efficiency rating of D or below and what measures need to be taken to increase the energy efficiency within the home thereby raising the energy efficiency rating to C+.

Work commenced in February 2024 and to date 70 Council owned bungalows have benefited from improvements and upgrades which include;

- 53 solar photovoltaic technology (solar panels)
- 15 ventilation enhancements
- 32 loft insulation upgrades

It is expected that tenants will see a reduction in their energy costs and homes will be easier to heat and maintain the required level of heating for longer.

In the coming year it is expected a further 70 properties will benefit from similar property enhancements and upgrades.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) set the standards that define the outcomes that the Council is expected to deliver in its role as a social housing landlord.

The four consumer standards are the;

- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Safety and Quality Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires all registered providers of social housing to collect and report annually on their performance using a core set of defined



measures. These measures are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures. The TSMs provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance.

There are 22 TSMs divided into two categories,

1. 10 TSMs generated from management information
2. 12 TSMs collected from tenant perception surveys

Table 5 provides a summary of the TSMs connected with management information

TSM Code	TSM Description (Management Information)
CH01	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
CH02	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
NM01	Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord
RP01	Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
RP02	Repairs completed within target timescale
BS01	Gas safety checks
BS02	Fire safety checks
BS03	Asbestos safety checks
BS04	Water safety checks
BS05	Lift safety checks

Table 5

In terms of the 12 TSMs collected through the tenant perception survey. The Housing team surveyed 25% of tenants over the course of the year, and asked 12 questions connected with the services that they received. Table 6 provides a succinct summary of the questions that were asked of the tenants. Against each question the satisfaction level has been recorded.

Service Area	Satisfaction Level
Treating you fairly and with respect	87.20%
Overall repairs service	85.60%
Time taken to complete your most recent repair after it was reported	80.50%
Overall housing service	79.70%
How well your home is maintained	79.40%
Provide a home that is safe	78.40%
Keeping you informed about things that matter to you	75.90%



Listening to your views and act upon them	72.10%
Making a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	70.50%
Our approach to anti-social behaviour	60.30%
Keeping communal areas clean and well maintained	54.20%
Our approach to complaints handling	38.60%

Table 6

The Council is required to submit the TSM results to the RSH by the end of June 2024, in addition to this we are required to publish these results so to support our tenant's effective scrutiny of their landlord's performance.

Lightbulb

Quarter 4 performance information and not yet been sent through by Blaby District Council. A task and finish group has been established to look at the recommendations that came out of the Charnwood report to see if any improvements to service delivery can be made. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Disabled Facilities Grant funding for 24/25 is £501,999, a proportion of this will be top sliced to fund the pilots such as the Home Gadgets, Safe Spaces and the Housing Occupational Therapist. Once performance data is received we will share with members.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

Policy, Performance and Transformation

The Policy, Performance, and Transformation Manager work with two service reviews continues. Support is being given to both the Revenues and Benefits team and the Corporate Assets/Clean and Green team. Efficiencies and improvements have been identified and work is progressing well.

In light of the staff changes the responsibilities for complaints, EIR's, FOI's and DPA requests have been reassigned to the Senior Leadership Secretarial Support Team. The Policy, Performance, and Transformation Manager has now assumed the role of Data Protection Officer and is handling more complex enquiries whilst overseeing the compliance section. This has impacted on the usual Customer Service Excellence work that is undertaken throughout the year. A mid-year review will take place in Q1 2024/25.

Communications and Marketing

Our email subscription service

Measure	Q4 Totals	Comparison to previous quarter	Percentage of possible subscribers (based on 42,000 adults registered to vote)
Total subscriptions	11,402	+8.5%	27.1%



Please note that 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.

Measure	Q4 Totals	Comparison to previous quarter
Average subscriptions per subscriber	2.0	-0.0
Engagement rate	78%	+2%
Open rate	55%	+3%
Bulletins sent (in quarter)	62	+16
Emails delivered (in quarter)	127,978	+11.6%

Subscribers by topic (email subscription service)

Topic	Number of subscribers	Comparison to previous quarter
Citizen's Panel	106	No change
Community & Voluntary Sector	2931	+16.1%
Community Safety, Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour	1231	+29.8%
Consultations & Surveys	3013	+13.1%
Council News & Information	6438	+20.7%
Health, Wellbeing, Sport & Leisure	4594	+9.5%
News for Businesses	1159	+11.7%
News for Council Tenants*	965	+19.8%
Private Sector Housing News	575	+0.1%
Recycling, Refuse & Bin Collections	5579	+19.1%
Sports Clubs	13	No change
What's On & Events	3361	+14.9%

* 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.

