

Notice of Meeting



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Executive

Thursday, 12th January, 2023 at 5.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Market Street, Newbury**

Note: This meeting can be streamed live here: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/executive/ve>

Date of despatch of Agenda: Wednesday, 4 January 2023

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) on 01635 519052, e-mail: sadie.owen1@westberks.gov.uk

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk



Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 12 January 2023 (continued)

| | |
|------------|--|
| To: | Councillors Lynne Doherty (Chairman), Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Ross Mackinnon, Thomas Marino, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston |
|------------|--|

Agenda

Part I

| | Pages |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any). | 5 - 6 |
| 2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 15 December 2022. | 7 - 12 |
| 3. Declarations of Interest To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct . | 13 - 14 |
| 4. Public Questions Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution. | 15 - 16 |
| 5. Petitions Councillors or Members of the public may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate Committee without discussion. | 17 - 18 |

Items as timetabled in the Forward Plan

| | Pages |
|---|--------------|
| 6. Draft Council Strategy 2023-2027 (EX4312) Purpose: to introduce the draft Council Strategy 2023-2027 and to seek approval for it to progress to public consultation in early 2023. | 19 - 44 |
| 7. West Berkshire Council Customer Charter (EX4311) Purpose: to present a formal public-facing Customer Services Charter. This was a key action within the Communications and Engagement Strategy and will form part of the 'One Council' approach (also known as 'Many Channels, One Service project) being developed. Elements of the | 45 - 54 |

Agenda - Executive to be held on Thursday, 12 January 2023 (continued)

Digital Strategy will also be incorporated in to the Charter in line with other commitments to further digitisation.

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8. **2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Two (EX4210)** 55 - 100
Purpose: to provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the Council Strategy 2019-2023 are being managed effectively, and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action.
-
9. **Social Value Update (EX4305)** 101 - 110
Purpose: the report provides an update on the Social Value Policy which was adopted by the Council at Executive on 18 November 2021. The paper will provide details of the uptake and impact of the inclusion of social value measures within contracts arising from the procurement process.
-
10. **Members' Questions** 111 - 112
Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.
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Sarah Clarke
Service Director: Strategy and Governance

West Berkshire Council Strategy Priorities

Council Strategy Priorities:

PC1: Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes

PC2: Support everyone to reach their full potential

OFB1: Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire

GP1: Develop local infrastructure to support and grow the local economy

GP2: Maintain a green district

SIT1: Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Sadie Owen on telephone (01635) 519052.



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

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Item 1 – Apologies for absence

Verbal Item

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Agenda Item 2.

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2022

Councillors Present: Lynne Doherty (Chairman), Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Ross Mackinnon, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston,

Also Present: Councillors Lee Dillon, Geoff Mayes and Erik Pattenden.

Members and Officers Present Remotely: Councillors Tom Marino, Adrian Abbs, Carolyne Culver, Alan Macro and Andy Sharp (Executive Director – People)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillors Jeff Brooks and Tony Vickers

Officers Present: Sarah Clarke (Service Director Strategy & Governance), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) Eric Owens (Executive Director – Place) and Lizzie Reeves (Project Manager - MC, OS)

PART I

56. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2023 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

57. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

58. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

59. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

60. Capital Financial Performance Report Quarter Two 2022/23 (EX4270)

Councillor Ross Mackinnon introduced and proposed the recommendation within the Capital Financial Performance Report (Agenda Item 6), which reported on the forecast under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget as at Quarter Two of 2022/23.

Councillor Lee Dillon suggested that the cost of re-profiling the £17.9 million into the following year was likely to have risen given the increase in interest rates and inflation and queried where the calculation sat within the paper. Joseph Holmes, Executive Director, Resources explained that generally the cost would be rolled forward, but would also be dependent on how advanced the project was and whether any expenses had already been incurred.

Councillor Mackinnon agreed to review the feasibility of providing Councillor Dillon with a breakdown of the re-profiled projects and any costs incurred in order to allow for the re-profiling.

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Councillor Dillon queried the impact on people caused by delay to some of the projects, suggesting the Downland Sports Centre and impact to students as an example.

Councillor Dillon further commented that the greyscale bar charts were difficult to read and suggested using colour, given that it was a public document.

Councillor Dominic Boeck seconded the report.

RESOLVED that:

- Members approve the proposed reprofiling of £17.9 million of future expenditure from 2022/23 into financial year 2023/24.
- Members note the increase in expenditure budget for the Castle at Theale School project, which will be fully funded through additional Department for Education High Needs Provision Capital Fund Grant. See section 6.1 of this report.

61. 2022/23 Revenue Financial Performance Quarter Two (EX4269)

Councillor Ross Mackinnon introduced the Revenue Financial Performance Report (Agenda Item 7), which detailed the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets and provided a year-end forecast, as at Quarter Two of 2022/23.

Councillor Alan Macro drew attention to section 4.5, page 43 of the Agenda Pack which reported that Adult Social Care long term services were predicting a £3m overspend. Councillor Macro suggested that almost half of the overspend was due to low occupancy within Council run care homes. Further, Councillor Macro noted that there had been increased spending incurred to place clients in private care homes. Councillor Macro queried why this was occurring when there were plenty of spaces within the Council's own care homes.

Councillor Mackinnon explained that private care homes were being utilised for those clients with complex needs who could not be serviced by the Council care homes.

Councillor Jo Stewart further added that it had not been possible to place clients within the Birchwood Care Home for a time, but that further to a recent Care Quality Commission rating of 'improving', clients could now be placed there again. Councillor Macro commented that it was good news and commended all Officers and staff involved in the improvement at Birchwood Care Home.

Councillor Erik Pattenden queried whether the Children and Family Services model was fit for purpose if it was unable to take into account inflation and an increase in demand.

Councillor Mackinnon commented that no model would ever be perfect, and the fact that it had not correctly forecast demand did not mean that it was inaccurate. In relation to inflation Councillor Mackinnon commented that in February inflation had been 5.4% and not been forecast to reach such high levels but conversely to reduce. Councillor Mackinnon suggested that it would have been impossible to predict the extent of the increase.

Councillor Pattenden noted that the model had incorrectly forecast Quarter One and Quarter Two and queried whether it would be the same for Quarter Three. Councillor Mackinnon explained that the budget had been set in March, based on client numbers at that time.

Councillor Dominic Boeck commented that in relation to the data for Children, the numbers were smaller but the volatility could be greater due to a small number of individuals having very complex needs.

Councillor Pattenden queried what mitigation was in place to avoid future overspend. Councillor Lynne Doherty explained that a risk reserve was set aside to take account of

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any fluctuations in the modelling, and that increased demand was a widespread national issue which had been recognised in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care final report.

Councillor Pattenden queried what actions had been taken to ensure a fair funding settlement from Central Government. Councillor Mackinnon responded that Members of the Executive had robustly lobbied Central Government over the preceding few months and that details were expected the following week.

Referring to mitigation, Councillor Lee Dillon queried whether the Council could act as a host and provide services to other local authorities. Councillor Boeck responded that such an approach had been tried at Castle Gate Respite Centre with beds offered to Hampshire and Oxfordshire, but that there was no longer any availability due to increased demand. Further, he noted that twelve additional places for secondary aged SEMH children had just been created at The Castle School, Theale, and that plans were in place to offer a similar facility for primary school children at Kennet Valley Primary School.

Councillor Doherty suggested greater use of in-house foster carers and made a plea for anyone interested to register.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Note the forecast £3m over spend, after taking account of provision that was made in reserves for specific risks at the time of budget setting. Without this provision, the forecast would be an over spend of £7.8m.
- Note that proposed mitigations totalling £1.9m could reduce the overspend to £1.1m.

62. **Financial Year 2022/23 Mid-Year Treasury Report (GE4308)**

Councillor Ross Mackinnon introduced the Mid-Year Treasury Report (Agenda Item 8), which provided an overview of the treasury management activity for financial year 2022/23 as at 30 September 2022.

RESOLVED that:

- The report is to note only. The Section 151 Officer is satisfied that treasury management practices in year have operated in accordance with the approved performance management criteria.

63. **Grazeley Solar Farm Project Update (EX4293)**

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter introduced and proposed the recommendations within the report (Agenda Item 9), which provided an update to the business case for the Grazeley Solar Farm project and sought delegated authority for the Service Director (Environment), to enter into a power purchase agreement to supply energy through the Crown Commercial Services Heat Networks and Electricity Generation Assets (HELGA) Framework.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter explained that the preferred option of the two outlined was Option Two, which proposed connection to the grid via AWE's Burghfield substation.

Councillor Graham Bridgman noted that the site was within his ward and that he had been asked by Wokefield Parish Council to note that the site was within Wokefield, not Grazeley.

Councillor Bridgman made a plea that James Lane not damaged or excavated, if avoidable.

Councillor Adrian Abbs referred to section 4.4 of the report and stated that the actual site was larger than the Solar Farm currently planned and queried why connection to both

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locations was not being explored. He further queried whether there was any allocation for storage.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that storage was still under consideration and there was still space to add it.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter acknowledged that whilst the site was larger, consultants had recommended that the Council continue with the plot size outlined. Councillor Abbs requested sight of the consultant's report.

It was clarified that section 5.20 of the report referred to West Berkshire Council's carbon footprint rather than that of the overall district.

Councillor Lee Dillon voiced his support for the project and welcomed the cleaner, greener energy that would be produced in West Berkshire as a result of the Solar Farm.

Recommendation (Vote to be taken in Part II):

- That the updated business case be noted and that the Executive give delegated authority for the Service Director Environment, in consultation with the S151 and Monitoring Officers, to approve registering as an energy supplier on the Crown Commercial Services Heat Networks and Electricity Generation Asset (HELGA) Framework and entering into of a Power Purchase Agreement for up to 30 years for the supply of electricity through said framework.

Other options considered:

- Consideration is being given to using the solar farm for sheep farming during its life. Biodiversity and ecology is also prominent in the scheme design. The project retains the current features that are present on the site, such as the mature trees and hedges. We have allowed a ten metre buffer between these existing features and the fenced solar farm area, hence ensuring there is no damage to the existing flora and fauna in the field boundaries. In addition to this, the proposed scheme design includes additional tree and hedge planting, the creation of ponds and seeding with wildflower seed-mix, and seeding for winter birds. The scheme will also include the installation of bird and bat boxes across the site. All of these measures have been captured in the Biodiversity Net gain score, which is positive.

64. Contract Award for the Children and Young Peoples Therapies Service (EX4181)

Councillor Dominic Boeck introduced the report (Agenda Item 10), which sought authority to enter into an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to work in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council (Lead Authority) & Brighter Futures For Children Ltd (Reading) to deliver the Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies Service.

Councillor Erik Pattenden referred to section 5.18 of the report which stated that the service had been stretched, with some children not receiving the therapy set out in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Councillor Pattenden queried how many children had been affected, given that it was a statutory service. Councillor Boeck agreed to investigate and provide details following the meeting.

Councillor Boeck explained that the contract would be monitored following the usual contract management system (as detailed at 5.16 of the report), and that should demand exceed the level of service provision outlined, the contract would be reviewed.

Councillor Lee Dillon expressed support for the paper and requested assurance that it would prevent future failures in provision of the statutory service to children.

Councillor Boeck expressed confidence that the agreement would enable the Council to meet its statutory commitments.

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Recommendation (Vote to be taken in Part II):

- The Executive resolves to approve the Inter Authority Agreement with Wokingham Borough Council and Brighter Futures for Children Limited (Reading Borough Council) for integrated therapies service under a contract let by Wokingham Borough Council and to delegate authority to Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services in consultation with Head of Education to finalise and enter into the IAA.

Other options considered:

- Undertake full tender for West Berkshire Council only. This option was considered and discounted as partnering with neighbouring authorities will achieve economies of scale and better value for money.
- Do nothing and let the current contract lapse with no future provision. This is not an option due to the statutory nature of the service
- Provide the service in-house. The Council do not have the necessary skills to deliver this service and it is not considered economically viable to pursue this option.

65. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As.](#)

66. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that: members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 3 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

67. Grazeley Solar Farm Project Update (EX4293)

(Paragraph 6 - information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 13), concerning an update on the business case for the Grazeley Solar Farm project and to seek delegated authority for the Service Director Environment to enter into a power purchase agreement to supply energy through the Crown Commercial Services Heat Networks and Electricity Generation Assets (HELGA) Framework.

RESOLVED that: the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Other options considered:

- Consideration is being given to using the solar farm for sheep farming during its life. Biodiversity and ecology is also prominent in the scheme design. The project retains the current features that are present on the site, such as the mature trees and hedges. We have allowed a ten metre buffer between these existing features and the fenced solar farm area, hence ensuring there is no damage to the existing flora and fauna in the field boundaries. In addition to this, the proposed scheme design includes additional tree and hedge planting, the creation of ponds and seeding with wildflower seed-mix, and seeding for winter birds. The scheme will also include the installation of bird and bat boxes across the site. All of these measures have been captured in the Biodiversity Net gain score, which is positive.

68. Contract Award for the Children and Young Peoples Therapies Service (EX4181)

(Paragraph 3 - information relating to financial/business affairs of particular person)

EXECUTIVE - 15 DECEMBER 2022 - MINUTES

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 14), seeking authority to enter into an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to work in partnership with Wokingham Borough Council (Lead Authority) & Brighter Futures For Children Ltd (Reading) to deliver the Children and Young People’s Integrated Therapies Service.

RESOLVED that: the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Other options considered:

- Undertake full tender for West Berkshire Council only. This option was considered and discounted as partnering with neighbouring authorities will achieve economies of scale and better value for money.
- Do nothing and let the current contract lapse with no future provision. This is not an option due to the statutory nature of the service.
- Provide the service in-house. The Council do not have the necessary skills to deliver this service and it is not considered economically viable to pursue this option.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 6.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Executive –12 January 2023

Item 3 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 12 January 2023.

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

A. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:

"The current Local Plan, adopted by the Council in 2012, includes an 'Area Delivery Plan Policy for Thatcham'. This states, inter alia, that the town centre will be regenerated with the redevelopment of the Kingsland Centre driving this improvement, that Thatcham's services and facilities will be improved, and that the range of leisure facilities within Thatcham will be expanded. What aspects of these objectives has the Council delivered to date, and what more does it expect to deliver in the remainder of the plan period?"

B. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:

"Executive members have often expressed faith in the councils drainage officers. Why are more expensive SUDs Consultants being contracted to advise on the LRIE?"

C. Question submitted by Alan Pearce to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:

"The Executive decision EX4219 London Road Industrial Estate Project Refresh 6.11 The delivery Strategy is to redevelop the depot site by the end of 2024 and at the same time adopt a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the LRIE. Please would the Council explain the logic in redeveloping the depot site without an SPD, when there may be requirement to redevelop the site in a certain way, for instance to provide a holistic drainage strategy/system for the area to reduce surface water flooding downstream?"

D. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:

"What were the costs to the Council and the value of Government grants for the installation, the replacement and the subsequent removal of Orcas along the A4 through Thatcham? Will any of the grant funding now need to be repaid?"

E. Question submitted by John Gotelee to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:

"Approximately one quarter of 322 English local planning authorities have either adopted or are preparing BNG requirements in their local plans. Is West Berkshire Council one of them?"

F. Question submitted by Simon Pike to the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture:

"The Area Delivery Plan Policy for Thatcham states that "The range of leisure facilities within Thatcham will be expanded, utilising those at the existing Newbury Leisure Park on Lower Way". Has the council provided any funding or

Item 4:

Public Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 12 January 2023.

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

other support to support this expansion, and what range of leisure opportunities are now available at the Leisure Park?"

Executive – 12 January 2023

Item 5 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Draft Council Strategy 2023-2027

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Committee considering report: | Executive |
| Date of Committee: | 12 January 2023 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Lynne Doherty |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 3 January 2023 |
| Report Author: | Gabrielle Mancini/Catalin Bogos |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX4312 |

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To introduce the draft Council Strategy 2023-2027 and to seek approval for it to progress to public consultation in early 2023.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Executive is asked to consider the draft strategy, recommend amendments to its content and approve it for public consultation.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|------------------------|--|
| Financial: | The draft strategy contains a number of proposed outcomes relating to the undertaking of the Council's core business as well as new initiatives and projects. These have been considered in the budget setting process for 2023/24 and will inform budget setting in subsequent years during the lifetime of the strategy. |
| Human Resource: | The draft strategy relates to the undertaking of the Council's business. The resourcing implications of the fulfilment of its objectives have been considered during the budget setting process. The Strategy will inform further decisions about human resource deployment for the delivery of its priorities and outcomes. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------|--|
| Legal: | Many of the objectives in the draft strategy relate to the discharging of statutory duties and core business. | | | |
| Risk Management: | Risks associated with the production of the draft strategy relate to appropriately identifying and prioritising the needs of our residents and communities. A number of mitigation actions have been put in place, including top-down and bottom-up needs analysis, engagement with residents, councillors and officers and plans to further consult on the attached working draft strategy. | | | |
| Property: | Proposals within the Council Strategy may relate to improvements to Council buildings, the construction of new facilities and the maintenance of existing ones. This has been considered when setting the revenue and capital budgets for the lifetime of the strategy. | | | |
| Policy: | The setting of a four year Council Strategy is fundamental to the Council’s objectives and performance management. It is essential that what it contains responds to the needs of residents, is monitored using clear key performance indicators and is used to inform the budget setting process. | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | x | | | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. |

| | | | | |
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| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | x | | | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. |
| Environmental Impact: | x | | | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to the Council's aspiration towards carbon neutrality by 2030. |
| Health Impact: | x | | | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved health outcomes for local people. |
| ICT Impact: | | x | | If approved, some of the initiatives within the strategy may require more effective use of technology. Should this be the case, this should be considered when assessing the resourcing needs of ICT during the budget setting process. |
| Digital Services Impact: | | x | | If approved, some of the initiatives within the strategy may require more effective use of digital. Should this be the case, this should be considered when assessing the resourcing needs of the Digital Services Team during the budget setting process. |
| Council Strategy Priorities: | | x | | By its definition, the Council Strategy sets the agenda for the Council's core business and future aspirations. |
| Core Business: | | x | | By its definition, the Council Strategy sets the agenda for the Council's core business. |
| Data Impact: | | x | | The data used to develop this strategy is either publicly available (e.g. ONS data) or has been provided anonymously. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Consultation and Engagement: | <p>A number of engagement exercises have been undertaken with residents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Covid-19 Residents Survey• The 2021 representative Residents Survey• A series of engagement events with local people, including people traditionally under-represented in responses to consultations <p>The Performance, Research and Risk team has also worked closely with the following groups when developing the draft strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive• Administration backbench elected members• The Corporate Leadership Team• Service Directors and Heads of Service |
|-------------------------------------|--|

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Council Strategy is a business planning document that sets out the Council's future priorities and objectives. West Berkshire Council produces a Council Strategy every four years to correspond with its election cycles using analysis of the evolving needs of residents, feedback received from the Residents Survey and additional engagement with residents as well as the information held about the outcomes delivered against the objectives in the current Council Strategy and the West Berkshire Vision 2036.
- 4.2 The draft document at Appendix C proposes a number of outcomes that the Council will focus on delivering in the next four years. They have been informed by the evidence mentioned above, including the need to respond to the challenges resulting from the aftermaths of the Covid-19 pandemic, the socio-economic impacts of the conflict in Ukraine and ongoing efforts in response to the Climate Emergency, which was declared in 2019.
- 4.3 The proposed outcomes for the Council Strategy 2023-2027 have been grouped into five priority areas:
- Providing opportunities for all and more help when you need it
 - Protecting and enhancing our environment
 - Stronger communities
 - Great place to live, learn and do business

- Building public services for the future

4.4 The draft Strategy contains commentary about the Council's performance to date, details of the views of residents given during the various engagement exercises mentioned above and a number of draft outcomes for the Council to achieve during the lifetime of the new Strategy.

4.5 A six weeks consultation on these draft outcomes will take place starting in January 2023. A detailed communications and engagement plan will facilitate this consultation exercise, during which residents will be invited to give their views on the content of the draft strategy. Responses from this consultation will then be used to inform the final version of the strategy, which will be considered for approval by Council in May 2023.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 This report introduces the draft Council Strategy 2023-2027. The draft strategy has been developed using national policy and statistical information (top-down analysis) and service level qualitative and quantitative information (bottom-up analysis) about the district's needs. In addition, a number of residents and other stakeholders' engagement activities have informed this initial draft Strategy ready for further public consultation in January 2023 before being considered for approval by Council in May 2023.

Background

5.2 The Council Strategy (the Strategy) is West Berkshire Council's medium term strategic planning document that sets out the priority areas and the key outcomes we are planning to achieve whilst also delivering all our mandatory functions.

5.3 The Strategy is produced every four years and refreshed every other year. The current Strategy was adopted in 2019 covering the period ending 2023 and aligns with the electoral cycle. This paper presents the proposed priorities and outcomes for the new strategy for public consultation, for informing the final version of the new Council Strategy 2023 - 2027.

5.4 Based on the feedback from the latest Corporate Peer Review, the new Strategy will continue the approach to focus on a small number of priorities. The core business of the Council (safeguarding children and adults, roads maintenance, bin collection etc.) will continue to be delivered.

5.5 The Methodology

5.6 The methodology used for the strategic planning process that identified the priority areas and the outcomes for the new Strategy included:

- (a) A review of the evidence base (national policy and statistics and local qualitative and quantitative information from our services). This included the latest corporate performance information detailing the progress with the delivery of the current Council Strategy 2019 - 2023, contextual measures results, the refreshed Council

Strategy 2021 etc.); In addition to the core business objectives contained within the Council Strategy, the Council responded to a number of unprecedented global events; such as the Covid-19 pandemic, conflict in Ukraine and rising energy costs; which necessitated the redeployment of resources and additional support being made available to the community. Information about the impacts of these significant changes in the external context of the Council have also been considered.

- (b) A review of the residents' feedback received from the Covid-19 Residents survey 2020 and the representative Residents Survey 2021.
- (c) Identification of 'areas of focus' that could become priorities – during a workshop with Members and officers;
- (d) A process of refining the evidence base - this included making the links with the Vision 2036 priorities and aspirations and identifying what could the Council potentially do to improve identified areas; In addition, qualitative (interviews and workshops) have taken place with (seldom heard) people that do not normally take the opportunity to express their views about the Council's priorities and outcomes for residents.
- (e) A second round of stakeholders' engagement (Members and officers) to conclude the identification of priorities for improvement;
- (f) Work with individual services of the Council to detail the outcomes to be delivered as part of the identified priorities;
- (g) A third round of stakeholders' engagement to rationalise the outcomes for inclusion in the new Strategy, including to ensure a joined up approach (non-silo working) amongst the Council's services.
- (h) Corporate Board has reviewed the priorities and the associated outcomes.

5.7 There are two more key steps to be completed:

- (a) Public consultation (January – February 2023) on the draft Strategy – with the purpose of understanding how appropriate residents find the proposed priorities and the involvement that they feel they can provide to support the priorities' delivery.
- (b) The amended Council Strategy and the response to the public consultation's feedback are taken for approval at the meeting of the full Council in May 2023 – to ensure an appropriate response to the feedback received from the public consultation in finalising and adopting the Strategy.

5.8 Once the Strategy is approved, all Council's services will ensure they establish smart objectives (key performance measures and targets) on an annual basis for the delivery of all outcomes and as a result of the priorities.

5.9 The results of the work to date informed the draft Strategy which can be found at Appendix C and is focussed on the following five priority areas:

- Providing opportunities for all and more help when you need it
- Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Stronger communities
- Great place to live, learn and do business
- Building public services for the future

Proposals

5.10 It is proposed that a draft Council Strategy with the five priorities mentioned at 4.3 should proceed to public consultation in January 2023 before being considered in its amended form by Council in May 2023.

6 Other options considered

6.1 The Council must set a clear strategy for the delivery of its core business. As such, no other options have been considered.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Setting an evidence-based and ambitious but deliverable Council Strategy is key to establishing the Council's work programme. West Berkshire Council has delivered a wide range of enhancements to local services and infrastructure during the lifetime of the Council Strategy 2019-2023 and it will, through the new Council Strategy 2023 - 2027, build on this in order to make West Berkshire an even better place to live, work and learn.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment

8.3 Appendix C – Draft Council Strategy

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Wards affected: Applies to all wards

Officer details:

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| Name: | Gabrielle Mancini / | Catalin Bogos |
| Job Title: | Service Lead- Customer Engagement & Transformation | Performance, Research and Risk Manager |
| Tel No: | 01635 519449 | 01635 512102 |
| E-mail: | gabrielle.mancini@westberks.gov.uk | Catalin.Bogos@westberks.gov.uk |

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Stage One

| | |
|---|--|
| What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make: | To approve the draft Council Strategy for public consultation |
| Summary of relevant legislation: | |
| Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council’s priorities for improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire • Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy Maintain a green district • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> By its definition, the Council Strategy sets the agenda for the Council’s priorities for the new strategy cycle. It will replace the priorities of the current Council Strategy. |
| Name of Budget Holder: | Sarah Clarke |
| Name of Service/Directorate: | Strategy & Governance |
| Name of assessor: | Gabrielle Mancini/Catalin Bogos |
| Date of assessment: | 28/11/2022 |
| Version and release date (if applicable): | N/A |

| Is this a ? | | Is this policy, strategy, function or service ... ? | |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Policy | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | New or proposed | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strategy | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Already exists and is being reviewed | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Function | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Is changing | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Service | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |

| | |
|--|--|
| (1) What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it? | |
| Aims: | To improve the outcomes for all who live, work and learn in West Berkshire |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Objectives: | A series of outcomes can be found within each of the five priorities of the proposed strategy. |
| Outcomes: | Better outcomes for local people. |
| Benefits: | West Berkshire will become an even better place to live, work and learn. |

(2) Which groups might be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?

| Group Affected | What might be the effect? | Information to support this |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Age | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Disability | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Gender Reassignment | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Race | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| | improved outcomes for all local people. | resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Religion or Belief | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Sex | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Sexual Orientation | If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | The draft Council Strategy has been developed using a wide range of evidence about resident need, including resident's views. Details can be found at Appendix C. |
| Further Comments: | | |
| | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| (3) Result | |
| Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | |
| Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If approved, the suggested objectives within the draft strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for all local people. | |
| (4) Identify next steps as appropriate: | |
| EqIA Stage 2 required | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Owner of EqIA Stage Two: | |
| Timescale for EqIA Stage Two: | |

Name: Gabrielle Mancini/Catalin Bogos

Date: 28/11/2022

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Directorate: | Resources |
| Department: | Strategy & Governance |
| Team: | Customer Engagement & Transformation |
| Lead Officer: | Catalin Bogos/ Gabrielle Mancini |
| Title of Project/System: | Council Strategy 2023-2027 |
| Date of Assessment: | 28/11/2022 |

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

| | Yes | No |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “ data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> <p><i>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</i></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</p> | | |

If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.

Draft Council Strategy 2023-2027

WORKING DRAFT for producing a first version of the Council Strategy for public consultation

Forward Together- Council Strategy 2023-2027

Foreword

West Berkshire is a great place to live, work and learn. It is an area in which I am fortunate to serve as Council Leader and I am proud that in the past four years we were able to make such a positive impact on the district.

When we put together our Council Strategy 2019-23, none of us could have predicted the challenges we would face during this time. A global pandemic and a number of international humanitarian crises, which led to significant rises in the cost of living, meant that we had to step in to protect our community while delivering good local services and exciting new projects which enhanced the lives of local people.

The overarching theme of this draft strategy is 'Forward Together', which is the Council's motto. At no point since West Berkshire Council was formed in the late 1990s has it felt more appropriate to look to this motto when developing our Council Strategy. Without a doubt, the four years behind us have been tough for all of us and we must now focus on rebuilding some of what we have lost while reinforcing what we have gained. To help us in doing so we have community links which are stronger than ever and a shared sense of purpose to drive us.

I hope you will take the time to look at the outcomes we have developed using the feedback we collected from the community and give us your views on them.

Cllr Lynne Doherty, Leader of West Berkshire Council

Introduction: Forward Together towards a new Council Strategy

A Council Strategy is a business planning document that sets out our future priorities and planned outcomes. We produce one every four years to correspond with our election cycles using analysis of the evolving needs of our residents, feedback received from our Residents Survey and additional engagement with residents, as well as the information we have about the outcomes delivered against the objectives in our Council Strategy 2019-23 and the West Berkshire Vision 2036. The Council Strategy is the Council's overarching strategic document which impacts and is supported by a range of more specific [strategies and policies](#) (e.g. Adult Social Care Strategy, Environment Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy, Communication and Engagement Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy etc.).

Why do we need a Council Strategy?

- A clear Council Strategy ensures that the Council manages its resources effectively, setting the direction for all services to work together and follow.
- It ensures that projects can be delivered by the Council's services and that enough capacity is available to deliver them.
- It provides a focus for the Council's Executive to plan its work.
- It provides the framework for evaluating the Council's performance.

We have produced this draft document which proposes the outcomes that we will focus on delivering for local people in the next four years. They have been informed by the evidence we gathered and the need to respond to the challenges resulting from the aftermaths of the Covid-19 pandemic, the socio-economic impacts of the conflict in Ukraine and our ongoing efforts in response to the Climate Emergency, which was declared in 2019.

We have grouped these proposed outcomes into five priority areas:

- Providing opportunities for all and more help when you need it
- Protecting and enhancing our environment
- Stronger communities
- Great place to live, learn and do business
- Building public services for the future

The information that follows explains why we have selected the priorities and outcomes we have and we invite you to give your views on them. These views will then inform the final version of the strategy which will be considered for approval at the Council's meeting in May 2023. We look forward to hearing from you.

Key facts about our district

- West Berkshire has an estimated population of 161,400 in 2021, which is an increase of 4.9%, from around 153,800 in 2011. This is lower than the overall increase for the South East (7.5%) and England (6.6%).
- In 2020, for every resident aged 16-64, there were on average 1.1 jobs in West Berkshire. This is higher than the South East and Great Britain.
- A vibrant economy with 8,345 businesses, an increase of 6.9% since 2012.
- Healthy life expectancy at birth at 70.1 years for females and 69.4 for males are higher than the England average (2018-20).
- Similarly, life expectancy at birth, at 84.4 for females and 80.2 for males is higher than the national average (2018-20).
- Access to Heathrow Airport in less than 60 minutes and good connectivity North to South (A34) and East to West (M4).
- West Berkshire covers an area of 272 square miles which is over half of the geographical area of the county of Berkshire.
- Nearly three quarters of West Berkshire is classified as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

- The total number of households (in 2022) is estimated as 66,700, an increase of 7% since 2011. It is expected that households will become smaller, with one person households increasing by an estimated 21.9% by 2043.
- 166 Children in Care were receiving services, which is below the England average (as a rate per 10,000 children) (Mar 2022).
- 273 Children in Need (including those subject to a CP or in LA Care) were supported, which is slightly above the England average (as a rate per 10,000 children) (Mar 2022).
- West Berkshire has 51 sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 3 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), which are of national importance for animal and plant life.
- 85.2% of 16 to 64 year olds are economically active (people that are not retired, a student, a carer or unemployed). This is higher than the South East and Great Britain averages (June 2022).
- In 2020/21, there were 617 net completions of dwelling units. 73% of residential completions were on previously developed land. Since 2006/07, an average of 504 new homes have been built each year.
- Highly qualified workforce, 71.5% of 16 – 64 year olds living in the area qualified at level NVQ3 and above or general education equivalent. Better than South East (63.8%) and Great Britain (61.5%) (Dec 2021).
- At 28.85 the rate of violent crime per 1,000 population, is slightly higher than that for Thames Valley overall (27.74)
- The district has 27.7 miles of motorway, 78.5 miles of A roads and 782.4 miles of minor roads.
- West Berkshire has approx. 1,900 Listed Buildings, 90 Scheduled Monuments, 53 Conservation Areas, 39 Locally Listed Heritage Assets, 14 Registered Parks and Gardens and 1 Registered Battlefield – all these heritage assets contribute to the sense of place of the district.
- 1,792 older people and vulnerable adults were accessing long term support (Sep 2022).
- As of 2021, West Berkshire is the ninth least densely populated of the South East's 64 local authority areas, with around two people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

Priority area: [Providing opportunities for all and more help when you need it](#)

West Berkshire is a great place to live, which is reflected in the fact that local people benefit from good health, educational and employment outcomes. The district is among the top 15% of local authorities in England for population health (ONS 2022), which means that residents have a good quality of life.

Local young people achieve well in education, in particular by the end of secondary school (GCSEs & A Levels) (KnowledgeHUB Nov 2022) thanks to the very high proportion of Good or Outstanding Ofsted-rated schools, our investment in building new schools (e.g. Highwood Copse School and the Theale Primary School) and expanding existing ones so parents have opportunities to secure a school place of their choice. We are ambitious for all young people in West Berkshire and our

continued commitment to offering an excellent level of education from a young age will open up opportunities for them to achieve the best they can.

Those who are most in need of our support are also well-served by our Children and Family Services, which are rated as 'Good' by Ofsted, and a wide range of Adult Social Care settings, most of which are judged as 'Good' or better by inspectors. Our challenge is that we have an ageing population (ONS Census 2021), a high proportion of people living in single occupancy households and some people, including children, facing the long term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These are some of the factors which will result in increasing demand on social care, mental health and housing services.

We are better placed than most areas to face these challenges due to successful preventative work (for example, supporting nine in every 10 adult social care service users in the community and working with children and families at the early stages of their difficulties through our Early Response Hub, Family Safeguarding, Family Support and schools-based Mental Health Support Teams). Harnessing these preventative approaches and working in partnership with our residents and other organisations will help to further improve the range of services we offer so that our residents can achieve even better outcomes.

CASE STUDY – MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

In 2020, the Council launched a Trailblazer Mental Health Support Team (MHST), providing support to 27 schools in West Berkshire. Following its successes, a further MHST has launched in September 2022, supporting an additional 25 schools. These teams have provided support to residents, including:

- **Brief individual and group**, low-intensity, **support for children and young people** (CYP) who are experiencing anxiety, low mood, friendship and behavioural difficulties.
- **Family interventions, supporting parents and carers** of children and young people who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties, including issues around conduct disorder, communications difficulties and anxiety.
- **School staff support** working with schools at a whole school, strategic level. This involves working with the Senior Mental Health Lead and existing service providers, **to map what provision is already in place and where the gaps are**. Addressing the gaps often leads to the delivery of **staff training** along with support and consultation to **monitor whole school well-being**.
- **Regular liaison with the Senior Mental Health Lead** in school **to work with specialist CYP MH services to ensure that children and young people receive appropriate support** as quickly as possible. This includes more specialist NHS mental health support and our support also ensures a smooth **transition back from specialist services**.

As a result, over 1100 children and young people have had early access to support and interventions which improved their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

What you have told us so far

The engagement work we have done with local people shows that residents have good levels of life satisfaction and happiness, and a strong sense of belonging to the local area. It also told us that housing, care and health, and access to leisure activities are services that residents would like to prioritise. In addition to this, further engagement work with seldom heard residents highlighted good schools and education as important enablers for them to achieve the outcomes they want.

Draft Outcomes for 2023-2027

We have considered the evidence and developed the following draft outcomes:

- Good education attainment results, exceeding National levels
- Good and Outstanding schools (Ofsted rating)
- Good or better adult and children social care services (Ofsted and Care Quality Commission ratings)
- Vulnerable children and families supported at early stages to prevent the need for more critical or statutory social services
- Solutions are identified to prevent homelessness and avoid rough sleeping
- Residents are supported to access the mental health services that they need
- Residents facing the greatest challenges are prioritised by wellbeing and social care services
- People living with dementia will experience joined up support from our social care services and our health partners

Priority area: [Protecting and enhancing our environment](#)

One of our greatest assets in West Berkshire is our natural environment, with almost three quarters of the district sitting within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Protecting and enhancing our environment remains a priority for us, reaffirming the commitment made by the Council in 2019, when we unanimously declared a Climate Emergency. We agreed to work towards achieving carbon neutrality for West Berkshire Council and enabling and encouraging residents and other stakeholders to make as much progress as possible towards carbon neutrality in the district by 2030.

In recent years, the Council has been installing electric vehicle charging points in car parks and on selected residential streets. We have implemented measures to increase the district's resilience to flooding, drought and other impacts of climate change. Over 600 additional properties are now protected as a result of new flood alleviation schemes implemented in the lifetime of the Council Strategy 2019-2023. We have also provided good local waste services, including a new food waste collection service, which have led to higher recycling levels in the district when compared to the national average.

In addition, we have invested significantly in our local infrastructure, including roads, footpaths and digital communications, to support our residents to travel around sustainably, explore the district using active travel and to benefit from good physical and virtual connectivity.

The main areas we must continue to focus on are related to the climate emergency. We will need to build on the successes achieved in the last four years through our Environment Strategy to further expand opportunities to generate and use renewable energy, to increase the district's resilience to the impacts of climate change (e.g. flooding, droughts) and to work with residents and communities to respond together to this emergency. In addition, we must support local people to recycle and reuse more; maintain good quality roads and transport infrastructure; and protect, enhance and ensure accessibility to our local public natural spaces.

To do this, we must build on the new, creative ways we have been involving our residents in over the past few years. One such example is our multi award-winning Community Municipal Investment Bond which raised £1m to fund our environmental projects, including Solar PV installations, active travel infrastructure improvements and tree planting.

CASE STUDY- [Community Municipal Investment](#)

West Berkshire launched the United Kingdom's first Community Municipal Investment, or community bond, in late 2020. This ground-breaking bond was the result of months of hard work and was a genuinely innovative approach to delivering social value through finance.

Through this project, the Council was able to fund £1m worth of projects within the Environment Strategy using invested funds from individuals across the country to derive social value while also securing a return for investors.

The project has since won a number of awards including a Public Finance Award, has featured on the inaugural Net Zero 50 list and been shortlisted for two Local Government Chronicle Awards.

What you have told us so far

The majority of our residents told us that they see protecting the environment as a priority and that they would be taking their own action to achieve carbon neutrality ([Residents Survey 2021](#)). They reported that the quality of our roads and waste management, in particular better recycling and public space cleanliness, should be areas of focus.

Draft Outcomes for 2023-2027

We have considered the evidence and developed the following draft outcomes:

- Carbon neutrality achieved by West Berkshire Council by 2030
- Residents and businesses are enabled and encouraged to act on what they can do to contribute to carbon neutrality
- Installation of more renewable energy capacity
- Additional electric vehicle charging points installed, both in Council car parks and on residential streets without off-street parking

- Biodiversity net gain (including natural carbon reduction solutions) to offset new housing developments
- Our land's natural beauty is conserved and enhanced by integrated working with other local authorities, AONB and the Government
- Increased resilience to climate change by expanding flood prevention and minimising impacts of droughts
- Increased level of waste reused, recycled or composted
- Our primary, secondary and local road networks are maintained in a good state of repair
- Better travel options available to our residents including in rural areas
- Sustainable building, ensuring the right homes and the right jobs are in the right place
- Facilitate all residents' access to public open spaces
- Effective deterrence of fly-tipping

Priority area: [Stronger communities](#)

The Council does not work in isolation and has always looked to develop partnerships which enable residents, businesses and voluntary and community sector organisations to help themselves or receive help when needed. To support this, we have significantly enhanced our communication and engagement with residents through the use of newsletters, panels, webinars and events to involve local people more in our work. This was all the more important during the response to Covid-19, when our work with our communities, Town and Parish Councils, voluntary and other partner organisations was key to our response to, and recovery from, the pandemic.

By conducting public consultations, undertaking two Residents Surveys and engaging with seldom heard residents through outreach work, we have increased opportunities for a wider range of views, from people and communities across the district, to inform our strategies and plans (see further details on our [Consultation and Engagement Hub](#)). We value such contributions and are committed to do more in this area with an even greater focus on ensuring the voice of our younger residents is captured.

We have transformed the way in which residents access health and social care services, by strengthening our partnership working with the NHS, Town and Parish Councils, voluntary and community sector organisations and other key partners so that we can best respond to their needs. This helps us to offer the best possible support to our residents and businesses, which in turn boosts the district's resilience to economic, environmental or social challenges.

This joint working has made it possible to help our community through difficult circumstances by supporting our most vulnerable residents during Covid or offering a safe place for people displaced from their countries such as those from Afghanistan, Ukraine and Hong Kong.

CASE STUDY- Working with our communities

In March 2020, as communities across West Berkshire 'stood up' in response to the emerging Covid Challenge, the Council, in partnership with Greenham Trust and the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire, created the Community Support Hub to help coordinate the incredible 'community response'.

The Community Support Hub provided coordination, information and advice to community groups and individuals throughout West Berkshire, which enabled them support those who needed help.

Although the Community Support Hub fulfilled a pivotal role, it was the groups and individuals across the district that provided important and often essential help to those who needed to 'Shield' or who were finding it difficult to carry out everyday tasks.

During the response to Covid there were nearly 90 community groups and over 3,000 volunteers involved in helping others.

The Council has subsequently used the 'Hub Model' and enduring support from Greenham Trust and the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to create a Homes for Ukraine Support Hub and most recently a Cost Of Living Support Hub.

The Council will seek to continue to work *with* residents and communities, to help themselves and others.

What you have told us so far

Our residents play an important role in making West Berkshire the great place that it is with around one in three residents reporting that they volunteer in their spare time. The main reasons for volunteering mentioned by residents were that they wanted to do good for others and the community (77%), followed by just over a quarter (28%) stating they wanted to feel more of a connection with their local community and that it would help with their mental health and wellbeing.

The great community spirit in West Berkshire was particularly prominent during the pandemic when local people stepped up to help others in the community at a time of crisis.

Draft Outcomes for 2023-2027

We have considered the evidence and developed the following draft outcomes:

- Children and young people will be better heard to influence change in their area
- Closer and more effective working with our communities and partner organisations (including Town and Parish Councils and the private sector commissioned service providers) so residents achieve the outcomes that they need

- Improved health and wellbeing of our residents by working with Health and Wellbeing Board and other partner organisations
- West Berkshire continues to be a safe place
- Maximised engagement with the culture, arts and heritage offer
- More people enabled to be physically active in the district
- Reduced isolation (including rural isolation and young people isolation)

Priority area: Great place to live, learn and do business

West Berkshire's strong local economy is another reason why it is a great place to live. Our district is part of the successful Thames Valley economy, which showed strong resilience to the impacts of Covid-19 when compared with other parts of the country. During and since the pandemic, the Council has supported employees, self-employed residents and businesses by promptly distributing financial help, by providing advice and assistance to safely reopen once lockdown restrictions had been lifted, and continuing to offer advice and support for start-ups and companies wanting to expand. West Berkshire continues to maintain a strong labour market, including high employment levels, with the number of jobs exceeding the number of residents aged 16-64.

West Berkshire is amongst the top 10% of the most prosperous districts in the country. The local economy has the opportunity to employ residents with higher qualifications compared to other areas, with average wages above the regional and national levels. As the available jobs in the district are primarily in the Trade, Information and Communication, Manufacturing and Administrative domains, some of them with quickly evolving technologies and specialisations, it is important to maintain the focus on the continuous development of skills for all our residents through formal learning and education, but also by building on our successes achieved through Kick Start apprenticeship schemes, support careers fairs and work experience opportunities.