[Holocaust Memorial Day 2024](#)

[Borough Council achieves excellence award for putting customers first](#)

[Donation supports council's Roll of Honour restoration effort](#)

[New project to tackle air quality in South Wigston](#)

[Oadby recognised for fight against plastic pollution](#)



[Sustainable budget set by borough council](#)

[You can now book a video appointment to speak to our Customer Services team](#)

[Council steps in to ensure abandoned eyesore is turned into high quality new homes](#)

[Join the Great Egg-Scape this Easter!](#)

[Wigston Pool to get carbon footprint boost thanks to solar panels](#)

Social media

Measure	Facebook	Comparison to previous quarter
Number of Followers	4341	+61
Number of posts	115	-16.6%
Post reach*	57,650	+8.8%
Engagement – reactions, comments, likes and shares	12,143	-18.9%
Measure	Twitter	Comparison to previous quarter
Number of Followers	2679	-3
Number of posts	50	+19%
Post impressions*	12,763	-17.6%
Engagement – reactions, comments, likes and shares	87	+8.7%

*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 Q4.

Performance Management

The new probation forms and induction guidance were launched during Q4 alongside training which covered both issues as well as managing performance outside of probation and general staff motivation.

Further work was undertaken in relation to the outcomes of the appraisal process



undertaken in Q3, specifically focussing on those who received a 'requires improvement' rating and what action was being taken on the back of this rating.

Organisational Change

The HR team have been supporting the Service Transformation project which has taken place during Q4. This has involved supporting the consultation process, co-ordinating the voluntary redundancy process and selection process for compulsory redundancy.

Annual Leave

The HR team completed all of the changes on the People HR system in preparation for a new holiday year including updating any agreed carried over amounts.

Payroll

The HR team completed all of the preparation for the annual round of increments that were due in April 2024 including updating the People HR and the payroll system of all agreed increments.

HR Policies

The Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, Grievance Policy & Procedure and Flexible Working Policy were all reviewed together with new forms where appropriate. These will be published in Q1 2024-2025.

Exit Survey

In addition to our exit interview offer, a new exit survey has been launched to gain feedback on why individuals chose to leave the organisation.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The HR Manager has been working with the Head of Customer Service & Transformation alongside the Community Safety & Youth Officer as part of an EDI project to look at a review of our current EDI work.

People Strategy

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



HR Management Information

Headcount

Quarterly Comparison Current Year 2023/24 Actual Headcount as at end of Q4 (31.03.24)			Quarterly Comparison Previous year 2022/23 Actual Headcount as at end of Q4 (31.03.23)	
Headcount	Full Number	FTE	Full Number	FTE
Number of Permanent/Fixed Term Staff	179	170.2	176	168.01
Number of Temporary Staff (Agency Workers)	3	3	10	10
Total	182	173.2	186	178.01

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

In addition to the agency workers listed above there were also 292 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	45
Annual Leave/Contractual Bank holidays in lieu	54
Replacement for Permanent Staff	120
Extra Agency staff to cover extra Monday & Tuesday rounds & compost	73
Total	292

Leavers

Quarterly Comparison Q4 2023/24 Leavers between 1/01/24 – 31/03/24		Quarterly Comparison Q4 2022/23 Leavers between 1/01/23 – 31/03/23	
Number of Permanent/Fixed Term Staff	12	5	
Number of Temporary Staff (Agency Workers)	2	8	
Total	14	13	



Leavers (Permanent/Fixed Term Employees) by Service Area Quarterly Comparison		
Teams	Q4 2023/2024 Leavers between 1/01/24 – 31/03/24	Q4 2022/23 Leavers between 1/01/23 – 31/03/23
Clean & Green	1	0
Communications & Marketing	0	0
Community & Wellbeing*	0	1
Corporate Assets	0	0
Customer Services	0	0
Economic Regeneration	1	1
Finance	1	0
Health & Safety	0	0
Housing	1	0
HR	0	0
IT, Projects & Procurement	1	0
Legal & Democratic Services	2	0
Planning Policy & Development	1	1
Policy, Performance & Transformation	1	0
Regulatory Services	0	0
Revenue & Benefits	2	0
Waste Services	1	2
Built Environment	0	0
SLT	0	0
Total	12	5

*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 continued to decrease over the previous 3 years although we are slightly above the median local government rate of 14%.

Staff Turnover - Yearly comparison			
	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Average Head Count for the period	177.5	178	171
Number of Leavers	28	29	32
Staff Turnover	15.77%	16.29%	18.71%



FINANCE UPDATE

Revenues and Benefits

Benefits

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

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. This work is progressing well and the funding threshold targets have been achieved.

General Benefits Performance

Council	New Claims (up to 31.03.24)
Oadby and Wigston BC	19.95 days

Benchmarking with other local councils shows that our new claims processing times are average.

Council	Change in Circumstances (up to 31.03.24)
Oadby and Wigston BC	3.42 days

Benchmarking with other local councils shows that our change of circumstances processing times are above average.

Benefit Calls

Quarter 4	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of calls	390	328	449
Number of calls answered	373	318	435
Percentage answered	96	97	97
Number of abandoned calls	17	10	14
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	0:14	0:06	1:03

Finance Inclusion Officer

The Financial Inclusion Officer (FIO) works to support families and individuals who are facing financial hardship. Referrals are made to the FIO 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.

FIO referrals Q4	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of referrals	42	43	49



Business Rates

The Business Rates Team is responsible for the administration and collection of over £12m 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.