2021 Census data shows that the district has an ageing population which brings the challenge of making the district more attractive for our young people. This is exacerbated by the rurality of the district – over a third of the population living in rural areas – therefore, in addition to targeting opportunities in our town centres and working with the main employers in the district, we must also further develop our rural centres of excellence (horse racing industry, viticulture, tech etc.).

Our strong economy is supported by excellent physical and digital infrastructure. The district has excellent roads and rail transport infrastructure, links with other main economic centres such as London, Bristol, Oxford or the port cities in the South along the M4 and A34 corridors. Digital connectivity is vital for ensuring higher economic productivity especially following the change to a more remote working pattern since the pandemic. The Council has also completed a programme to ensure businesses and over 98% of people in West Berkshire are able to access ultrafast broadband ensuring the district has one of the best digital connectivity in the country.

A strong and resilient local economy requires continuous, long term prioritisation to ensure it withstands the impacts of international shorter or longer term challenges, such as the economic impact of the pandemic or of the conflicts impacting energy prices and the cost of living.

CASE STUDY- Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) COVID SUPPORT AWARD

West Berkshire Council prioritised supporting its businesses through the pandemic. This included deferring business rates for the first few months of the pandemic, providing businesses with a wide range of advice and resources to support them to reopen, holding a number of business-focussed webinars and distributing millions of pounds in government grants.

The Council also created a unique local scheme called the [Additional Restriction Grant \(ARG\) Challenge Fund](#) which offered upfront grants for projects or investments that would support businesses' innovation, recovery and growth. The scheme with 'Green Growth' and 'Digital' innovation at its heart proved very popular with 130 applications and 44 grant awards being made to local businesses. These efforts resulted in the Council winning the South Central Federation of Small Businesses Local Government Award for Covid-19 Support in 2022.

What you have told us so far

Nine in every ten residents reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their local area as a place to live with around three quarters saying that they had high levels of satisfaction with their life. Feedback from the seldom heard groups highlighted the importance of making our urban centres attractive and vibrant including for young people. They also highlighted the importance of education at all stages to be prioritised.

We engage extensively with the business community, including in our rural areas, and we recently held a Rural Business Forum to hear their views. We also seek the views of a wide range of businesses through the Quarterly Business Survey undertaken by the Chamber of Commerce. This informs our priorities for supporting businesses, including how to use Government funding such as the Rural Prosperity and UK Shared Prosperity funds. Feedback from our rural businesses suggests that they want to diversify to increase jobs and skills in our rural areas, and would benefit from financial support to achieve this. Recruitment and inflation have also been raised as concerns from surveyed businesses across a range of industries.

Draft Outcomes for 2023-2027

We have considered the evidence and developed the following draft outcomes:

- New skills acquired by residents through lifelong learning
- Routes to employment are enhanced, including by supporting schools to encourage [T Levels](#) qualifications and further education

- Residents benefit from apprenticeships, a Council work experience programme, career advice and our support at careers fairs
- Investment in the district secured, from a range of businesses to remain competitive through a mixed economy
- Local economy benefits of a sustainable workforce (retention of professional jobs, placements for social care students from the university centre at Newbury College)
- Increased productivity in particular for rural based jobs by exploiting our existing rural clusters (viticulture, horse racing, tech, traditional farming) and supporting the environment around centres of excellence
- Local economic growth supported by infrastructure developments
- Vibrant local town centres
- Opportunities are created for young people to live, learn and socialise in the district, including by focusing on their needs when delivering town centres place making strategies
- Residents access more work, learning and leisure opportunities through increased digital connectivity

Priority area: Building public services for the future

We are proud of our strong record of delivering good local services while managing our budget and resources well. Our efforts have seen us being recognised as having among the best value for money council tax in the country and good levels of resident satisfaction. (LGA Value for money profiles)

Over the last few years, we have focused on prioritising the services that our residents needed the most and reviewing all our services to identify transformation opportunities to deliver outcomes for residents and communities in the most effective and efficient way. This focus placed us in a good position when we had to completely change our ways of working in order to respond to Covid challenges at local level. For instance, we were among the first local authorities in the country to adopt virtual meetings for our decision making bodies (Council, Executive and other Committee meetings) which increased the accessibility of the democratic process.

During the pandemic, residents, council employees and partner organisations, all experienced new ways of receiving and providing services. Enhanced communication and better use of digital technology have been vital for service delivery and helped a better, more visible and closer relationship with those who use our services. Similarly, closer working with Government departments allowed us to identify and offer local solutions to support our residents, such as Covid grants' distributions and hosting displaced Ukrainian families etc. The Council will explore further devolution initiatives from Government for the benefit of our residents.

Our residents have provided positive feedback about how the Council runs services and about the Council's response to the pandemic. As customers' expectations and the ways of delivering services are evolving to a new, post-pandemic normal, the challenge remains to assess and continuously improve what we do to ensure our services remain effective and relevant for the future.

CASE STUDY- Household, Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) Booking

In early spring of 2020, many of the Council's facilities were closed as a response to the pandemic, including its HWRCs. The Council's Digital Services Team worked with the Waste Management Team and its booking platform supplier at pace during the first week of May 2020 to deliver a solution to manage demand for HWRCs, both so they could be operated in a Covid secure way, and to ensure queueing traffic would not become dangerous given the expected high demand when they reopened.

HWRC Booking was launched on 13 May 2020 with customers able to use the Click and Tip service online or phone the Contact Centre to book an appointment, allowing customers to choose their engagement channel.

During the first 18 months from the launch of the service, over a quarter of a million appointments have been made, with 97% of customers using Click and Tip and 3% using a phone to make their bookings..

Three separate customer surveys were undertaken between June 2020 and June 2021. Of the 3000+ respondents 79% expressed the view that the Council should keep the booking system, with 90% saying they had a positive experience of using it.

What you have told us so far

The majority of our residents gave us positive feedback about how we manage local services, the way in which we act on their concerns, and how effectively we keep them informed.

Some areas for attention are ensuring residents are clear how their Council Tax is being spent, how they can become further involved in our decision making and how we can make our services even more accessible.

Draft Outcomes for 2023-2027

We have considered the evidence and developed the following draft outcomes:

- Good quality public services for all (compared to all local authorities in England)
- Residents are more aware of the Council's services and how well we are performing
- Strong budget management (compared to all local authorities in England) and initiatives to generate financial efficiency
- Residents more engaged with the decision making processes about the services that impact them
- Continually improving customer experience and enable digital access option to services for the residents that want and can access them in this way
- Successful implementation of our new Customer Charter

West Berkshire Council Customer Charter

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Committee considering report: | Executive |
| Date of Committee: | 12 January 2023 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Lynne Doherty |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 22 December 2022 |
| Report Author: | Gabrielle Mancini |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX4311 |

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present a formal public-facing Customer Services Charter. This was a key action within the Communications and Engagement Strategy and will form part of the 'One Council' approach (also known as 'Many Channels, One Service project) being developed. Elements of the Digital Strategy will also be incorporated in this Charter in line with other commitments to further digitisation.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the draft Customer Charter is approved by Executive.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|------------------------|--|
| Financial: | Adopting the Charter itself will not have any direct costs. The indirect costs attributed to staff training and further digitisation have either been accounted for or, where necessary, will be subject to Transformation Funding at relevant stages of the project. |
| Human Resource: | Staff training will eventually form part of the induction and training programme. |

| | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------|---|
| Legal: | None. The Monitoring Officer was consulted while drafting this report. | | | |
| Risk Management: | There is a risk that we leave the organisation open to more complaints if we are in breach of our own service standards. It is not considered that this would be a valid reason not to proceed. | | | |
| Property: | None. However, one of the considerations of the Many Channels, One Service will be to offer a 'pod' in Reception and in community hubs whereby customers can access digital services within our building. This will have some impact from a Property perspective. | | | |
| Policy: | N/A | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | x | | | An improved and more accessible service can only have positive impacts for all in the community, particularly given our commitment to reaching out to seldom heard communities. |
| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | x | | | An improved and more accessible service can only have positive impacts for all in the community, particularly given our commitment to reaching out to seldom heard communities. |
| Environmental Impact: | x | | | Extended access to digital services will avoid the need to travel to in-person appointments and meetings. |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Health Impact: | | x | | N/A |
| ICT Impact: | | x | | It is likely that additional digitisation will have an impact on our network. However, our experiences during Covid have demonstrated that the system is sufficiently resilient. |
| Digital Services Impact: | | x | | It is likely that additional digitisation will have resource implications for the Digital Team. However, these have been accounted for already in our service planning and in the Digital Strategy. |
| Council Strategy Priorities: | x | | | Priority- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships This will positively impact on the service levels offered to our customers and will also allow us to use customer data to improve service delivery. |
| Core Business: | x | | | This will positively impact on the service levels offered to our customers and will also allow us to use customer data to improve service delivery. |
| Data Impact: | | x | | It may do depending on the method used to collate customer feedback and the digital platforms used to carry out digital transactions. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Consultation and Engagement: | <p>All Department/Service Management Teams</p> <p>Customer First Programme Board</p> <p>All Customer Services staff</p> <p>A series of staff focus groups</p> <p>Sam Shepherd- Programme Manager- Local Communities</p> <p>Pamela Voss- Equality and Diversity Officer</p> <p>Resident focus groups attended by the Consultation & Engagement Officer</p> |
|-------------------------------------|---|

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The development of a Customer Services Charter was a key action contained within the Communications and Engagement Strategy, which was approved by Executive in October 2020.
- 4.2 The Charter contains a number of proposed clear service standards which customers can expect regardless of the channel chosen to contact us.
- 4.3 These standards relate to the various channels through which our customers engage with us, including:
 - Telephone
 - Email or letter
 - Social media
 - At our offices
 - In their homes/ the community
- 4.4 It also contains information about how customers can escalate their concerns, compliments or feedback so that we can resolve issues and use this to further improve our service delivery.
- 4.5 The final part of the Charter seeks to outline what we ask of our customers in order to perform our roles effectively and help them in a timely manner.
- 4.6 This draft Charter was subject to internal and external testing over the past six months and is now ready to be considered for adoption.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The Communications and Engagement Strategy was adopted in October 2020 in response to recommendations contained in a Local Government Association Peer Review which took place in November 2019 as well as to enhanced levels of

engagement with the community as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the actions contained within the strategy was the establishment of a Customer Charter with the aim of setting out clear and consistent service standards for our customers.

Background

- 5.2 The Local Government Peer Review which took place in November 2019 found that although West Berkshire Council is a high performing local authority, there were ways in which the authority could make improvements to the way in which it communicates and engages with its community as well as taking a more active role in the Place-making agenda. As a result, senior officers began to consider how communications and engagement might be made more prominent within the organisation.
- 5.3 The Covid-19 Pandemic necessitated an overnight change in how the Council both communicated and engaged with its local communities and consequently, enhanced performance was delivered at pace. Key changes have included the deployment of additional resources, less reliance on local media and more focus on contacting residents and businesses directly, a more prominent role for the Council Leader and Chief Executive and an increased focus on digital communication.
- 5.4 This work eventually resulted in the development of the Communications and Engagement Strategy, which was eventually adopted in October 2020. This strategy contained a number of transformative initiatives with respect to improving the authority's communication and engagement with its communities, of which a Customer Charter was one.
- 5.5 This draft charter was developed in conjunction with all service areas within the authority and has achieved consensus.

Proposals

- It is proposed that this draft Customer Charter, which has been subject to consultation with all service areas, is rolled out to all service areas to ensure that the level of service offered meets needs of all within the community.
- It is proposed that this Charter is adopted in tandem with a concerted internal effort towards a culture whereby good customer service is seen to be the responsibility of all within the organisation. This will ensure the successful implementation of the Charter.
- It is proposed that this Charter is adopted in tandem with the Many Channels, One Service approach, including the aspirations set out in the Digital Strategy. This will ensure that there is strategic alignment and that customers have the best possible chance of receiving a high standard of customer service, regardless of channel or service area.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 Not adopting a Customer Charter could be considered, but this would be contrary to the actions set out within the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Ensuring that customers receive a consistently high standard of service regardless of the channel through which they choose to contact us and the service area they are accessing is a priority for us as a customer-focussed organisation.
- 7.2 Although there is an underlying understanding of the organisation’s expectations with respect to customer service and the authority has good levels of customer satisfaction, a formal charter has never been adopted. Many authorities use similar charters to communicate clearly what customers should expect, as well as what is expected of them, and the Communications and Engagement Strategy made the case for this model to be adopted in West Berkshire.
- 7.3 There is a need to ensure that everyone within the organisation has the skills and tools they need to deliver the standards of customer service contained within the charter. For this reason, training in communications should be rolled out as part of mandatory training in a way that is tailored to the expectations apportioned to officers at various levels of the organisations. This internal element of rolling out the charter effectively will run in tandem with our public-facing efforts to test, finalise and publicise it.
- 7.4 There are also clear expectations outlined in the Digital Strategy about extending access to our digital platforms so that the range of transactions available meets customer demand. This may also lead to improvements with service standards received by customers using other channels as the number of high volume transactions being processed manually are likely to decrease. It also bears repeating that the service standards expressed in the charter will apply to our digital services as well as our other channels.
- 7.5 By adopting a charter that we have co-produced with all service areas and using data from the Residents Survey, we move closer to our aspirations of becoming a more effective and inclusive local authority. For this reason, this approach meets our strategic priorities with respect to communications and engagement.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft Customer Charter

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
 - Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
 - Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position
 - Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
-

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

Officer details:

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Job Title: Service Lead, Customer Engagement and Transformation

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West Berkshire Council Customer Service Charter

We want our district to be a great place to live, work, learn and visit, as outlined in our Council Strategy, and for our customers to have the best possible experience. In our Customer Charter we let you know how we will interact with you when you contact us.

Our commitment to you and how we will work together

| We will | In return, we ask that you |
|--|--|
| be polite and open | treat our staff politely |
| listen to you and respect your needs treat all customers fairly and equally | inform us if you are unhappy with the service you receive and let us have feedback if we have done well |
| make sure that our employees are trained to give you the advice that you need | treat our offices with respect so that everyone can enjoy them let us know in good time if you need to cancel or rearrange an appointment |
| use easy to understand language and provide information in other languages or formats on request | tell us if you need information in another language or format |
| deal with your personal information sensitively and in accordance with GDPR requirements | ensure we have up to date details for you and your household make use of our online portal, if you can, to carry out transactions |

When you write to us, we will:

- aim to respond in a timely manner by post dependent on mail providers.
- acknowledge receipt of your letter if you provide an email address or contact telephone number

When you call us, we will:

- answer calls to our switchboard within **2 minutes**
- greet you politely
- tell you who you are speaking to and the name of the service or place you are calling
- put calls through to the right place first time
- arrange a call back if we are not able to put you through
- return your messages within **24 hours**

When we visit you, we will:

- arrive on time
- wear name badges or carry identification
- provide our contact details and clearly explain follow up actions, where appropriate

When you e-mail us, we will:

- provide an automatic response to all enquiries received to generic email addresses
- We will respond **within the timescales laid out in this automated response**
- acknowledge your email within **2 working days** and confirm what will happen next when emailing all other council email addresses

When you contact us on social media, we will:

- provide an acknowledgement where requested
- give you details of who is dealing with your enquiry
- if you ask us a question, we will respond within **24 hours** when our offices are open'

When you visit us, we will:

- create an environment that is welcoming
- provide clear signage
- make sure you are greeted within **1 minute** of your arrival
- provide self service facilities where appropriate, including access to relevant IT equipment
- provide private areas where you can discuss confidential matters
- start meetings on time

When dealing with complaints, comments and compliments, we will:

- provide you with information about how to report a complaint, comment or compliment
- record your feedback and use it to improve our services
- respond to complaints within **15 working days**
- treat complaints confidentially and fairly
- inform you how you can take your complaint further if you are not satisfied
- apologise when we are at fault and work to put things right

We will keep customers informed and involved by:

- publishing accurate, useful and up to date information
- providing information in other languages and formats on request
- publishing customer service performance data
- reviewing our customer standards every year
- using your feedback to help us make decisions

We commit to these standards during our opening hours. If you need emergency out of hours assistance, please call 01635 42161.



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2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Two

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Committee considering report: | Executive |
| Date of Committee: | 12 January 2023 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Thomas Marino |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 15 December 2022 |
| Report Author: | Jenny Legge/Catalin Bogos |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX4210 |

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide assurance that the core business and council priorities for improvement measures in the [Council Strategy 2019-2023](#) are being managed effectively, and where performance has fallen below the expected level, present information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2019-2023, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the council's priorities for improvement, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|-------------------------|---|
| Financial: | To be highlighted and managed by individual services. |
| Human Resource: | To be highlighted and managed by individual services. |
| Legal: | To be highlighted and managed by individual services. |
| Risk Management: | To be highlighted and managed by individual services. |
| Property: | To be highlighted and managed by individual services. |
| Policy: | To be highlighted and managed by individual services. |

| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
|--|--|---------|----------|--|
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | | x | | |
| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | | x | | |
| Environmental Impact: | | x | | |
| Health Impact: | | x | | |
| ICT or Digital Services Impact: | | x | | |
| Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual: | x x | | | Supports all priorities and core business of the Council Strategy 2019-2023. |
| Data Impact: | | x | | |
| Consultation and Engagement: | The information provided for this report, has been signed off by the relevant Head of Service/Service Director and Portfolio Holder. | | | |

4 Executive Summary

4.1 This paper provides updates for each component of the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2019-2023:

- Non-targeted influencer measures for context.
- Targeted measures for each core business area.
- Targeted measures for each priority for improvement.
- Corporate health measures for internal context.

4.2 The **Influencer measures** indicated that the district continued to fare well. However, in some areas there is an increasing pressure on demand for services.

- 4.3 The economic indicators (economic activity, unemployment rates and business rated properties) continued to show strong resilience, even if further improving trends on some measures, such as employment (chart 2), unemployment rate (chart 3), claimant count (charts 5-6) have slowed down to some degree, on the improvement trajectory, at the end of Q2. However, business properties numbers, footfall and parking tickets continue to further recover and improve.
- 4.4 The social care measures highlight increasing pressures and demand on services such as children social care, adult social care and housing.
- 4.5 Performance for 2022/23 showed that, despite increasing demand, the Council continued to ensure **core business** service delivery, whilst also managing the response to the [cost of living crisis](#) and aiding refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- 4.6 The majority of the measures achieved challenging targets set to maintain the best quartile comparative position nationally. Examples include, good or better inspection outcomes for our schools and our children's services, timely response to children at risk of abuse or neglect, prompt adult social care financial assessments, business rates collections, support for businesses in the district and increasing visits to our libraries.
- 4.7 Of the measures rated Amber or Red, a number of areas to highlight to the Executive include:
- Timeliness of visits to children in care – impacted by recording and staff recruiting pressures experienced not only locally, but at regional level too;
 - Council Tax – the effects of Covid (adapted temporarily the collection approach, supporting residents with special arrangements when needed), and now potentially the cost of living, impacted on customers' ability to pay;
 - Housing Benefit claims processing times - impacted by the increased volume of claims relating to Covid, and as the cost of living rises there was an increase in Exceptional Hardship claims.
- 4.8 Improvement activity through the Council Strategy **priorities for improvement** continued to progress, with the majority of measures targeted for this year being achieved. Areas of achievement to note include: successful outcomes from early response support for parents and children, offered accommodation to 100% of rough sleepers, a high proportion of care leavers in education, employment or training, above target number of young people (including with special needs) involved in work experience, further expansion of our cycling routes, progressing the refurbishment of the Newbury Lido, and the development of a co-production framework to expand our ways of engaging with residents, communities and partner organisations.
- 4.9 Some measures were not reporting due to data availability (e.g. educational attainment, where confirmed data is due to be published in January/February).
- 4.10 The council's **corporate health indicators** highlight focus on resource management, a controlled approach, which will be further expanded, to manage service demand and inflation pressures on the Council's funding, resulting in a £1.1m budget overspend forecast, and an increase in workforce turnover.

5 Supporting Information

Influencer measures

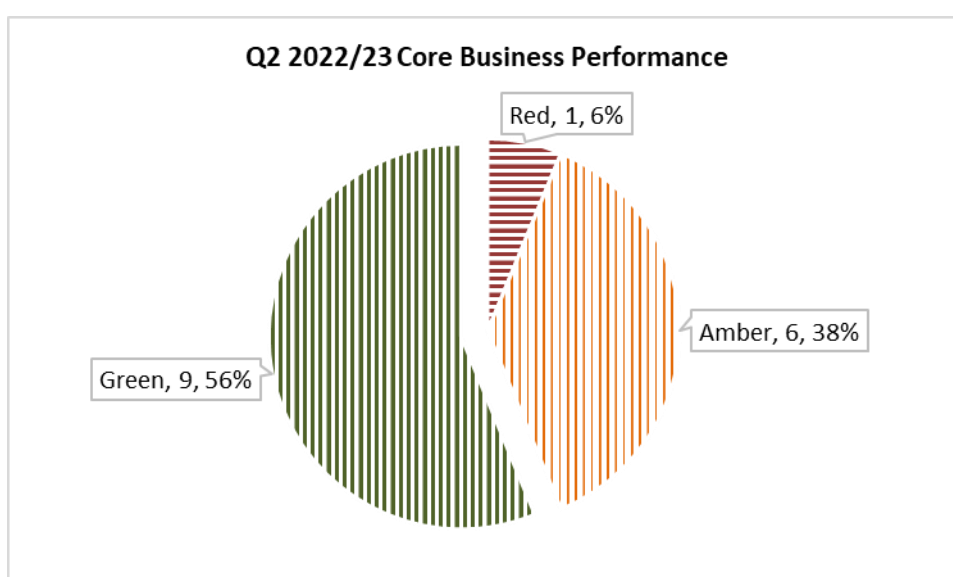
Refer to Appendix A for more detail

- 5.1 Non-targeted measures of volume are monitored to provide context to the work being carried out across Council services.
- 5.2 The major focus for the district continued to be on **recovery and renewal** whilst responding and adapting to emerging economic and social challenges.
- 5.3 Overall, the local **economy has remained strong**. Unemployment rate (chart 3), total claimant count (charts 5 and 6) and business rated properties (chart 7) remained at previously achieved strong levels, but for the quarter further improvement has slowed down. Despite the rising cost of living (9.1% nationally in the year to June 2022), local economy measures show that more people visited Newbury Town Centre compared to the same period last year, with footfall increasing by 6%, and a 26% increase in parking tickets sold in WBC managed car parks (charts 12 and 13). The cost of houses in the district continued to rise (chart 14). However, the number of planning applications fell, with 20% fewer minor applications being submitted.
- 5.4 Within the local **social indicators**, the number of all crimes reported to Thames Valley Police has increased, but based on the information available, the increase is not associated to a particular causal factor.
- 5.5 The increase in demand to children's services remained high compared to previous years, as a result of cases reaching the services at a more acute crisis point (charts 22 and 24). The higher levels of Section 47s resulted in higher numbers of Child Protection Plans and, to a lesser extent, children in care (charts 23, 25 and 24).
- 5.6 In adult social care (ASC), the steady rise in the number of new adult safeguarding enquiries (chart 32) indicated sustained demand.
- 5.7 The number of ASC clients requiring Long Term support increased by 4.7% compared to Q2 last year, notably in the 65 and over age group.
- 5.8 The number of people accessing enablement predominantly relates to those supported via hospital discharge pathways. There was a notable increase in 2020/21 and 2021/22 linked to the impact of the COVID pandemic and shift in guidance and funding arrangements from NHS-D to support the pathways for timely discharge. The guidance and funding changed for 2022/23, so a drop in the referrals from hospital and numbers receiving enablement was anticipated. This drop was reflected in activity seen this year (chart 35).
- 5.9 The number of households prevented from becoming homeless declined and there are more people on the Housing register (charts 36 and 37). This was due to factors, such as a significant drop in the number of available, affordable (compared to the local housing allowance) private rented sector properties.

5.10 Borrowing from libraries continued to rise, being 19.8% higher than this quarter in 2021/22 (chart 40).

Core Business Activities

5.11 The majority of the core business measures have achieved strong performance results against challenging targets and on a background of increasing demand on most of the Council’s services. The chart below provides a summary of the 16 performance measures by RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status. Full details about the results achieved are provided in the tables below (one about performance against targets and one about the latest benchmarking information available) and the subsequent narrative section. Further details are provided in the Exception Reports (Appendix B).



Please note:

- R (red): year-end target will not be met
- A (amber): behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target
- G (green): year-end target will be met.
- DNA: Data not available
- DNP: Data not provided

Refer to Appendix C for technical conventions

| Category | Measure | RAG | 2022/23 | | Notes |
|-------------------------|--|-----|------------------|--------|--|
| | | | Q2 (YTD) Outturn | Target | |
| Protecting our children | Ofsted rating of at least Good for our Children and Family Service | G | Good | Good | Result of the OFSTED inspection which took place in March 2022 |

2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Two

| Category | Measure | RAG | 2022/23 | | Notes |
|----------------------|--|--------|--------------------|---------|--|
| | | | Q2 (YTD) Outturn | Target | |
| | % of Children in Care where the child has been visited in the past 6 weeks (or 12 weeks if this is the agreed visiting schedule) | A | 85.7% | ≥95% | YTD: 168 / 196 When exploring the data in detail the reduction in visit compliance is found in the Family Safeguarding Model teams, this is due to the significant increase in all areas of their work (Children In Need, Child Protection and Children In Care) and recruitment challenges thus making visit compliance more challenging. See exception report for details |
| Supporting education | % of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted | G | 95% | ≥95% | YTD: 75 / 79 |
| | % of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions) | Annual | 99% | ≥98% | |
| | % of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions) | Annual | 98% | ≥95% | |
| | % of 16-17 year olds participating in education and training | dna | Data not available | Top 20% | Finalised national statistics not available before the end of the quarter, so no national comparators available. However, the percentage rate of participation is comparable to Sept 2020 and Sept 2021. |

2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Two

| Category | Measure | RAG | 2022/23 | | Notes |
|--|---|--------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | | Q2 (YTD) Outturn | Target | |
| Ensuring the wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults | % of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and rated as good or better | R | 80.0% | =100% | YTD: 4/5. Birchwood Nursing Home was re-inspected in July 2022 and achieved an overall rating of Requires Improvement (RI). All other ASC Regulated services are rated 'Good'. See exception report for details. |
| | % of financial assessments actioned within 3 weeks of referral to the Financial Assessment & Charging Team | G | 99.2% | ≥98% | YTD: 526 / 530 |
| Maintaining our roads | % of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair | Annual | Annual Q4 | ≤3% | |
| Countryside and open spaces | Adopt the Rights of Way Improvement Plan | dnp | Data not provided | Complete in January 2023 | |
| | Survey the highway verge network, with partners and volunteers, for the wildlife verges project | Annual | Annual Q4 | 100% by March 2023 | |
| Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean | % of household waste recycled, composted and reused | A | 48.8% (P) | ≥ 49.5% (≥ 2018/19 outturn) | Q2 data is provisional. All results are subject to change once validated by DEFRA after Q4. See exception report for details |
| | Maintain an acceptable level of litter, detritus and graffiti (as outlined in the Keep Britain Tidy local environmental indicators) | A | Satisfactory (P) | Good | The first tranche (assessment) was not completed this year. Reported results are for Tranche 2. See exception report for details. |
| Providing benefits | Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims | A | 19.68 | ≤19 days | Processing times have been impacted by claims relating to Covid, and as the cost of living rises there has been an increase in Exceptional Hardship claims. See exception report for details |

2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Two

| Category | Measure | RAG | 2022/23 | | Notes |
|---|---|-----|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| | | | Q2 (YTD) Outturn | Target | |
| Collecting Council Tax and Business rates | Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due | A | 56.0% | Year end ≥98.8% Q2 57.7% | The effects of Covid, and now potentially the cost of living, is still having an impact on customer's ability to pay. See exception report for details. |
| | Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due | G | 60.7% | Year end ≥98% Q2 61.0% | |
| Planning and housing | % of planning appeals won | G | 67.6% | ≥65% (England average) | |
| | % of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time | A | 83.0% | ≥90% (England average) | Q2: 27 / 32 YTD: 39 / 47 See exception report for details |
| | % of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time | A | 78.5% | ≥86% (England average) | Q2: 44 / 58 YTD: 102 / 130 See exception report for details |
| | % of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time | A | 85.2% | ≥90% (England average) | Q2: 266 / 312 YTD: 490 / 575 See exception report for details |
| Economic development | Deliver quarterly business engagement events to provide businesses with advice and guidance, or promote awareness of Council activities | G | 2 | 1 per quarter | |
| | Establish and implement an account management approach toward business and investment relationship management and support | G | On track | Mar 23 | Linked to Investment Strategy and the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) Funding |

Please note:

R (red): year-end target will not be met

A (amber): behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

G (green): year-end target will be met.

DNA: Data not available
DNP: Data not provided

Refer to Appendix C for technical conventions

5.12 Performance for the majority of core business activities reported has been on target.

5.13 Recruitment challenges impacted our social care services' ability to achieve visit compliance, recording of the visits being one of the issues.

5.14 Housing benefit processing times were impacted by additional workload resulting from Covid related claims and Exceptional Hardship claims due to the cost of living crisis.

National Benchmarking for Core Business Measures (April 2018- March 2021)

5.15 No new benchmarking is available at time of publication. In the majority of services, we compare favourably with our peers and continue to maintain our position.

5.16 We benchmark against all authorities responsible for delivering the relevant functions, whether they be single tier, county, district or unitary.

| Category | Measure | National Quartile/Rank | | | 2022/23 Target | RAG | 2022/23 |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|----------------|--------|------------------|
| | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | | | Q2 (YTD) Outturn |
| Supporting education | % of maintained schools judged good or better by Ofsted | 1st Qtile Rank 17/152 (August) (YE: 95.7%) | 1st Qtile Rank 22/152 (YE: 95.7%) | 1st Qtile Rank: 36/151 (YE: 91.45%) | ≥95% | R | 95% |
| | % of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Primary Admissions) | 2nd Qtile Rank 51/152 (YE: 98.4%) | 1st Qtile Rank 12/152 (YE: 99.1%) | 1st Qtile Rank 15/151 (YE: 99.2%) | ≥98% | G | 99% |
| | % of applications receiving one of their three preferences for West Berkshire children (Secondary Admissions) | 1st Qtile Rank 27/152 (YE: 97.9%) | 1st Qtile Rank 36/152 (YE: 96.6%) | 1st Qrtile Rank 15/151 (YE: 98.2%) | ≥95% | G | 98% |
| Maintaining our roads | % of the principal road network (A roads) in need of repair | 2nd Qtile Rank 18/147 (YE: 2%) | 2nd Qtile Rank 19/128 (YE: 2%) | 3rd Qtile Rank 49/115 (YE: 3%) | ≤3% | Annual | Annual Q4 |

2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Two

| Category | Measure | National Quartile/Rank | | | 2022/23 Target | 2022/23 | |
|--|---|--|--|--|-----------------------------|---------|------------------|
| | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | | RAG | Q2 (YTD) Outturn |
| Collecting your bins and keeping the streets clean | % of household waste recycled, composted and reused | 1st Qtile Rank 30/146 (YE: 49.5%) | 1st Qtile Rank 32/148 (YE: 50.2%) | 1st Qtile Rank 33/149 (YE: 49.0%) | ≥ 49.5% (≥ 2018/19 outturn) | A | 48.8% |
| Collecting Council Tax and Business rates | Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due | 1st Qtile Rank 8/151 (YE: 98.5%) | 1st Qtile Rank 8/151 (YE: 98.5%) | 2nd Qtile Rank: 68/151 (YE: 95.9%) | ≥98.8% | A | 56.0% |
| | Non domestic rates collected as a percentage of non domestic rates due | 3rd Qtile Rank 82/151 (YE: 98.4%) | 1st Qtile Rank 20/151 (YE: 98.9%) | 2nd Qtile Rank: 48/151 (YE: 95.2%) | ≥98% | G | 60.7% |
| Planning and Housing | % of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time | 4th Qtile Rank 258/300 (YE: 78.1%) | 2nd Qtile Rank 67/305 (YE: 98.8%) | dna | ≥90% (England average) | A | 83.0% |
| | % of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time | 4th Qtile Rank 240/301 (YE: 77.5%) | 2nd Qtile Rank 108/306 (YE: 90.4%) | 2nd Qtile Rank 125/307 (YE: 89.5%) | ≥86% (England average) | A | 78.5% |
| | % of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time | 2nd Qtile Rank 119/309 (YE: 93%) | 2nd Qtile Rank 92/309 (YE: 94.8%) | 3rd Qtile Rank 224/309 (YE: 84.9%) | ≥90% (England average) | A | 85.2% |

Note: quartile position is described by both text (1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th Qtile) and colour (dark green, green, light red and red).

Council Strategy Priorities for Improvement:

5.17 Results at the end of Q2 show that progress continued to be made to deliver the Council Strategy priorities for improvement. The chart below provides a summary of the 15 performance measures by RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status. Further detail by priority for improvement and additional intelligence about achievements and challenges are included in the section below. For the latter, even more details are provided in the Exception Reports (Appendix B).

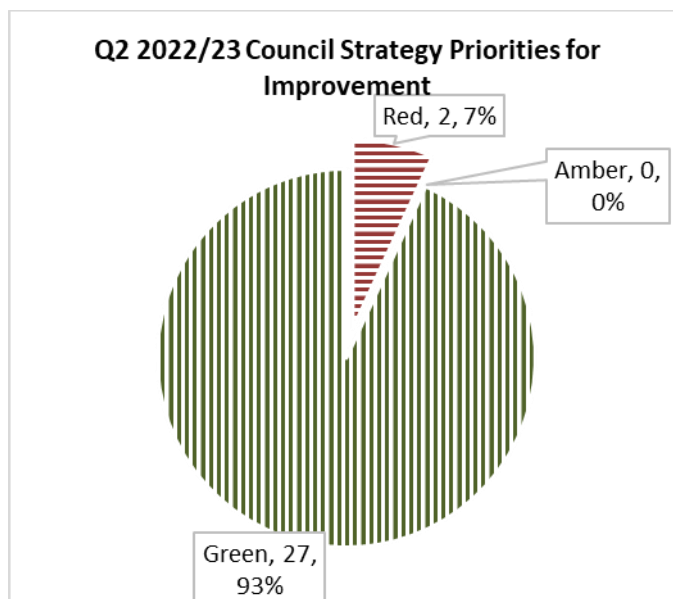


Table 1. Number of measures by priority of improvement and performance status

| Priority for Improvement | RAG Status | | | | |
|--|------------|----------|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Red | Amber | Green | Data not provided | Not due to be reported |
| Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| Support everyone to reach their full potential | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Maintain a green district | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 0 | 27 | 1 | 9 |

Note:

Red: year-end target will not be met

Amber: behind schedule, but expected to achieve year-end target

Green: year-end target will be met.

Other: includes Annual (reported once a year), data not available, data not provided and targets to be confirmed

Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes

5.18 Targets are exceeded for parents supported by our Early Response Hub reporting their concerns had been reduced.

5.19 100% of eligible rough sleepers were offered accommodation when first identified.

5.20 Supporting more vulnerable young adults into employment resulted in nearly three quarters of our care leavers aged 19 to 21 benefiting of employment, education or training, compared to the national figure of 52%, and above our target of 60%. In addition, by the end of Q2 the annual targets have already been exceeded for the number of young people involved in work experience and project work opportunities. Amongst the young people participating in such activities, some have special educational needs or disabilities.

Support everyone to reach their full potential

5.21 Work progressed on the development of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework to make sure that the people of West Berkshire have equal opportunities to benefit of high quality services, employment and options for personal development, and that West Berkshire Council maintains a fair and inclusive organisational culture.

Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire

5.22 The review of the Economic Delivery Strategy was completed, detailing the progress made since 2019 but also evidencing our support to ensure resilience and recovery of local businesses in response to the pandemic. A Business Engagement Plan has been adopted. In addition, a proposal for the Newbury Masterplan Wharf redesign project has been developed and the preparation of the Inward Investment Strategy continued as scheduled.

5.23 A forum for rural businesses and the horse racing industry was established.

Develop local infrastructure including housing to support and grow the local economy

5.24 Work was reported to be on track for connecting West Berkshire premises to Full Fibre with an increase from 25% to 80.2%.

Maintain a green district

5.25 EV charging infrastructure was available in 32% of WBC public car parks.

5.26 The work to increase the number of additional miles of cycle route is back on track.

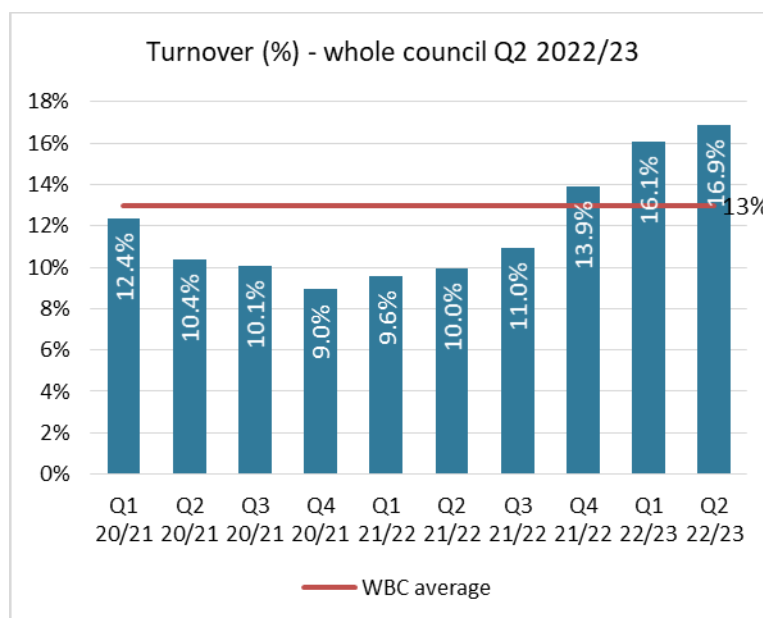
Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

5.27 A review of the community signposting needs was completed in June and the work to develop a solution continued.

Corporate Health

5.28 The provisional revenue outturn is a £1.1m forecast overspend which is being managed through a range of measures.

5.29 Staff turnover rose further to 16.9%, which was well above the WBC average rate.



Proposals

5.30 To note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the Council's priorities for improvement and remedial actions taken where performance was below target.

6 Other options considered

None considered.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Quarter two results show that strong performance levels have been maintained and key services delivered to residents as part of the activities in the Core Business category.

7.2 Action plans are in place to address performance measures rated "Amber" and "Red" and the Executive is asked to note these actions and the overall performance reported.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A - Influencer Measures