Business Rates Calls

Quarter 4	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of calls	38	38	47
Number of calls answered	36	34	39
Percentage answered	95%	89%	83%
Number of abandoned calls	2	4	8
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	0	11:27	6:02

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 24,400 households within the borough.

There was an increase of 173 additional properties within the Borough during Q4 (24,325 end of December 2023 rising to 24,498 end of March 2024).

Council Tax Calls

The Customer Services Team answer the first tier of Council Tax calls, this include enquires 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 4	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of calls	194	179	235
Number of calls answered	167	165	186
Percentage answered	86%	92%	79%
Number of abandoned calls	27	14	49
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	1:07	3:08	3:41



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 work and documents issued 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.

Q4 Council Tax Recovery	Jan	Feb	Mar
Reminders	325	346	292
Finals	66	71	50
Summonses	204	154	254
Liability Orders	205	153	114

Q4 NNDR Recovery	Jan	Feb	Mar
Reminders	14	10	24
Finals	17	8	13
Summonses	36	0	13
Liability Orders	5	20	0

Recovery Calls

Quarter 4	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of calls	579	573	598
Number of calls answered	532	520	511
Percentage answered	92	91	85
Number of abandoned calls	47	53	87
Average wait time before abandonment (m:ss)	4:09	4:05	4:35

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 KPI's.

Oadby and Wigston's collection rates for Q4 are below the set target rate. The Teams will continue to work on updating the Collection Rate Improvement Plan.



Percentage of Debit Collected (Cumulative)	Jan	Feb	Mar
	%	%	%
Council Tax			
Target Rate	94.42	96.76	97.50
Actual Collection Rate	91.18	93.96	96.81
Actual Collection Rate 2022/2023	92.26	94.69	96.86
National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)			
Target Rate	90.23	94.52	98.50
Actual Collection Rate	88.40	92.14	95.73
Actual Collection Rate 2022/23	88.67	92.57	96.24

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.

Q4	Jan	Feb	Mar
No of Council Tax properties	24,333	24,334	24,498
No of Council Tax Direct Debits	18,755	18,673	18,848
No of Single Person Discounts	7,611	7,604	7,600
No of Businesses	1,415	1,415	1,415

IT Team

Throughout Q4 the IT team have compiled the Councils PSN (Public Services Network) submission pack. This includes (but not limited to) a full network diagram, remediation action plan for works that could potentially be a risk but are now fully mitigated, and some internal process documentation. PSN certification was received in April 2024.

Works were completed to ensure the network and infrastructure is as secure possible. This included completing work on the Councils firewall to ensure there is suitable resilience with a dual load balanced duplicated firewalls – where if one 'fails', the second one will continue to allow the Council to function, and securely.

All planned updates and upgrades were completed, in readiness for year-end processing of numerous services.

The main focus for this quarter was security, including training for staff, preparing training/presentation to Members, and ensuring all servers and the buildings network are up to date with security updates/patches to protect against known threats (that have impacted other local authorities locally and nationally).

Works for service areas were focussed on updating Academy for year-end processing and prepping hardware for the upcoming election in May. The section also implemented a new service desk that aids IT & system support in collating and managing tickets, but also helps towards improving resolution times for staff due to capturing more information at the first point of contact.

See key information of service delivery below:



	Type	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of contacts	Email	101	39	25
	New Service Desk	125	70	94
	Other	12	25	9

Standard	Target	Jan	Feb	Mar
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	0.9 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	99.9%	100%	100%	100%
Monitoring of system/software issues to drive improvements	Monthly Monitoring completed	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Jan	Feb	Mar
Major changes completed by IT team	<p>Completed upgrades to relevant systems following the change freeze that was implemented during the office closure for festive period.</p> <p>Senior Manager commenced supporting Blaby District Council in their IT ambitions, generating income for OWBC.</p> <p>Implemented new service desk to support users in a more efficient way – allowing for quicker resolution time, due to collecting more information at first point of contact.</p>	<p>Work carried out for large infrastructure change relating to resilience with dual running firewalls – which includes load balancing and giving resilience for hardware failure.</p> <p>Created external connections for Housing & Building Control Partnership for accessibility for their respective service areas.</p>	<p>Monitoring VPN connections to improve stability in WFH.</p> <p>Change freeze implemented Early March to allow service areas to complete year end processes and reporting.</p> <p>Information provided to fulfil audit queries & questions.</p> <p>Submitted PSN application</p>



LAW AND DEMOCRACY UPDATE

Regulatory Services – Q3 Update

Environmental Health

Delivering food inspections and regulating businesses must be a priority going forward. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have in the last quarter made it clear that capacity within local councils needs to be retained. We have two Officers who are competent to undertake such inspections.

During quarter 4, 32 inspections took place. There has been some staff absence the previous quarter which has resulted in approximately 20 inspections being carried forward into the new financial year.

Overall compliance rates are high, with 92% 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 3 who fall below the generally satisfactory standard and work continues with these to improve standards. New businesses to be triaged is 29.

There have been 13 food and health and safety complaints investigated in this period, one was a mouldy pizza and three related to possible rodent issues.

The most recent FSA audit was satisfactory with all processes, controls and records in order.

The team are working with the FSA, the Food Crime Unit, and Trading Standards in relation to food being sold and repacked without the correct labelling or controls in place. Trading Standards test purchase results are awaited as they will determine the next steps.

Day to day work was busy and wide ranging with a further 3 welfare burials handled including one where a distant cousin was tracked down in Australia. A noise abatement notice has been issued on a commercial premises for noise from musical and vocal entertainment. A health and safety improvement notice served on a public house and this remains outstanding. This follows a customer accident at the premises.

Officers will be attending a briefing from the government in April/May 2024 about Funeral Directors practices and future regulation following the reported police investigation into Legacy Independent Funeral Directors and their practices.

A tattooing and piercing swab project will start in July 2024 and further updates will be provided after Q2 2024/25.

The Blaby Road air quality pilot continues and a presentation of progress will be given to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee in June 2024.

New ways of working within the team are being implemented in view of the anticipated staff reduction in June 2024 following the redundancy process.

Private Sector Housing

The team are dealing with 116 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	833
Applications received	879
Number of exemptions, empty homes undergoing renovation	18
Licenses pending	111
Licenses issued	675
Licenses withdrawn	93
Income	£637,334.01
Enforcement cases	5 penalties served (£3,000 each)

Empty Homes

There are currently 46 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 delivery of program	Projected underspend of £29406.47 due to withdrawing prior to install, any outstanding properties	Private properties with mains gas supply (owned or rented)	72	110	Fully closed down and audited. Performance figures will be provided in Q1 24/25 report
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	Can be used for either LAD3 or HUG1 properties	20	20	Closed and confirmation of spend returned to Lightbulb



Project	Funding Awarded	Additional Narrative	Suitable Properties	Number	Number of measures	Status
		energy storage which was not included in the original brief				
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 or rented)	TBC	TBC	Project currently under review due to national delivery challenges and local issues satisfying the qualifying criteria. Possible withdrawal being considered.



Project	Funding Awarded	Additional Narrative	Suitable Properties	Number	Number of measures	Status
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	65		Works commenced and installs underway. Data being compiled for tenant report and press release.

Licensing

As part of the ongoing service transformation, work has started with uploading of templates to integrate back office systems and digitise forms. This will improve productivity within the service and work is currently ongoing and will continue into 24/25.

So far we have issued 33 premise registrations and 43 personal registrations for hairdressers and barbers across our area. There are 29 applications remaining to be progressed.

A taxi driver has been issued with a fixed penalty notice for the offence of smoking in the vehicle.

Q4 licenses processed

New and renewal vehicles	112
New and renewal drivers	28
New and renewal operators	0
Street collections	2
Small society lottery	0
House to house	2
Other licences	6
Licensing Act	13

Community Lottery

The lottery started on 5 August 2023 and we now have 23 approved causes who have joined with 455 tickets currently sold weekly which is generating an annual £14,196 for good causes in our area.



Corporate Assets

A busy winter period moving into the spring with the usual seasonal challenges associated with the CA services.

Ongoing longer term sickness continued to put a strain on staff deployment in operational services as had the restriction on recruitment within the CA team which meant the resilience was affected within the team too.

A recruitment restriction meant CA were unable to recruit to the vacant premises officer position and therefore minor maintenance works and small works (as well as office layout and attendance) were impacted, with some of the CA team supporting that vacant role with car parking machine attendance, community centre hire and impact on bin repairs and allotment attendance.

CA received 275 enquiries through the DASH system. Numerous further enquiries came direct to CA team members through calls, and other communications through regular channels. In addition the routine FOIs, complaints, request and members enquiries were also received. As has been consistent throughout the year, DASH and other enquiries are currently flagging up many land ownership searches and concerns.

Response times are stretched due to added pressures of staff available to review the services and whilst supporting the service review (admin & parking vacancy)

There was continued input still following from 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 ongoing 'snagging' issues from the BH offices – many issues such as aircon, plumbing, toilets, alarm and sensors, natural light etc.

The Clean & Green 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 vehicle and fleet items are overdue and being planned for.

Whilst essential pruning and much maintenance works have invariably been undertaken, progress has been slower – which is also due to staff limitations as well as the weather.

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

Cemetery maintenance has been under increased scrutiny this past year, particularly on the grounds maintenance and winter works were underway to ensure ease of maintenance into the new growing and maintenance season.



Parking continues to provide the regular enquiries – car park surface maintenance and lighting were of note this winter. In addition, concerns regarding the maintenance and attendance to maintain the machines has been readdressed with Metric as our support provider.

The latest car park permit figures are for the period 01/01/2024 to 27/05/2024 are 1,860 permits sold generating an income of £68,250.

A service review is underway for a revised level of operational services within the clean & green team – which reflects the revised level of staffing resource available to deliver statutory level of service within the Borough.