8.2 Appendix B - Exception Reports

8.3 Appendix C - Technical Conventions

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

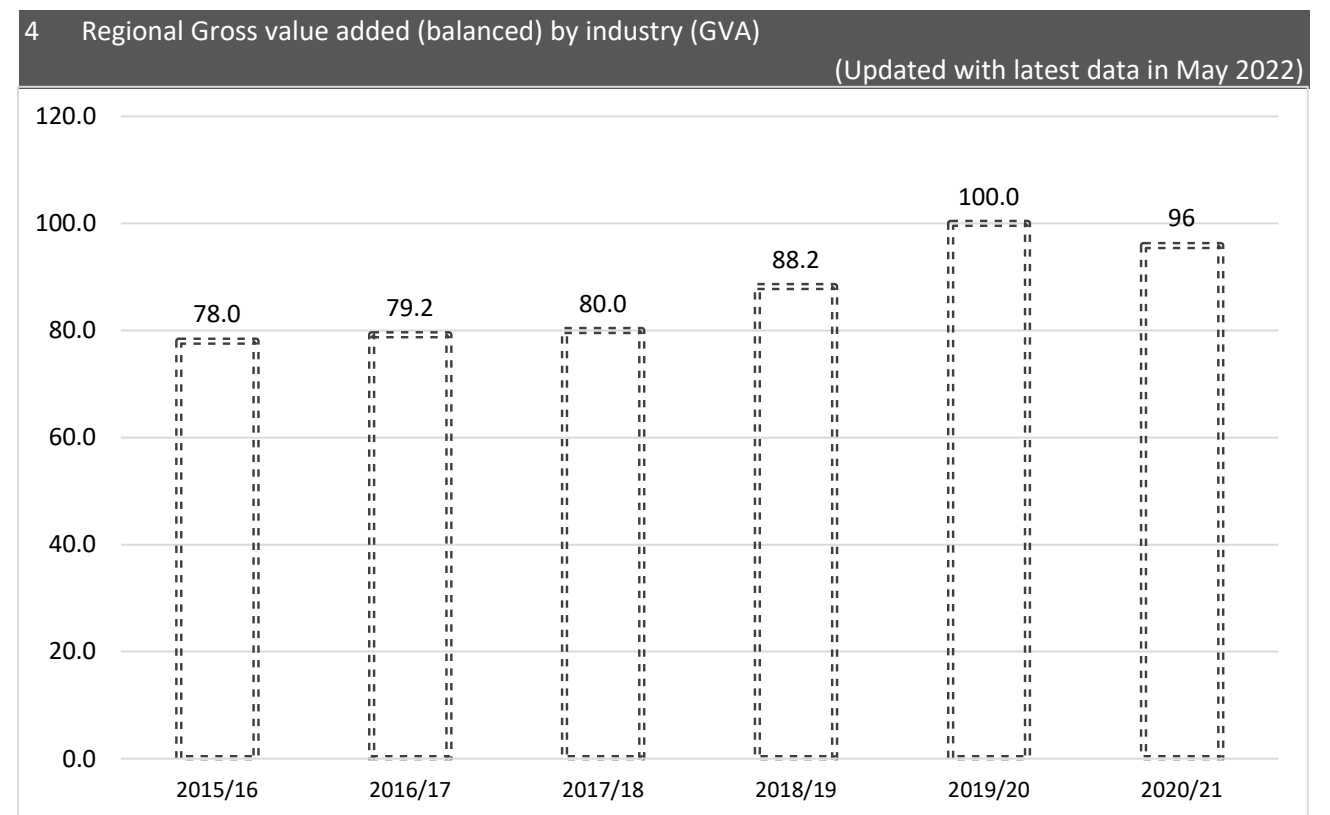
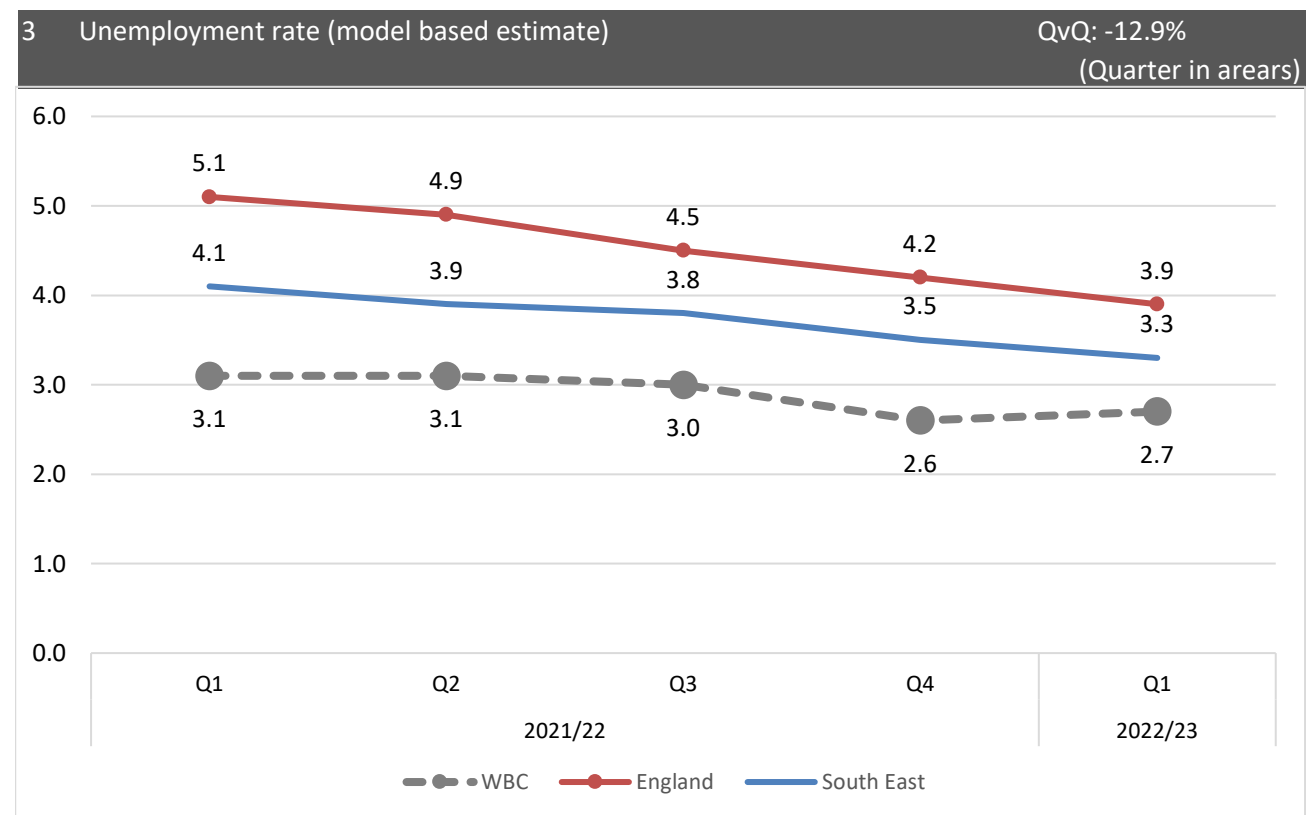
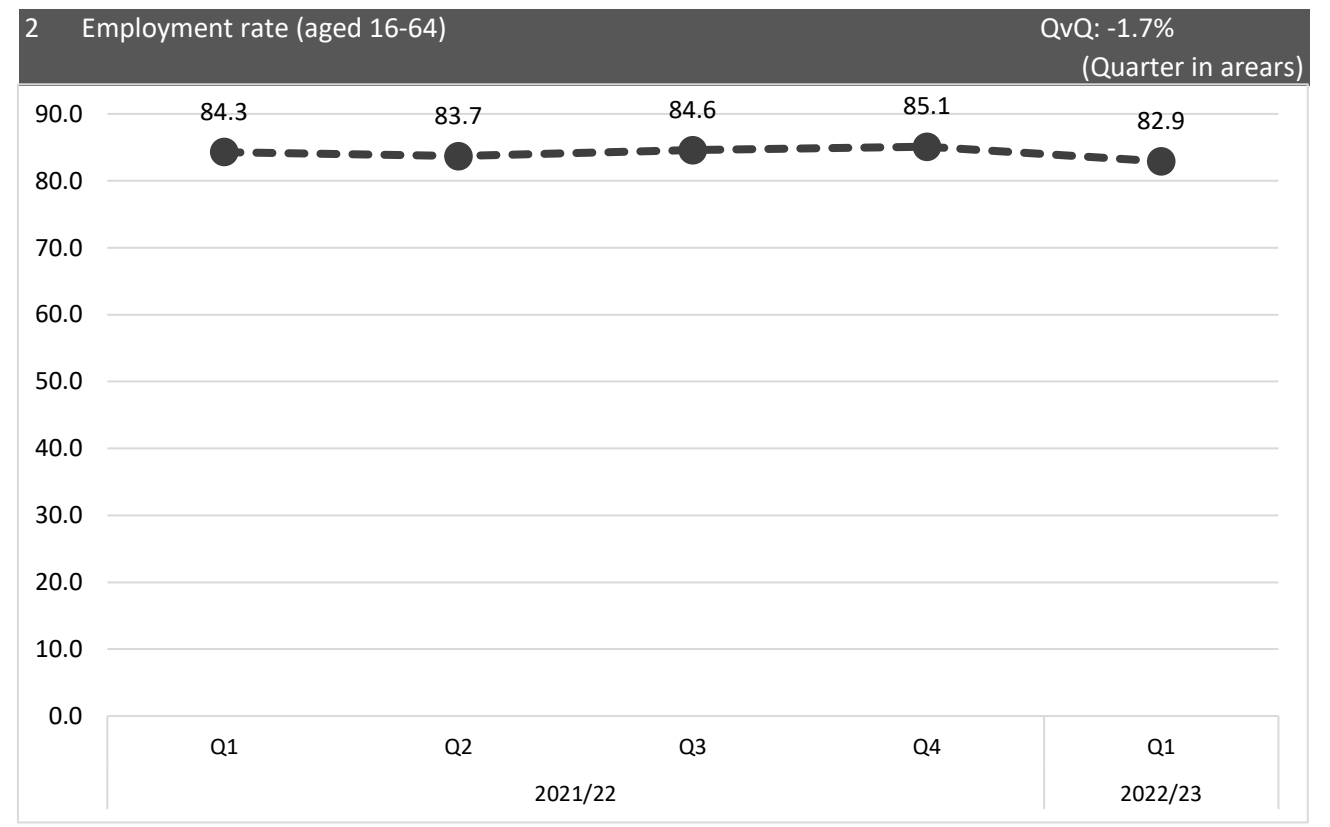
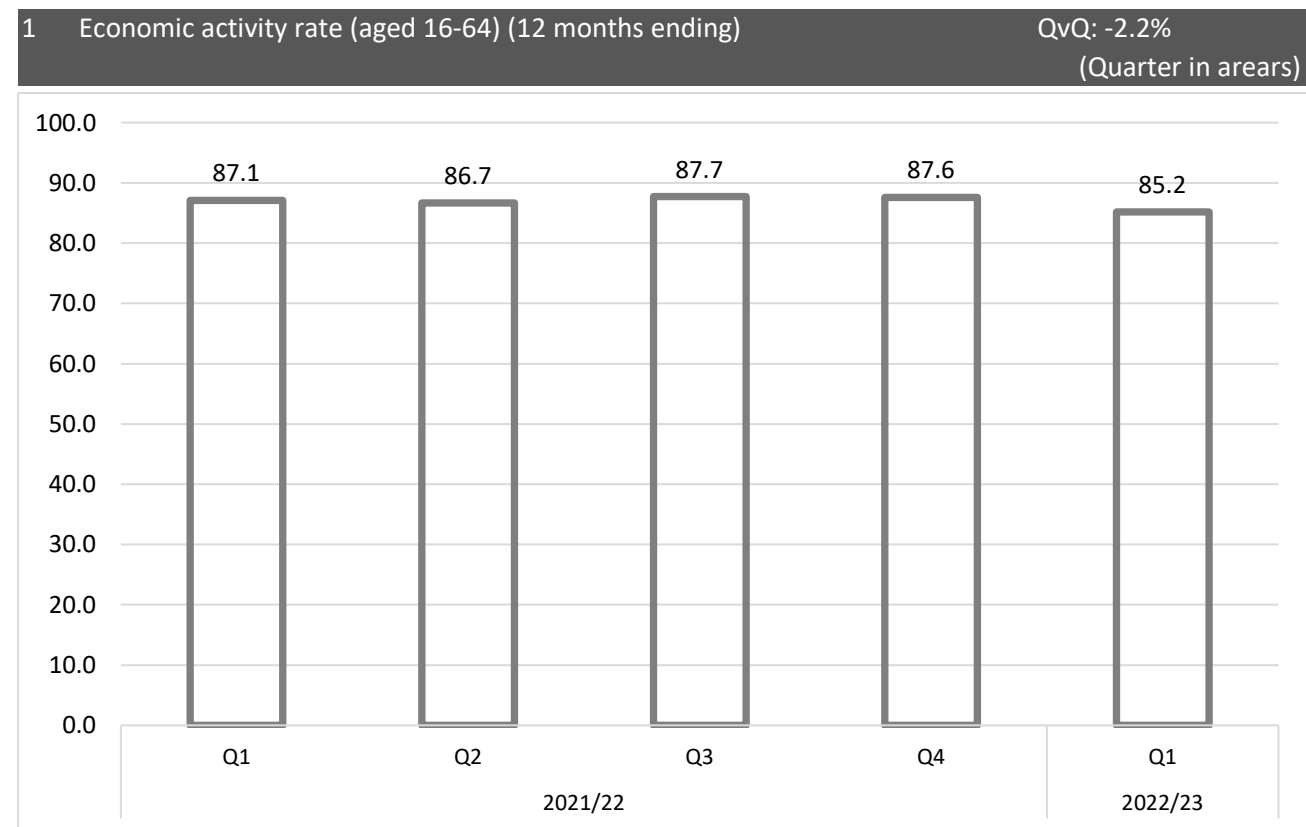
- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Officer details:

Name: Catalin Bogos
Job Title: Performance, Research and Risk Manager
Tel No: (01635) 519102
E-mail: Catalin.Bogos@westberks.gov.uk

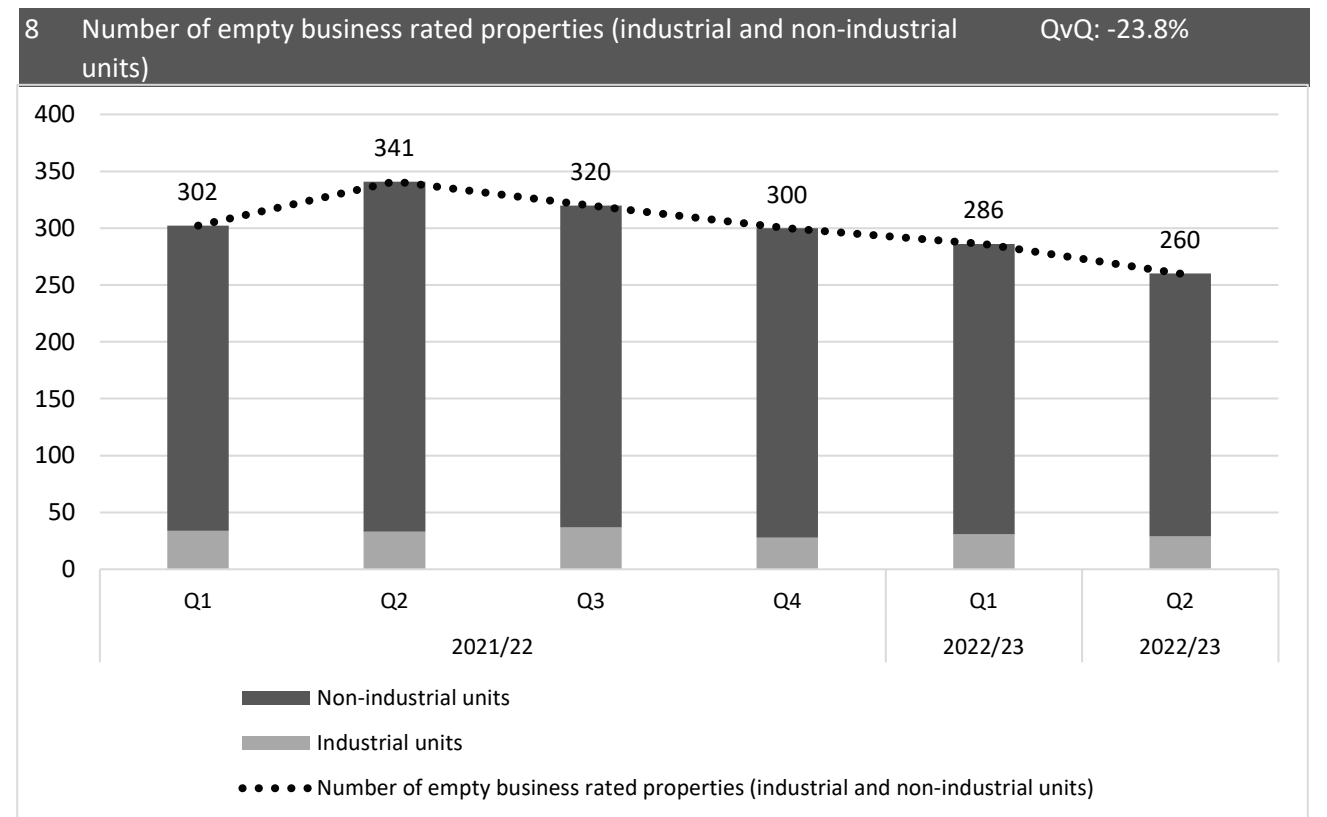
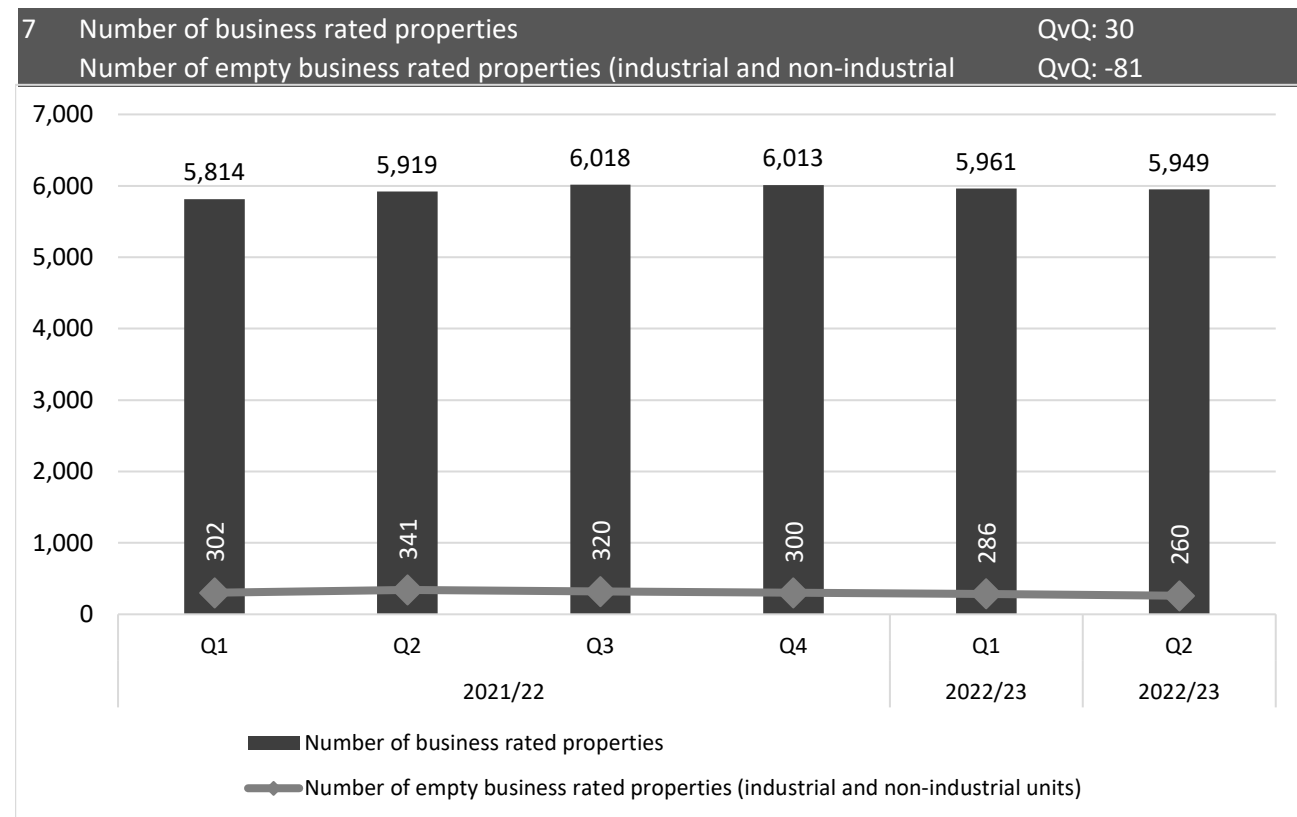
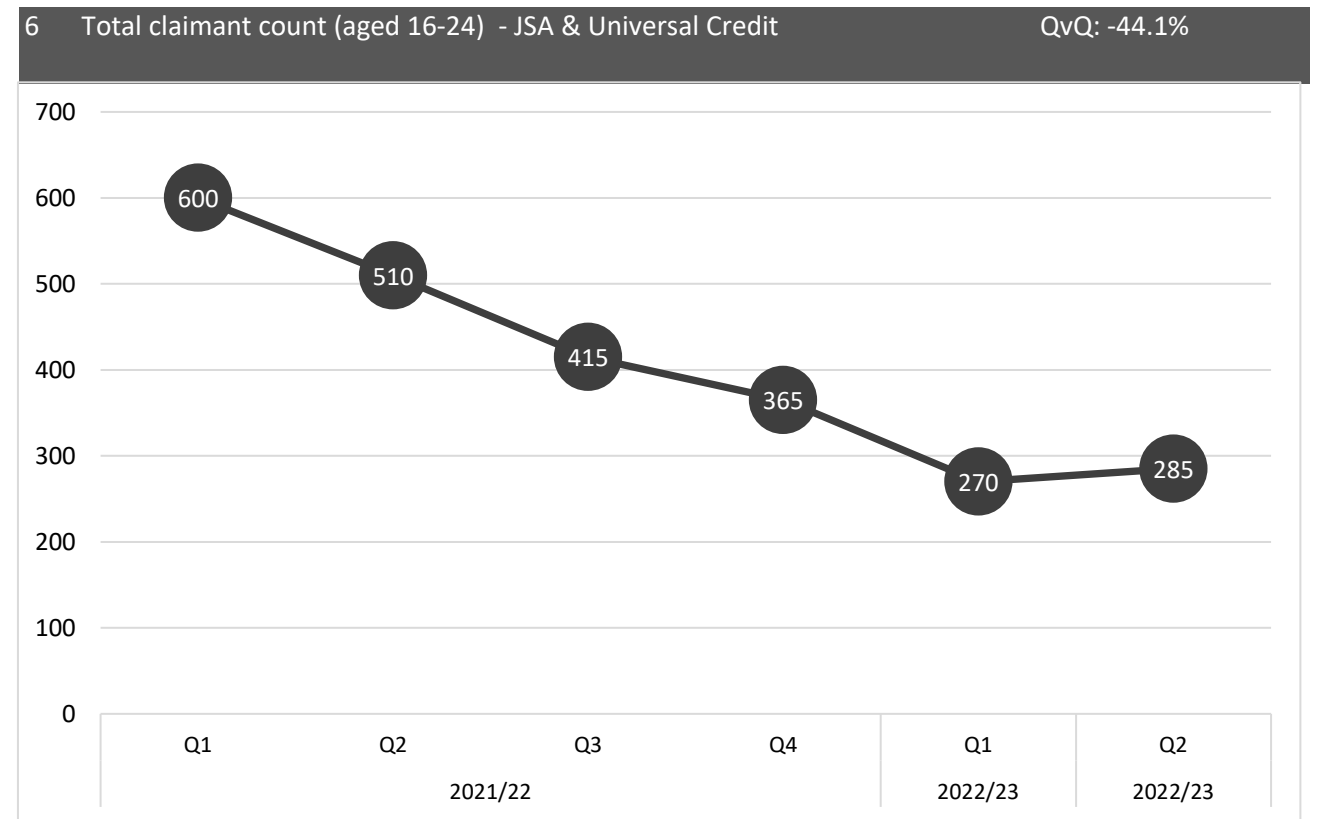
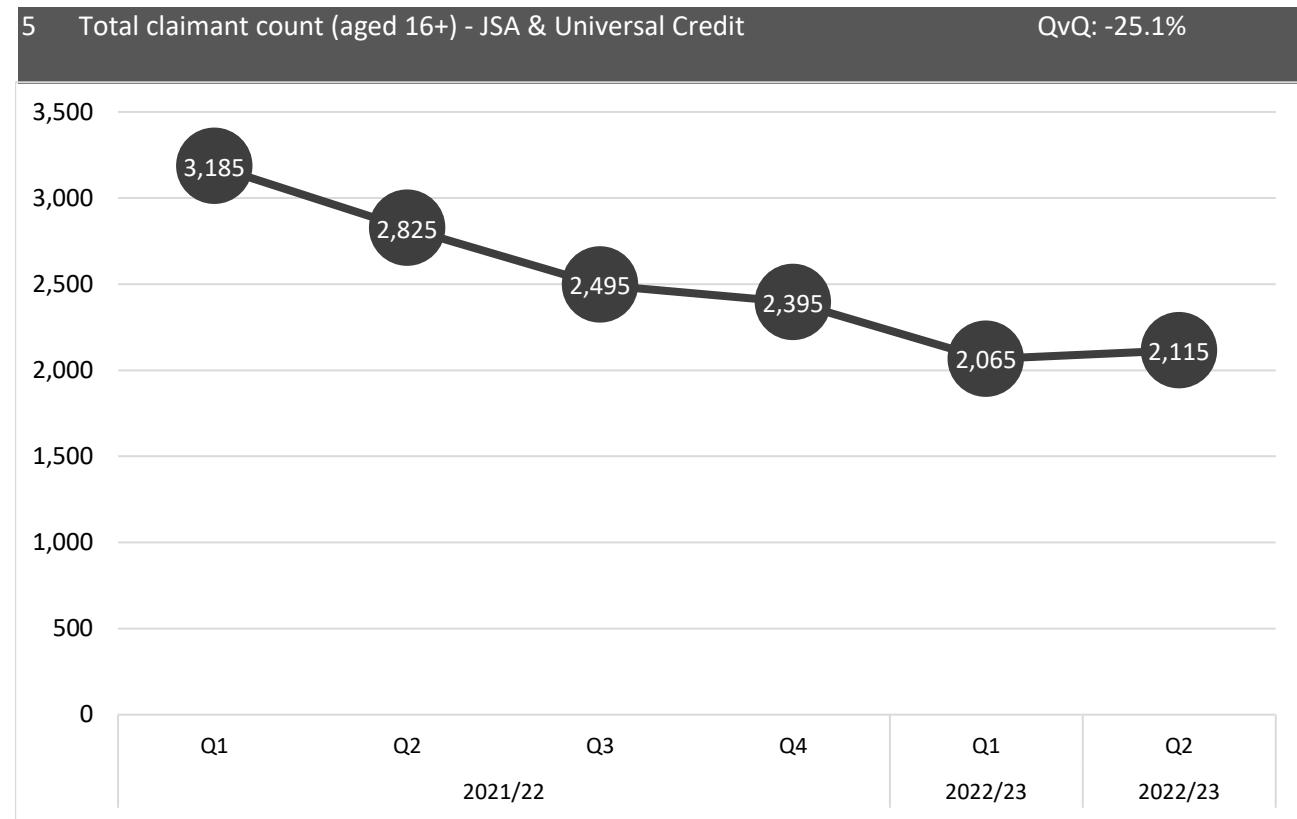
Appendix A: Influencer Measures Dashboard 2022/23 (current qtr v same qtr last year)