Clean & Green team have reduced their numbers by 4 FTE. 1 FTE off LTS

Recruitment required due to vacant roles is 1 x Admin and parking assistant. 2 x Prem Officers (1 Long term vacant), Tractor operator (from May 3rd).

Community and Wellbeing

Leisure Services – supplied by SLM Ltd

The last quarter has been an interesting one in that the weather appears to have played a significant role in bringing customer back into the indoor environment for their leisure time, the centres have used this and helped to thrive, also by welcoming old and new users getting back into the centres particularly in swimming.

The site teams continue to be 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 on monthly packages which are predominantly outside of our hands as is the local competition in Oadby, which is also an effector in the centres ability to be even busier.

We will continue to deliver on a wide ranging offering of facilities and activities which is without doubt the widest in the area and as previously noted we have further looked to develop our activity package with new sessions including Pickle Ball as an example of us exploring a new market.

Review:

An average attendance of 75,000 per month, came to the leisure centres during the quarter which in contrast to the previous year where the average attendance was over 68,500 customers per month coming through the doors. We know that this is notoriously our busiest quarter which has shown positively in our numbers, but this has been significantly helped this year with firstly how the school holidays have fallen compared with the previous year but also the extremely poor weather we have encountered which has brought people back into the indoor environment more.

Description	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Total	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total	Variance
Swimming	29,442	30,687	31,581	91,710	26,492	23,741	26,778	77,011	14,699
Gym/Fitness Classes	27,607	28,914	26,894	83,415	23,884	22,004	29,390	75,278	8,137



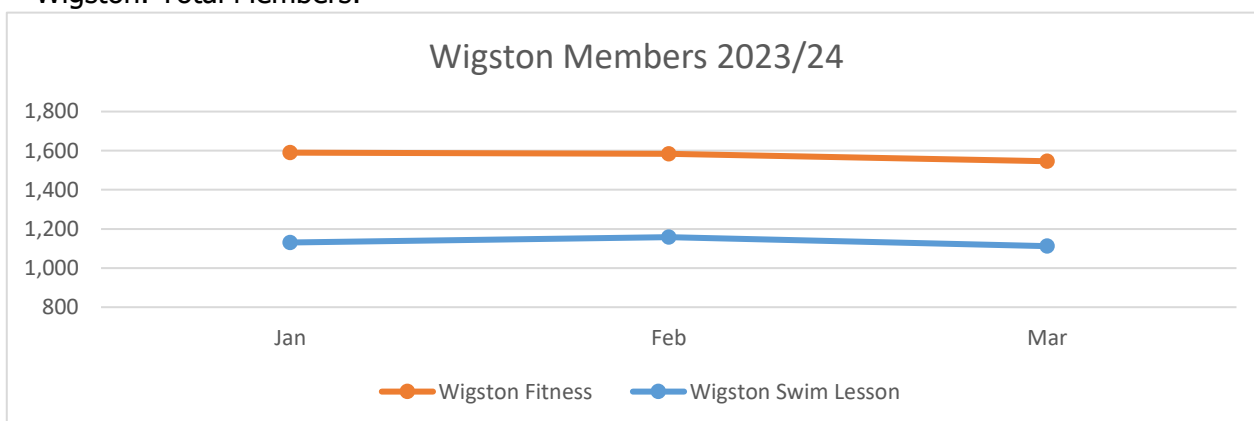
Sports/Activities	5,511	6,175	4,836	16,522	6,220	6,637	4,802	17,659	-1,137
Activity Total	62,560	65,776	63,311	191,647	56,596	52,382	60,970	169,948	21,699
Spectators	10,485	11,368	11,953	33,806	12,300	11,615	12,592	36,507	-2,701
Grand Total	73,045	77,144	75,264	225,453	68,896	63,997	73,562	206,455	18,998

Membership:

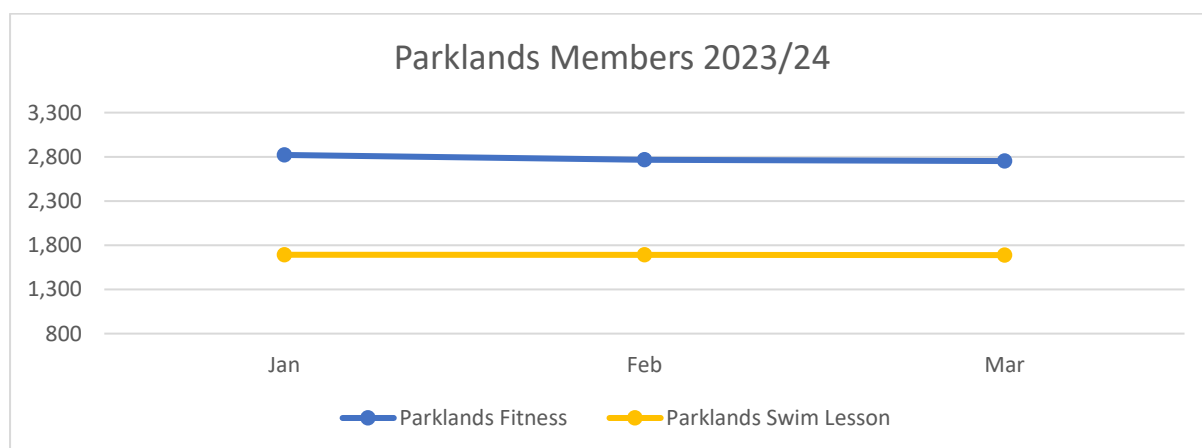
Over the last three months the continued downwards trend on core activities, monthly fitness and swimming lessons has unfortunately continued with Gym / Fitness Members 38 from the same period last year and swimming lessons 108.

Membership	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
Gym	4,411	4,351	4,298	4,457	4,368	4,373
Swim Lessons	2,822	2,849	2,800	2,949	2,975	2,950
Total	7,233	7,200	7,098	7,406	7,343	7,323

Wigston: Total Members:



Parklands: Total Members:





Community Well-Being:

The Leisure Centres have continued to be very busy this quarter looking to deliver the years Community Well Being Plan and indeed we have now brought in extra resources with another full time community activator to help with delivery and this has been shown in one of the major positives 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.

Children & Young People

- The HAF Junior Gym programme which is funded until Christmas 2025 has now supported 30 participants in the summer and 6 participants in the spring. This offer is growing each funded period, and we are getting great feedback from the young people taking part.
- The Leicester City Violence Reduction Network programme which offers a 3-month gym memberships as positive activities crime diversion for young people aged 11-18 has supported 15 young people this year with 1 new person added at Wigston.
- There are currently 40 care experienced memberships and 4 children in care memberships over the leisure centres.
- In the Oadby & Wigston Borough district contract we have had 16 physical activity referral scheme members set up.

Healthy Ageing

- Through Q4 we had 36 attendances on the walking football and 50 since it launched in November.
- The two senior badminton sessions had 413 attendances this quarter and 1,772 over the year.
- The new age kurling had 201 attendances this quarter and 792 over the course of the year.
- The steady steps maintainers had 101 attendances this quarter and 540 over the course of the year.
- We will be launching Pickleball in the next quarter.

Healthy Communities

- In Q4 we have had 121 attendances on the women's No Strings badminton and 590 over the course of the year.
- The pan inclusive football that we launched in November really struggled to get traction and we have decided to take this session off and launch it again in the next financial year as we have been meeting with Home Instead, a national care provider who will start referring into the sessions.
- This year we have created 2 fantastic relationships with Vita Health who run the talking therapies across Leicestershire. Through this we have upskilled staff and delivered signposting events. The second partnership is with the FA where we have worked together to deliver some fantastic programmes as well as corporately sponsoring them.



- Everyone Active team sponsored and attended the Multidisciplinary Conference 2024 “Shaping your future within Primary Care”. This event was great for interacting with a variety of health professionals, such as GP’s, social prescribers, nurses and pharmacists.
- Across the two sites we have supported 8 carers with memberships to support the person they care for to access the leisure centres.

Healthy Lives

- In Q4 exercise referral transitioned to 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. This new process started from December 11th, 2023, and although the number of referrals has reduced, we are having more people start the scheme.
- Through Q4 we have had 17 referrals, 10 initial consultations completed and 14 people joined as members. This means over the course of the year we have had 77 referrals; 61 initial consultations and 67 members join the exercise referral scheme across the 2 sites
- The Heartsmart cardiac rehab classes have had 979 attendances this quarter and over the course of the year there has been 2,515 attendances.
- Specific health campaign memberships delivered across both sites started with 38 in April 23 and has grown to 60 current Parkinson members in Q4.

	Jan-Mar	Jan-Mar		
Targeted Groups	2022-23	2023-24	Variance	% Variance
Exercise Referral	1,768	2,033	265	15%
Children and Young People	16,656	19,678	3,022	18%
Community	528	481	-47	-9%
Older Adults	2,876	2,702	-174	-6%

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 Memphis Charity Group.
- Free Coffee for VASL Carers
- Free Memberships for PARS

We have provided for over £8000 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 wellbeing benefits of the whole community.

General:

In general it is pleasing to see a return to activity levels that we last saw pre covid and although we understand that some of this is in relation to the inclement weather we have experienced over the last quarter, we also note that our active strategy of trying to keep our



pricing low in light of the extreme challenges faced with increased operating costs has had a positive effect on users coming through the door.

We continue to be pleased with the centres delivering a vital community role and engaging with many thousands of people throughout the year but we do continue to note as in previous reports that the users accessing the facilities continue to be impacted by a number of factors outside of SLM's control, 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 continued impact on car parking charges to access the centres.

Our commitment to work within 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 Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing Contract with Blaby District Council has been agreed to by both Councils and will continue into 2024/25 although at a 50% reduction in cost.

A draft Community Health & Wellbeing Plan was produced by the Integrated Care Board and work will continue in 2024/25 to finalise the priorities.