Economy (Grey) | Social Care (Blue) | Environment (Green)



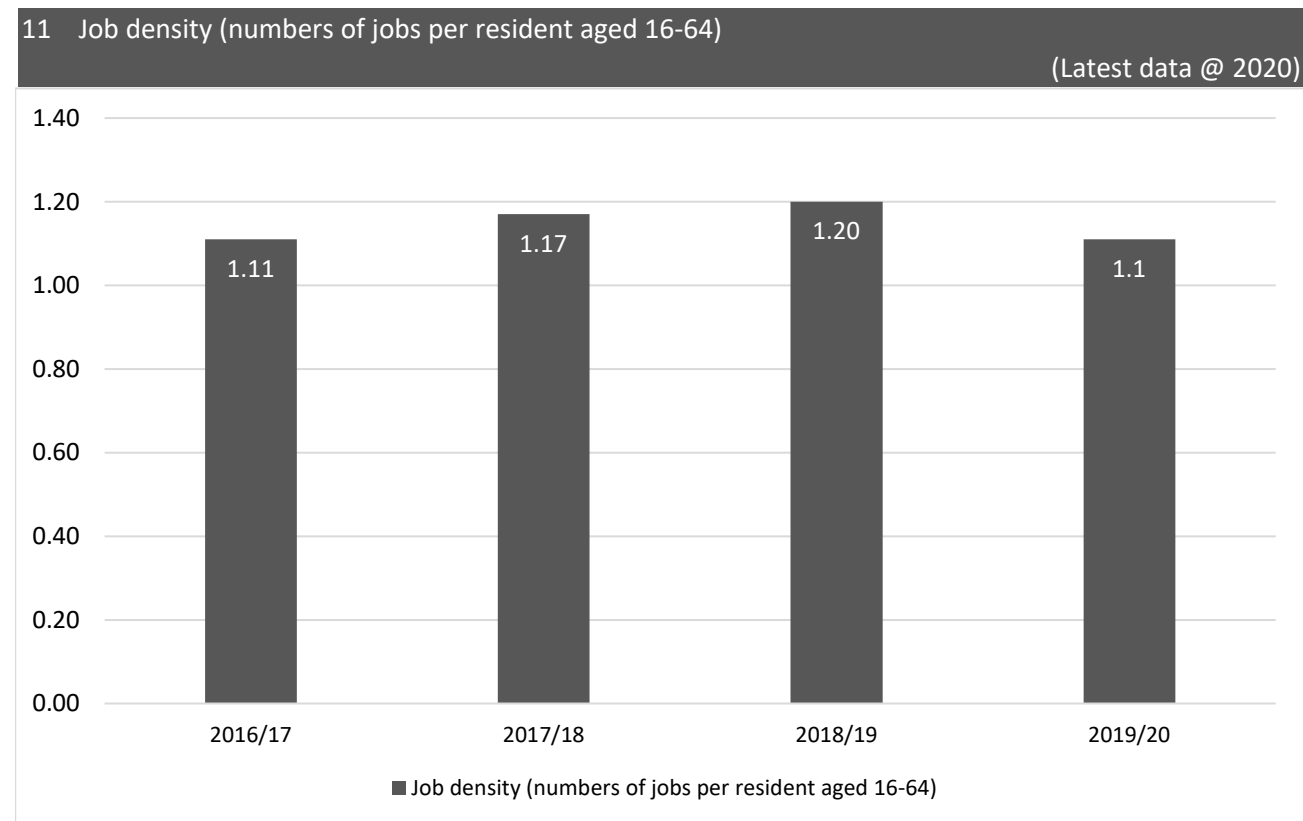
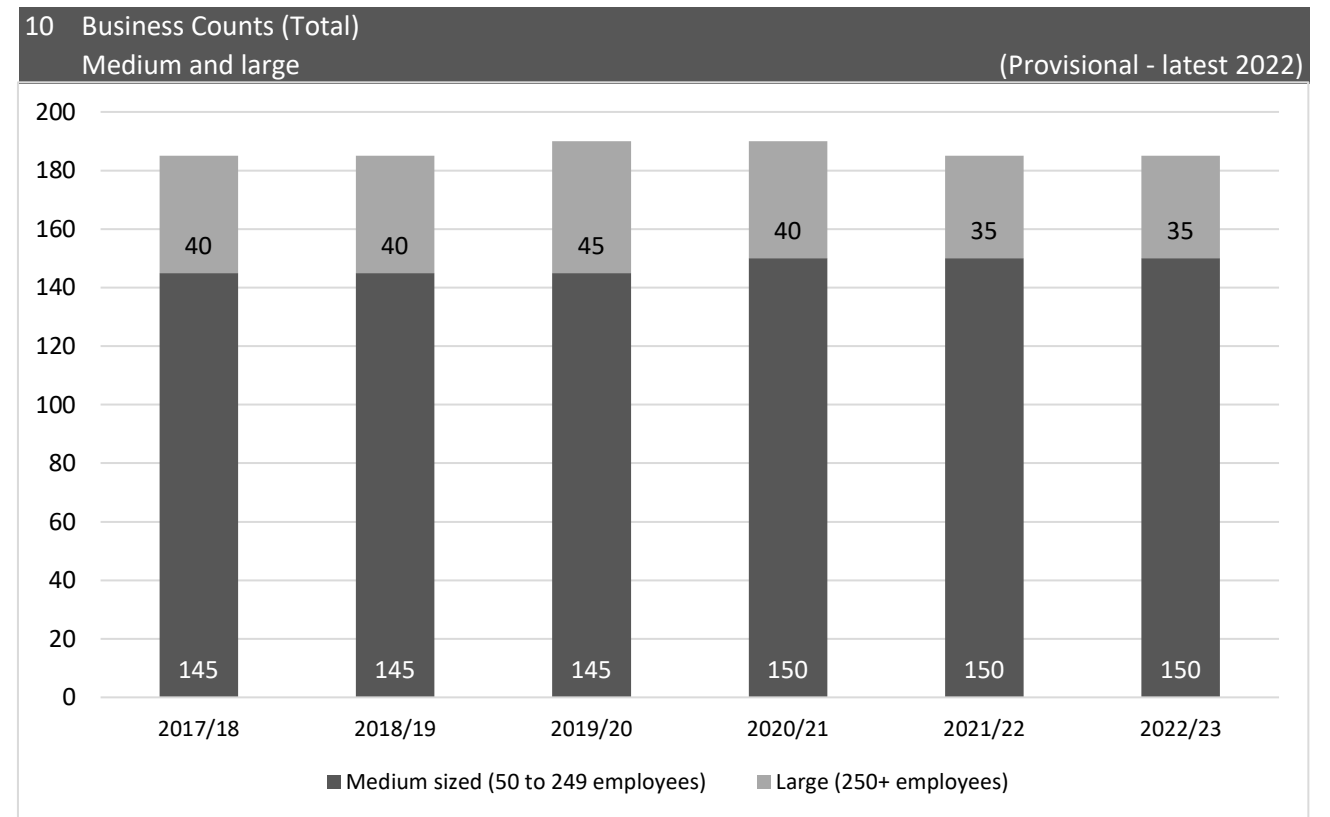
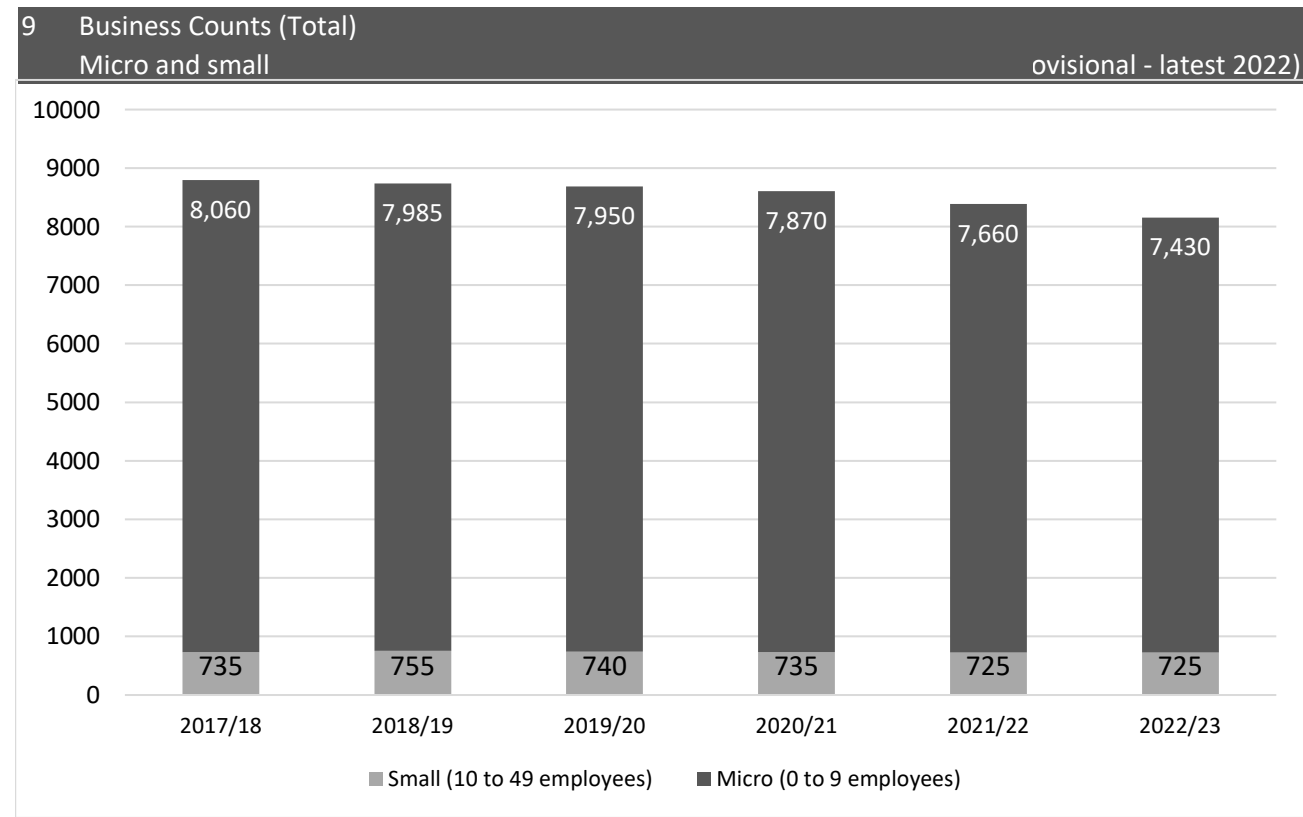
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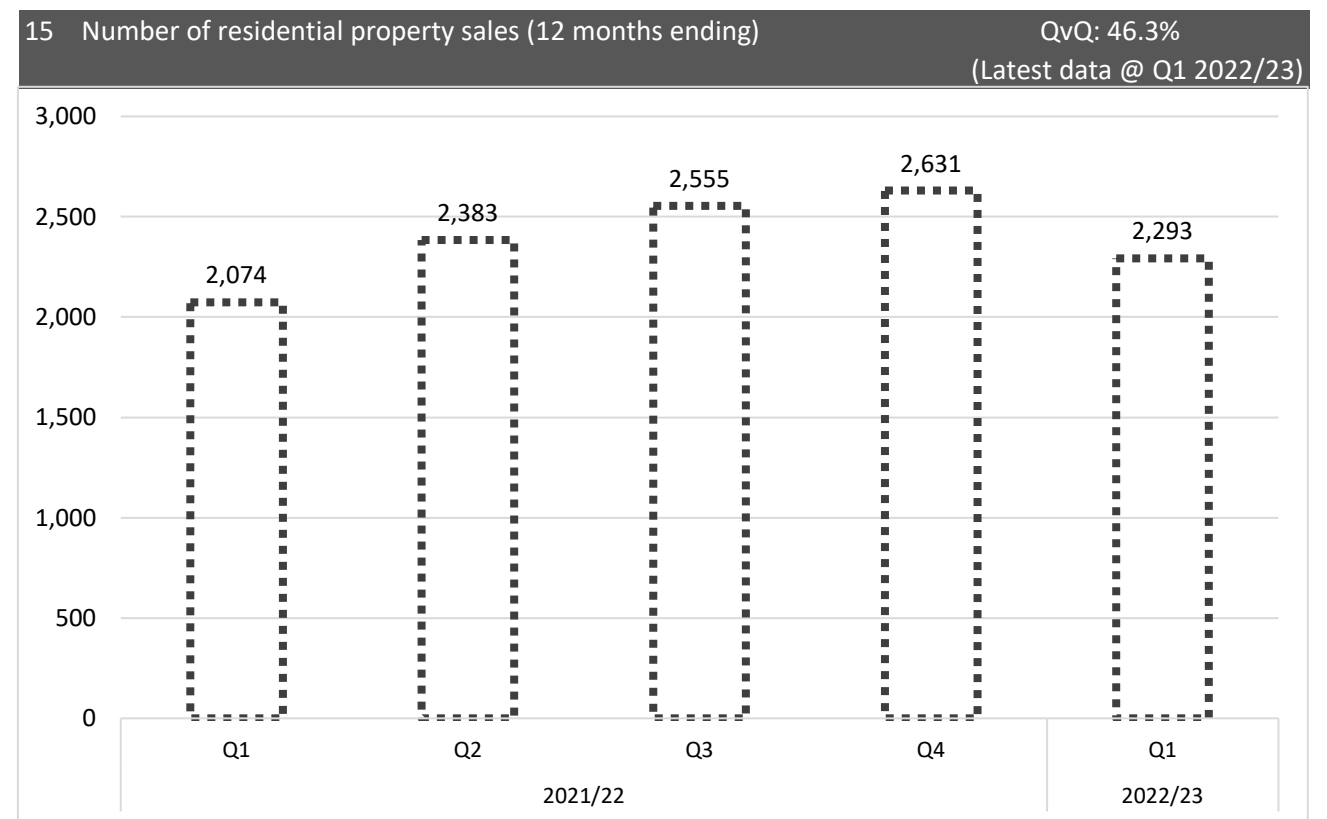
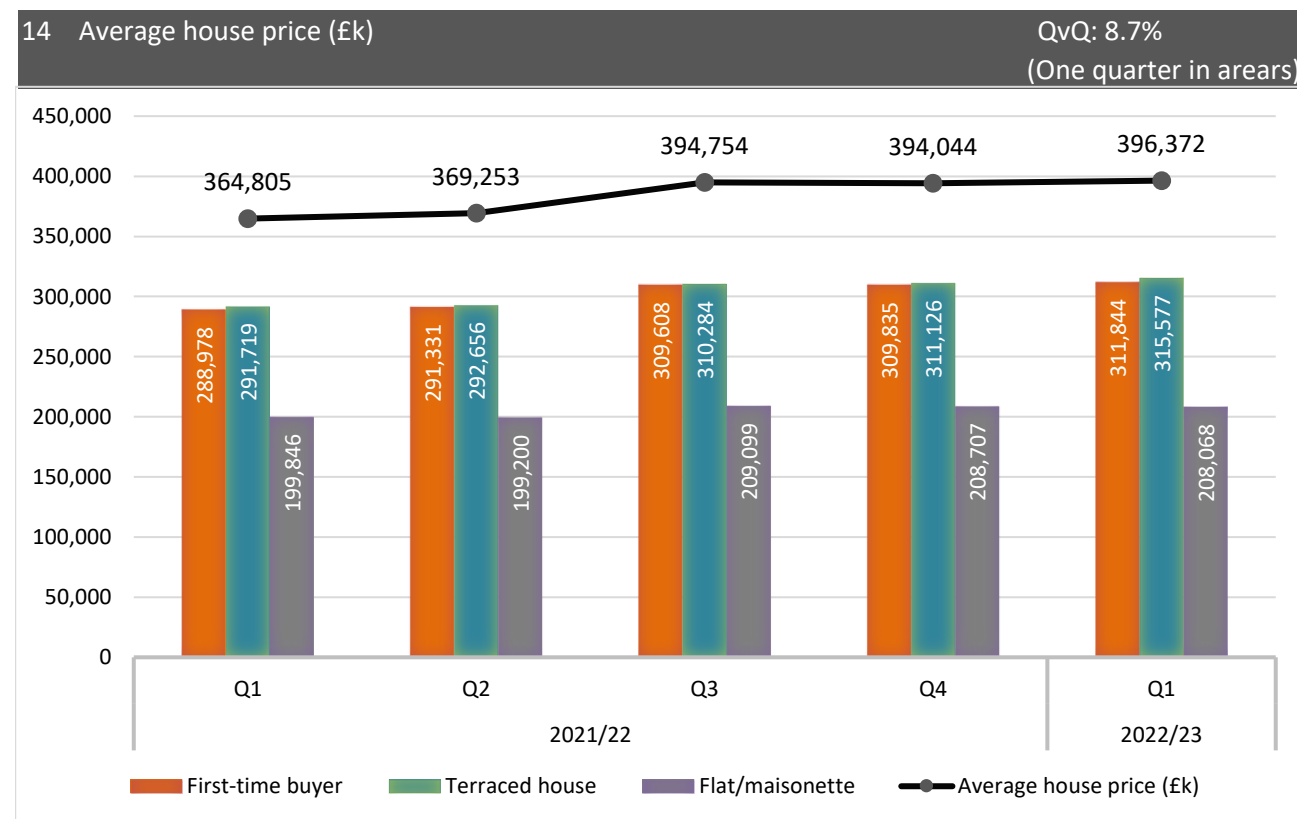
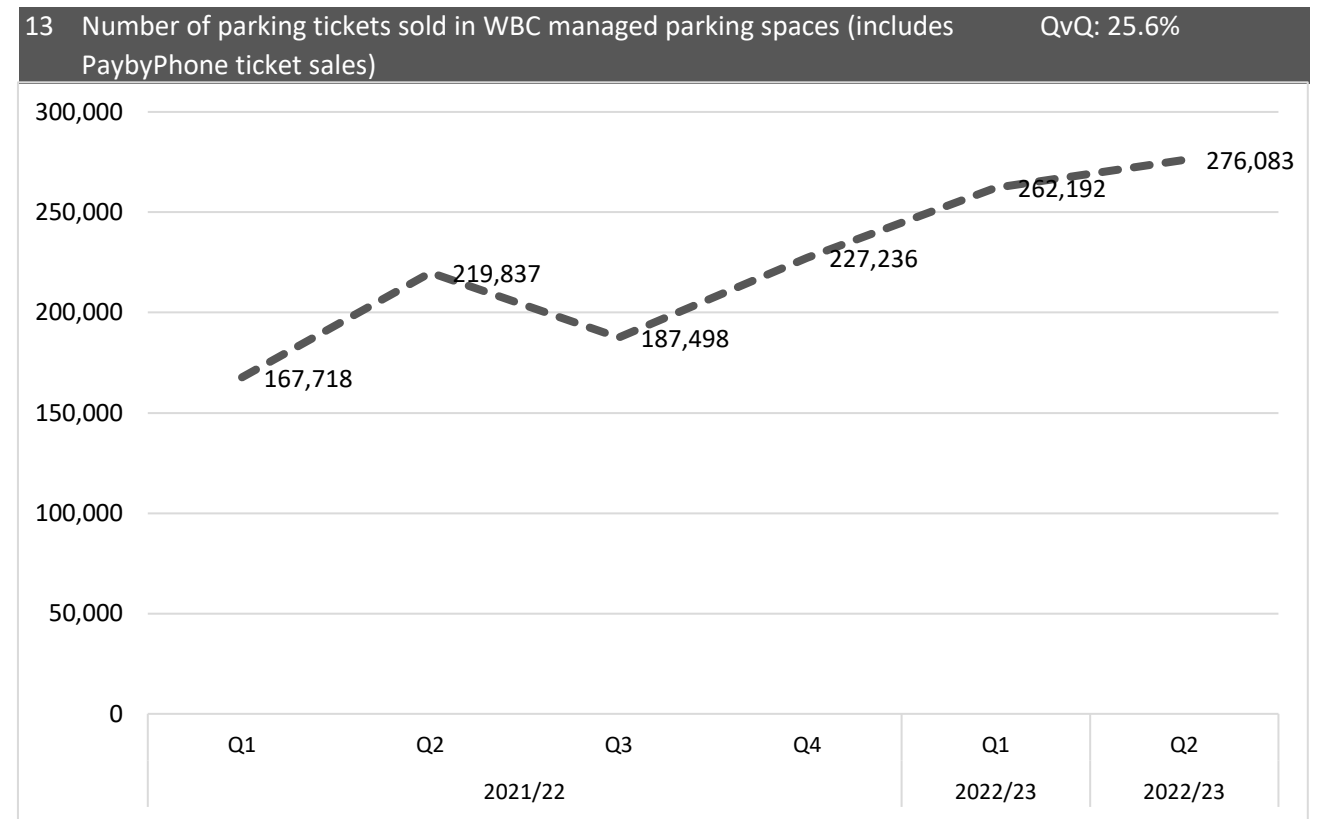
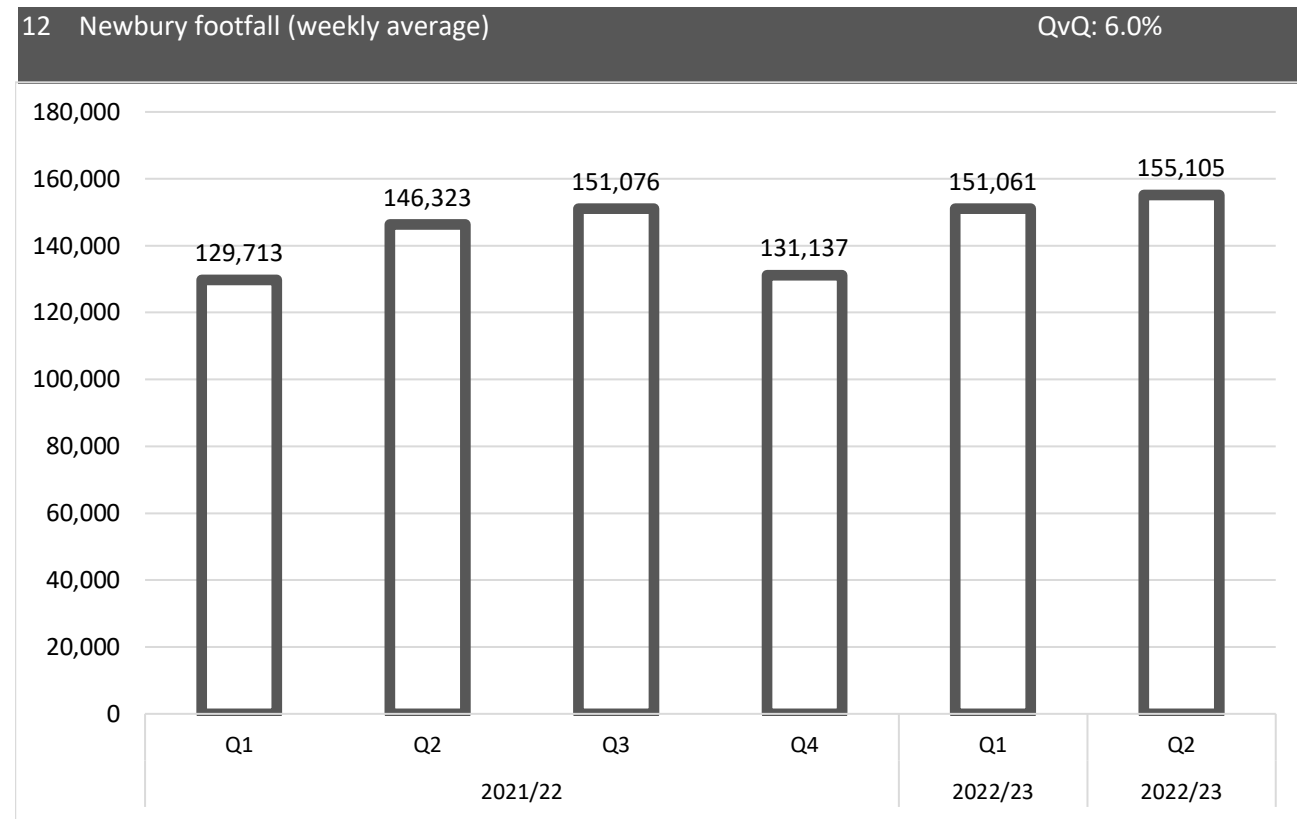
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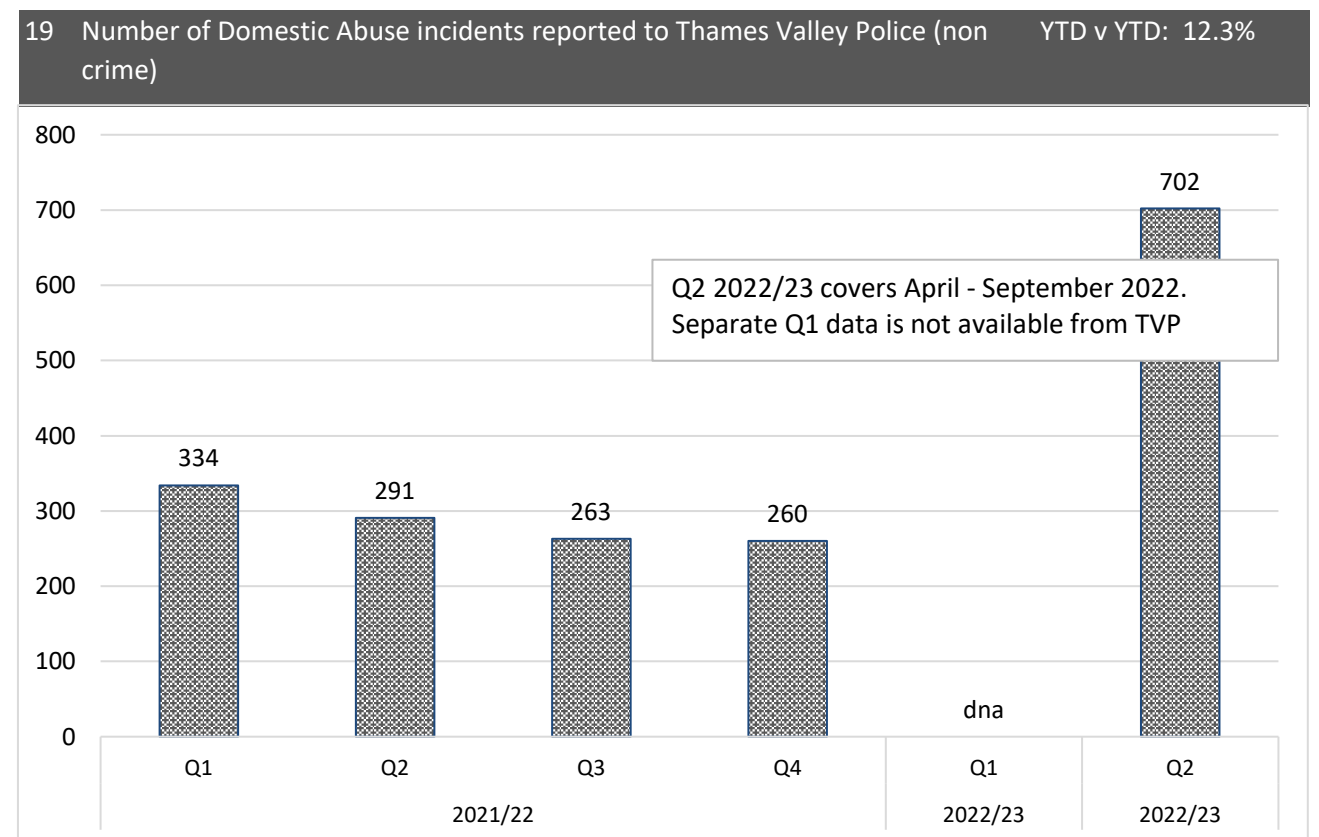
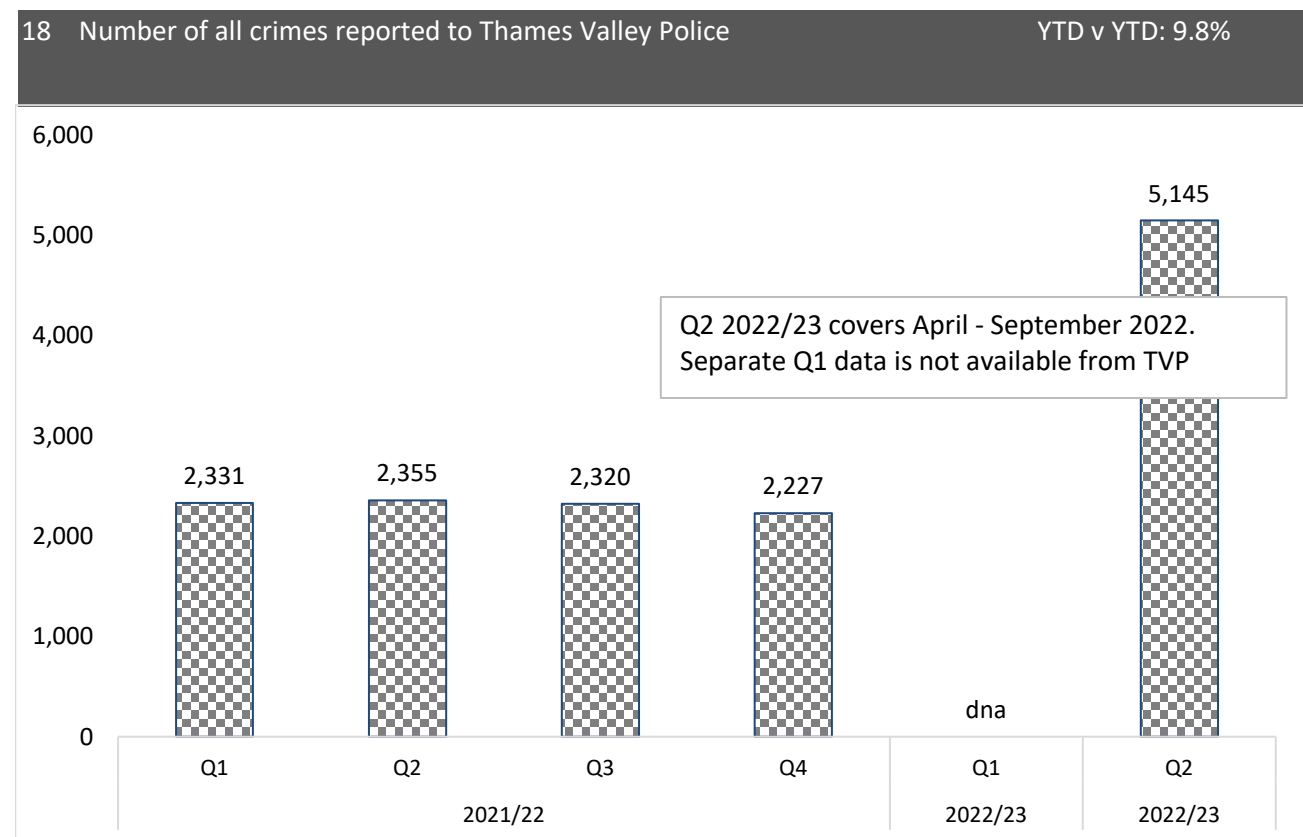
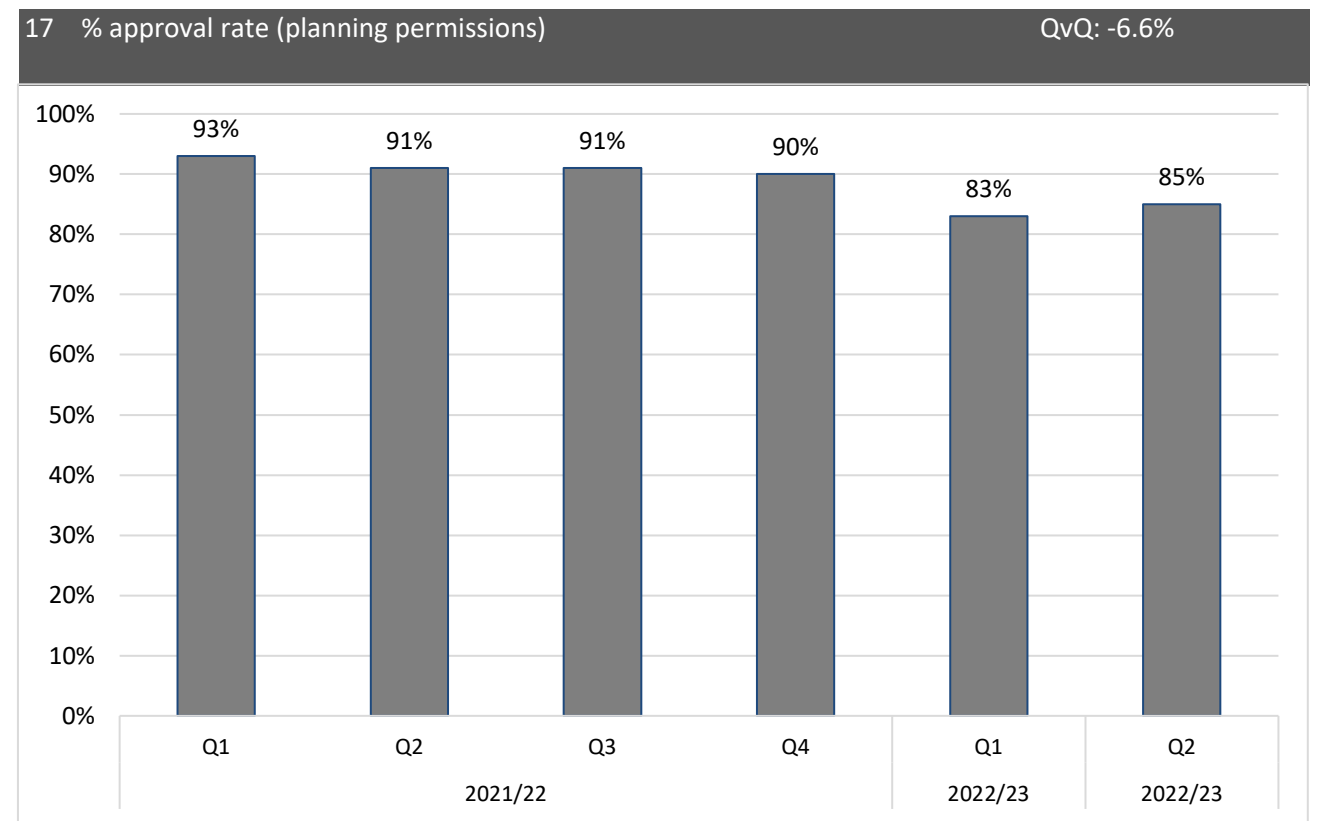
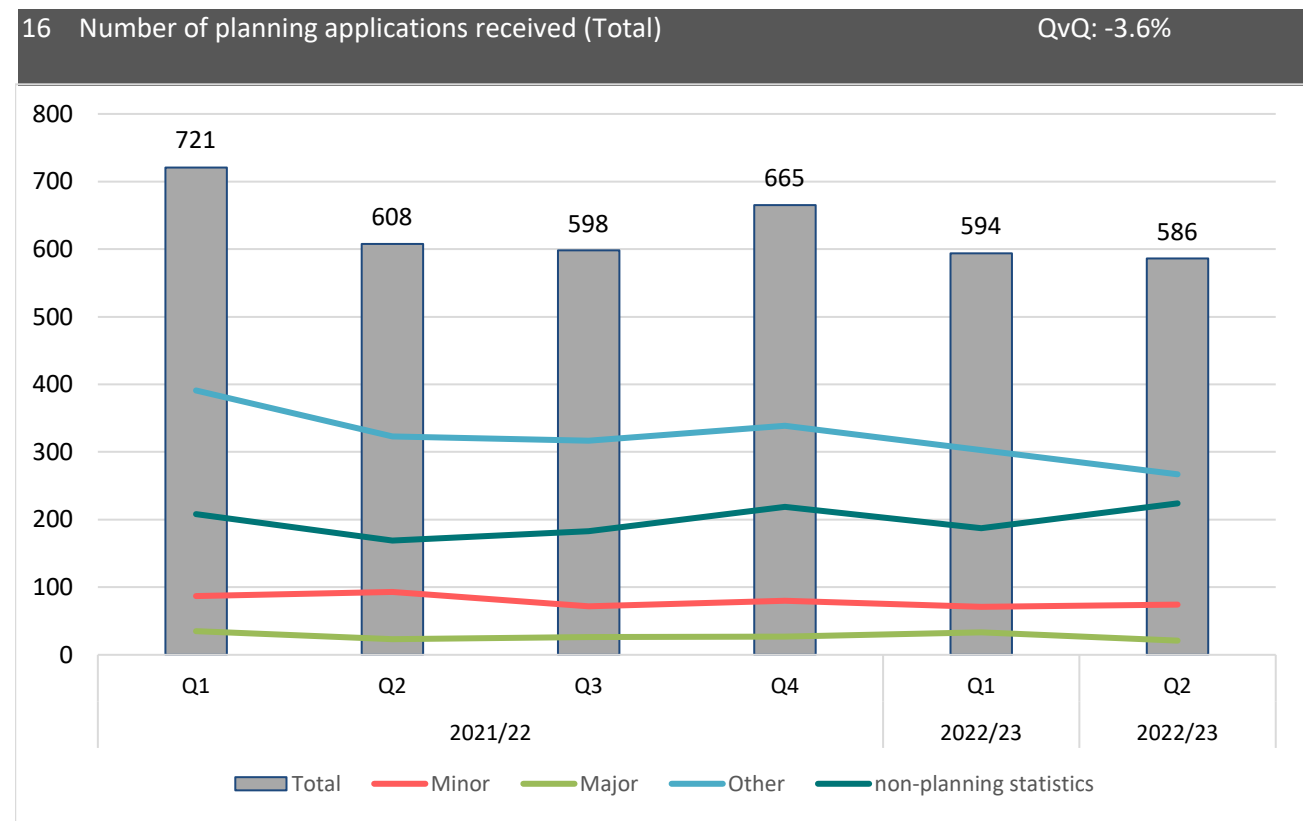
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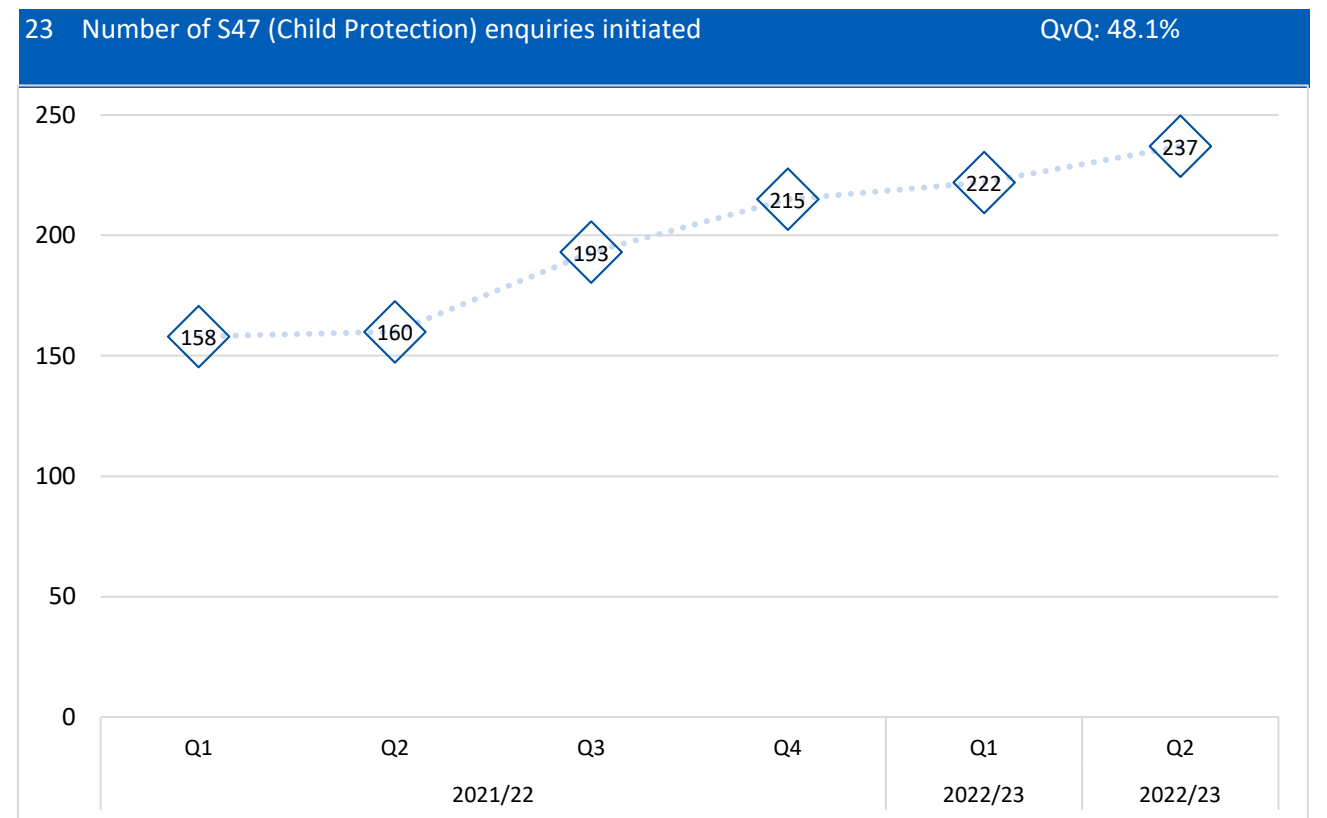