A draft mental health action plan was produced and contained 4 priority areas; whole family support, reducing inequalities for residents with chronic mental health illness, men's mental health and support for children and young people experiencing poor mental health. Key actions will be decided by the Mental Health Network that now meets in Oadby & Wigston on a quarterly basis, Chaired and managed by the Mental Health Neighbourhood Lead from the Integrated Care System Team at the NHS.

Children's Mental Health week took place in February with a Primary Wellbeing Ambassadors event focusing on the theme 'My Voice Matters'. Parklands Leisure Centre hosted the event with ambassadors given access to a soft play session as part of the morning to thank them for their support to other peers in school across the year. Approximately 50 pupils from Oadby & Wigston schools attended the event on 6 February, in which the link below shows the highlights:

<https://youtu.be/GJFHADWYPBI?si=dqnMVpScBIXvO1Zu>



The Learning South Leicestershire School Sport Partnership staff wellbeing conference in February was attended at Beauchamp College supported with presentations and signposting to local borough/county services. Mental Health & Wellbeing consultations were sent out to schools to evidence the need for future services. Three individual school meetings took place regarding support needs. This included Wigston Academy, Beauchamp College and Parklands Primary School with regards to pupil and staff mental health support.

A project to support parent's mental health took place at Parklands Primary School. The first session held in March supported 18 parents/carers.

Sport and Physical Activity

The team have received a total of 65 self-referrals from residents this quarter for support with being more active. There have been 581 total attendances this quarter across the community programmes we deliver. Work has been done to try and increase self-referrals across Oadby and Wigston district since the removal of GP prism forms, by getting in touch with local GP practices and other referral partners such as Local Area Coordinators to inform them of the change. We plan to open self-referrals to the general public in Q1 of 24/25 which will hopefully increase referrals into our service.

Just Get Involved, a programme which encourages women aged 18+ to join physical activity sessions ran by community instructors, ran across Oadby and Wigston borough for the first time in Q4. We received a total of 102 sign-ups for O&W and 20 sessions were on offer across the 9 weeks the programme ran in the borough. From feedback, 65% said they felt fitter, stronger and healthier and 86% of those taking part increased their physical activity levels when comparing pre and post data, by an average of 1.5 hours a week. 64% said JUST was responsible for the positive changes they had seen and 76% said they wouldn't have made the changes without the programme.

The first Steady Steps Plus programme has been set up in Oadby and Wigston, with this being an exit route from the Steady Steps falls prevention programmes running across the



borough. There are currently 10 participants enrolled, and we plan to set up a further two plus programmes in 24/25.

From end of programme feedback collected, 92% of participants attending an OW community programme said they would recommend it to a friend. 82% of participants completing feedback said they felt fitter, stronger, and healthier as a result of taking part and 72% self-reported an increase in their physical activity levels.

Active Oadby and Wigston accounts continue to be used for promotion of programmes and health agenda, seeing a continued growth of 15 new followers and 1,000 page views (an increase of 19%). The account received 53k page impressions (increase of 169%) and a reach of 36k (Increase of 159%).

Q4 Attendance Records

Participation Numbers - Level 2 Programmes

Session	Location	Started	Attendance
Walking Football	Wigston Academy	Ongoing	88
Walking Netball	Wigston Academy	Ongoing	99
Walking Cricket	Beauchamp College	Ongoing	62
Walking Hockey	Uni of Leicester Sports	Ongoing	86
Total			335

Participation Numbers- Level 3 Programmes

Activity	Location	Started	Attendance
Seated Activity	Freer Centre	Ongoing	246

Exercise Referral - Leisure Facility	Parklands Leisure Centre	Ongoing	18 successfully completed
Steady Steps Plus	Oadby St Pauls Church	25 th March 2024	10 Participants

Participation Numbers- Level 4 Programmes

Steady Steps		Participants		Attendance
Oadby 2	St Pauls Church (Oadby)	23- Jan	7	132
Wigston 1	Wigston (Freer Centre)	20-Nov	10	104
Total				236



Cardiac		Participants
Oadby and Wigston	Parklands Leisure Centre	16 completed

Youth Engagement

The Leicester Riders Positive Future sessions commenced at the sports hall located on the grounds of South Wigston High School in February. This, to offer a positive diversionary activity for young people to prevent involvement in crime and ASB. Numbers have varied each week in attendance.

Funded boxing sessions to support both male and female students at South Wigston High School continues weekly until the end of the school academic year.

At the February meeting of the Children & Young Peoples' Forum a revised 'Youth Engagement Strategy' document was presented to attendees for comment; this document incorporated data from the 2021 Census to aid in directing youth priorities within the Borough and received consent from those present to be presented to the PFD Forum at a later date. Additionally it was agreed that promotion of the Youth Council will be linked in with youth provision taking place throughout the summer period, including the Soft Touch Arts 'The Wall' project in South Wigston, with a view of creating interest in an initial Youth Council meeting to take place in September / October 2024.

Community Safety

The build of 15 new HD CCTV units and 2 ANPR-equipped Speed Indicator Display (SID) units is underway with all units expected to be completed, and delivery arranged, for April 2024. Whilst the build takes place the Partnership, using data from its component agencies, are working to identify suitable locations for lighting columns to be converted to host the CCTV units, providing coverage across the three settlement areas in line with known crime and disorder 'hotspots' and seasonal trends. A total of 65 columns will be identified and structurally tested as part of this workstream, with columns passing the structural test then being electrically tested by LCC before conversion works can take place. The PCC's Office and the Home Office remain satisfied with the progress to date against this Safer Streets funded project.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The ASB Officer has recorded **12** reports of ASB in Q4, please see chart below for monthly breakdown:

Q4		
Number of ASB logged/investigated by ASB Officer: 12		
Number of incidents per month		
January 24	February 24	March 24
5	4	3

Of these 12 ASB reports, issues remained that of a wide range. Most common reports included 'Noisy neighbours', 'Drunken behaviour', 'Throwing missiles' and 'Damage to buildings'.



Investigations continue with some of ASB reports with no disposals given to perpetrators as of yet.

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

Q4		
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 Q4 have recorded and investigated **12** reports in total of ASB, please see chart below for number per area breakdown:

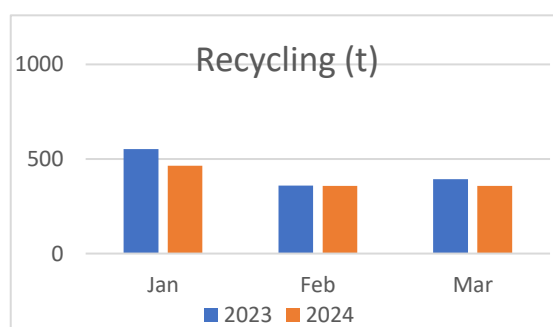
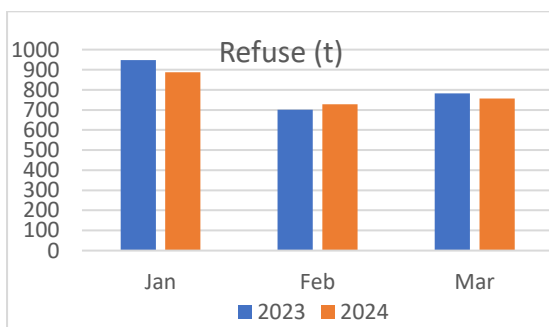
Q4		
Total number of ASB reports: 12		
Oadby	South Wigston	Wigston
4	5	3

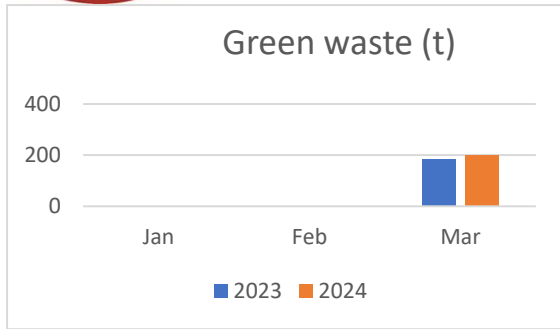
Refuse and Recycling

In Qtr4 2023-24 there has been an overall decrease of 60.38 tonnes in the refuse collected, this is a 2.48% decrease compared to Qtr4 2022-23.

For the recycling tonnages, there has also been a decrease of 124.65 tonnes in Qtr4 2023-24 compared to Qtr4 2022-23. This translates to a 9.55% decrease of recycling collected between these periods.

For the green waste there were no collections in the months of January and February. In March there was an increase of 17.10 tonnes in Q4 2023-24 compared to the Q4 2022-23, which equates to a 9.27% increase.





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

Waste Type 2024	January		February		March	
	Weight (t)	%	Weight (t)	%	Weight (t)	%
Green Waste	0.00	0%	0.00	0%	201.56	14.88%
Recycling	463.78	33.14%	358.50	29.99%	357.93	26.42%
Refuse	887.14	63.40%	727.64	60.87%	756.18	55.81%
Other	48.38	3.46%	109.26	9.14%	39.16	2.89%

Garden Waste Update

Garden waste renewals and sign ups continue, see chart below:

1st Jan - 27th May 2024	2024/25 (this year)	
	Number	Gross Revenue*
Renewals	8449	£538,875
New sign ups	536	£33,835
Total	8985	£572,710

At this point last year, we had received 9250 permit applications and gross income was £496,235. At the end of last year we had received 9874 permit applications and the full gross income was £528,570.

This year renewals have decreased, but the lack of sunny weather is likely to have played a part in this. Previous year's show that between 500-600 people will normally sign up/renew between now and the end of the year, so the permit applications will continue to increase.

Please note *The gross revenue is the payment amount taken from the customer, this does not account for any refunds that may have been given (in cases of duplicate payments, for example resident suffering with dementia paying twice) or any other associated costs.



Waste Transformation

Letters were sent to all residents w/c 20th May regarding the change to alternate weekly waste collections later this year.

Up to 27th May we have had 462 residents purchase a larger black household waste bin (a high number of these have been online). Our Customer Service Team has been very busy since dealing with calls and emails about the new scheme.