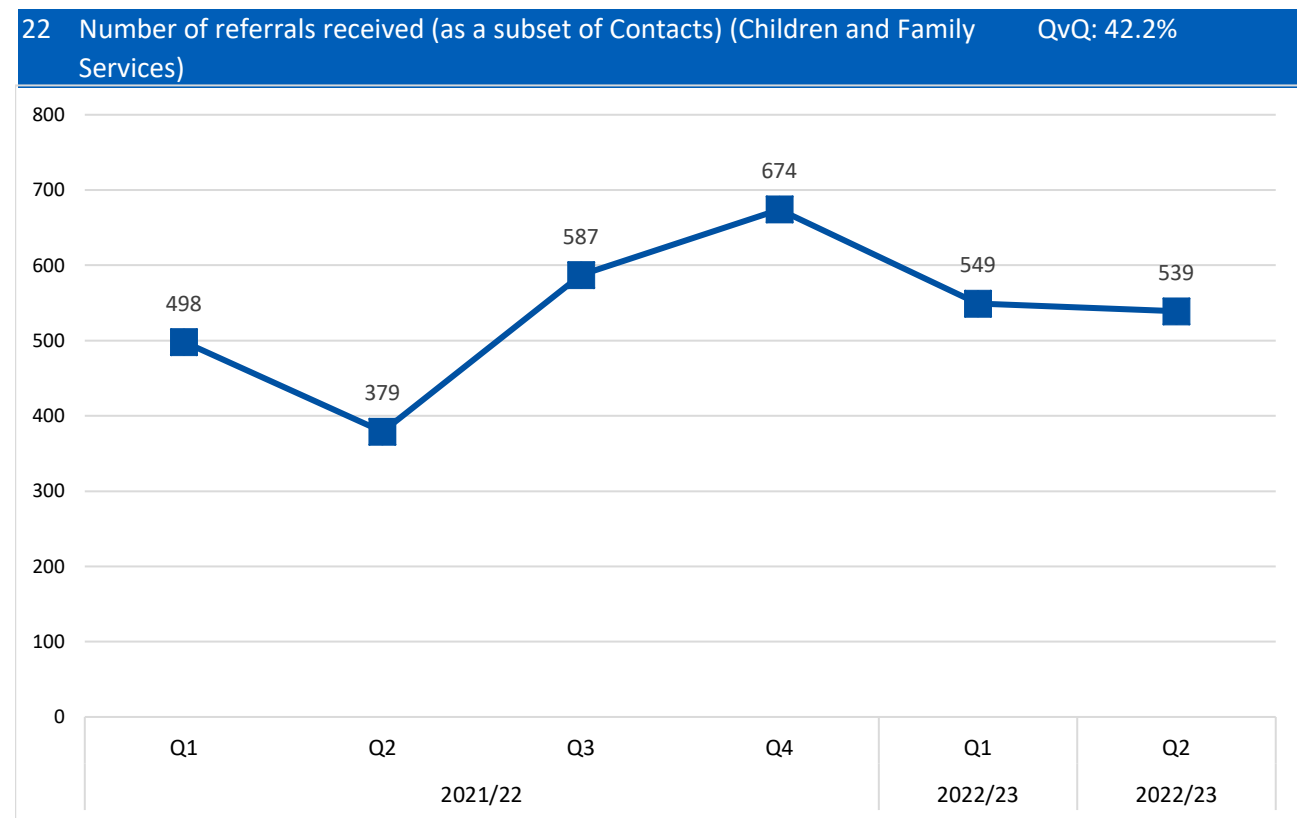
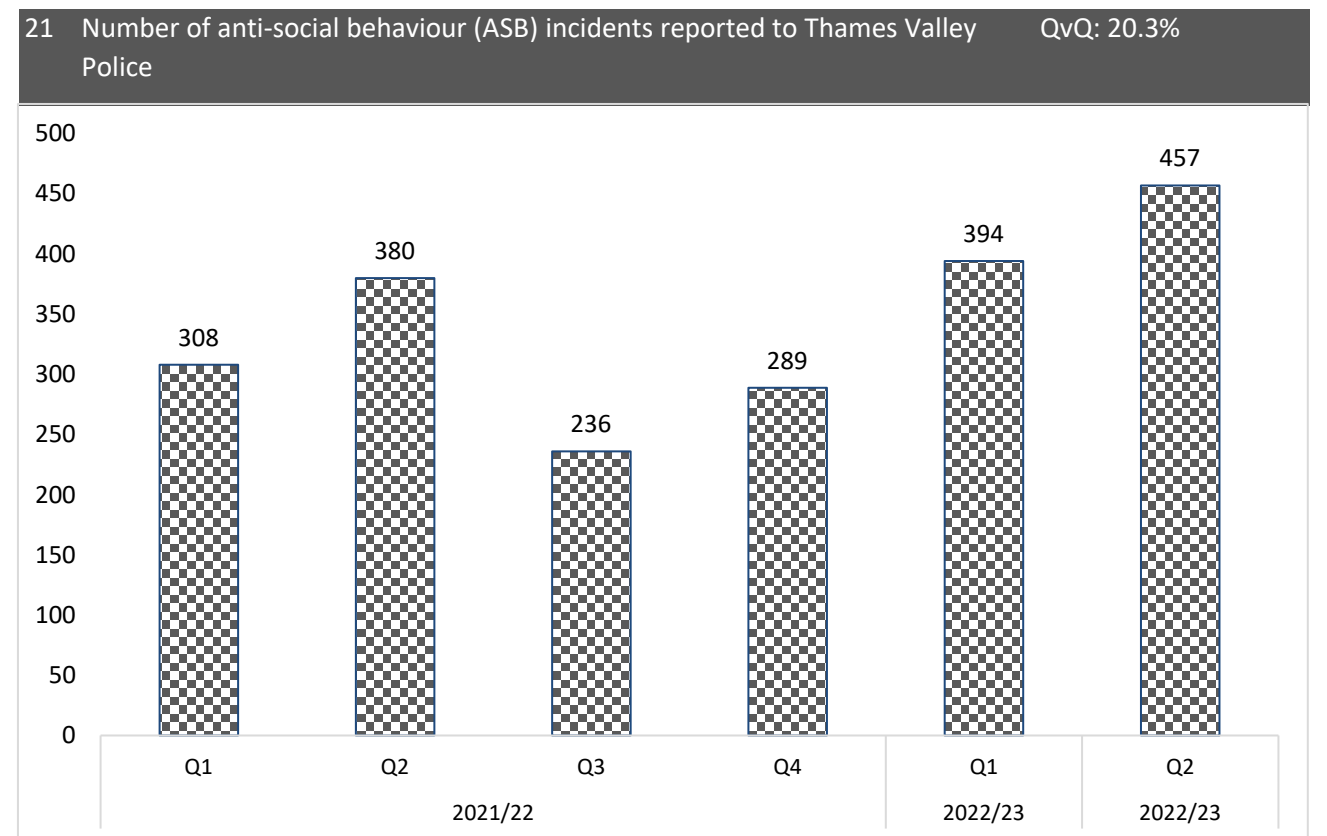
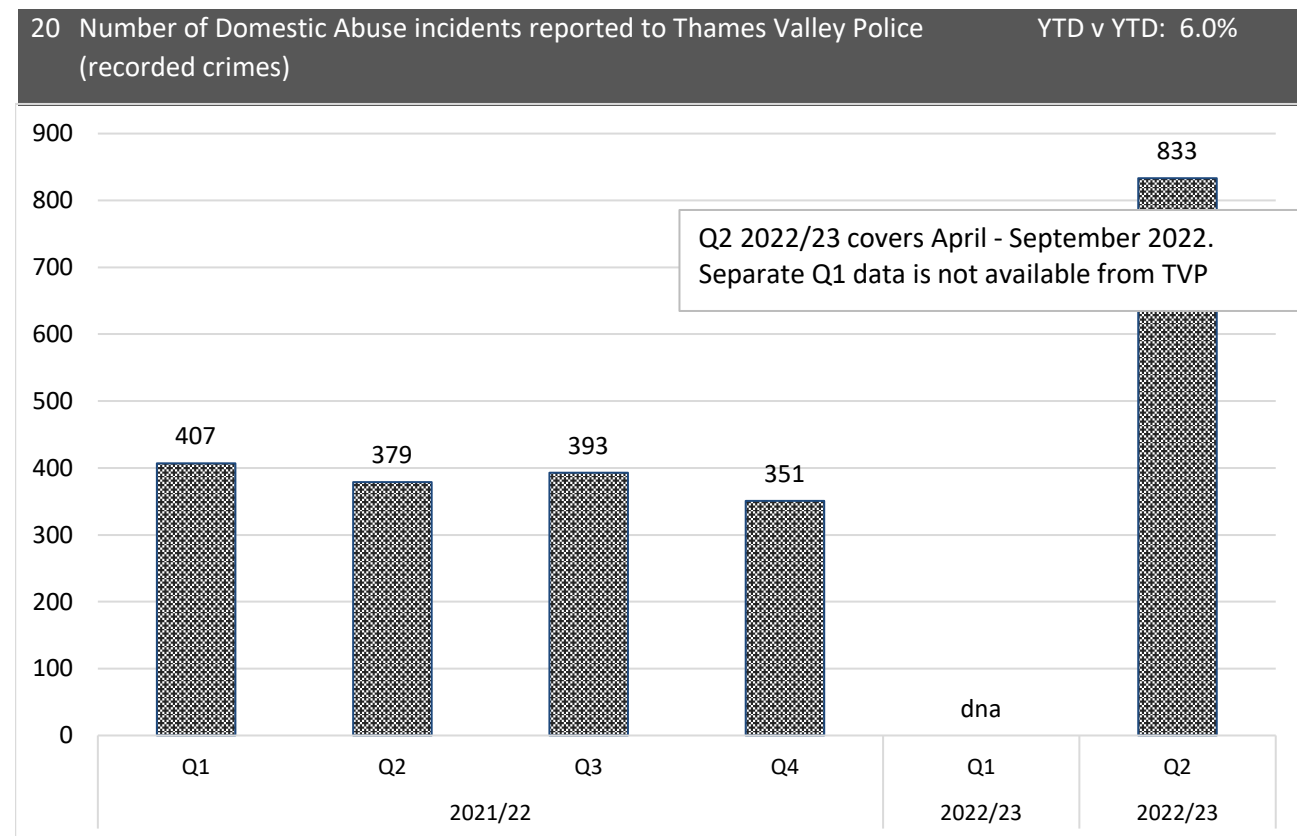
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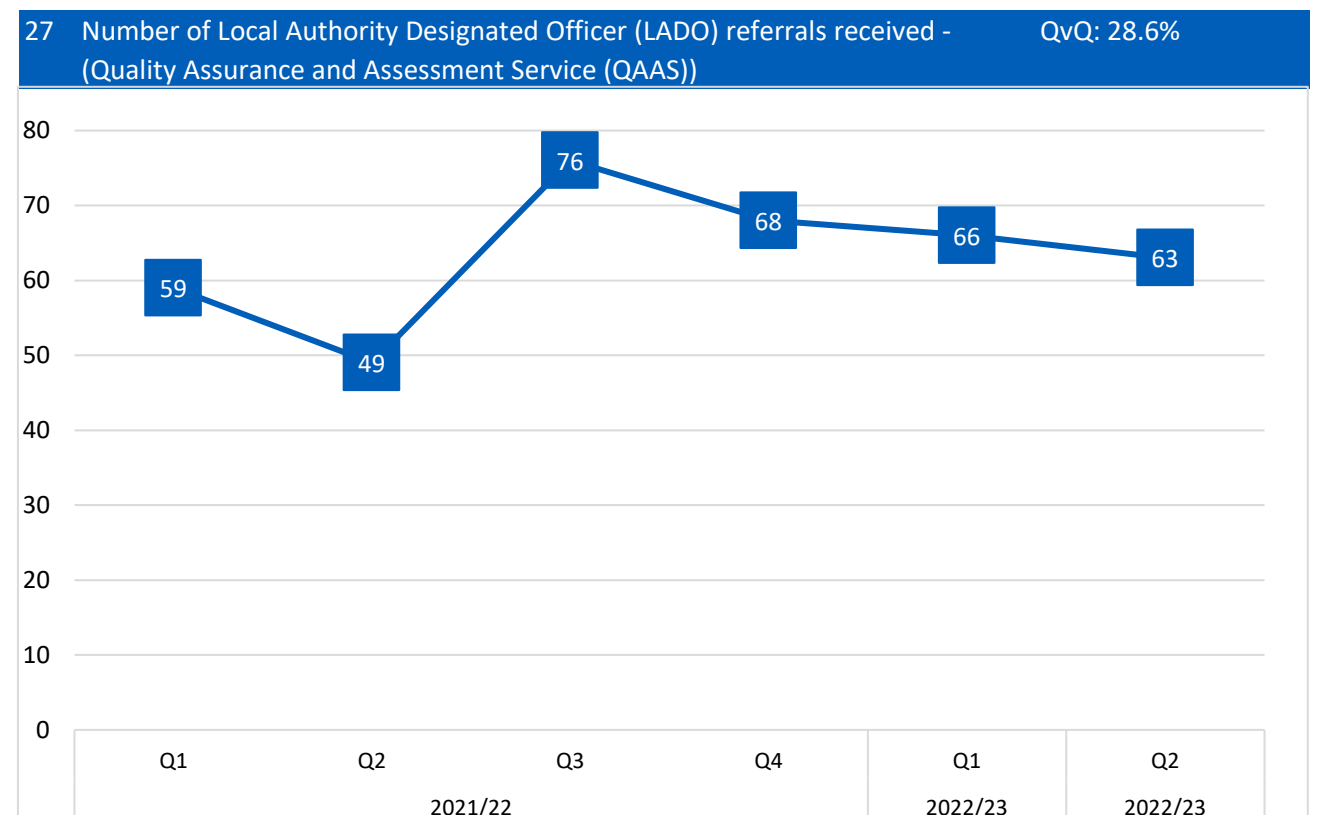
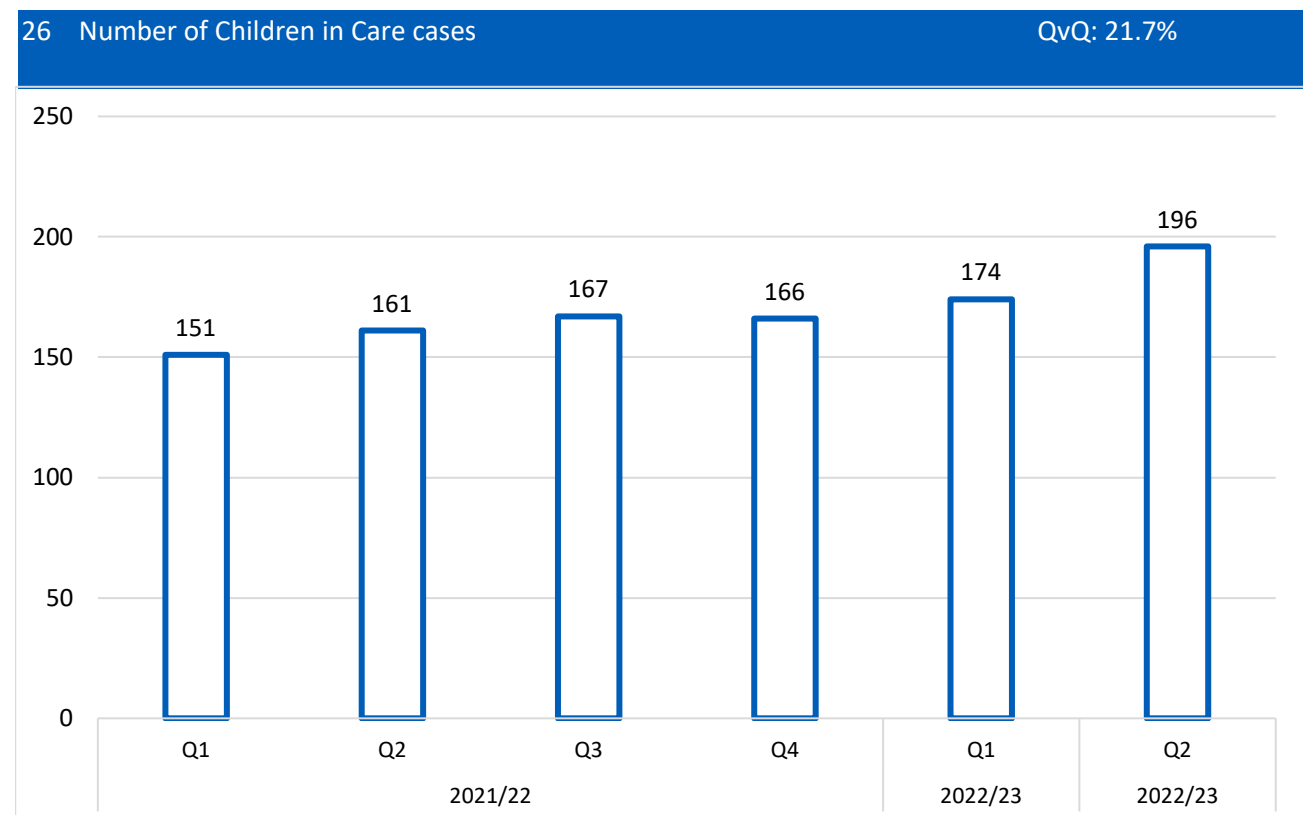
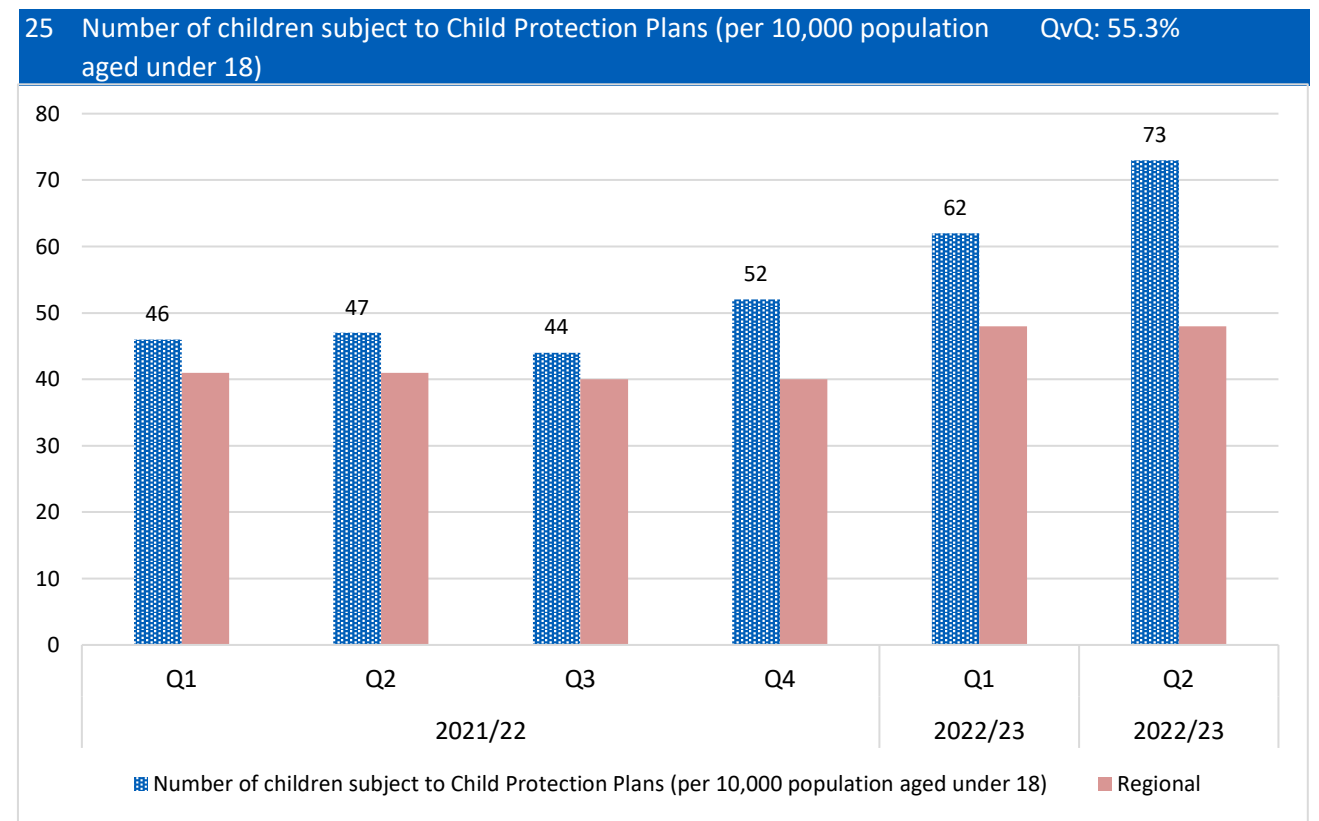
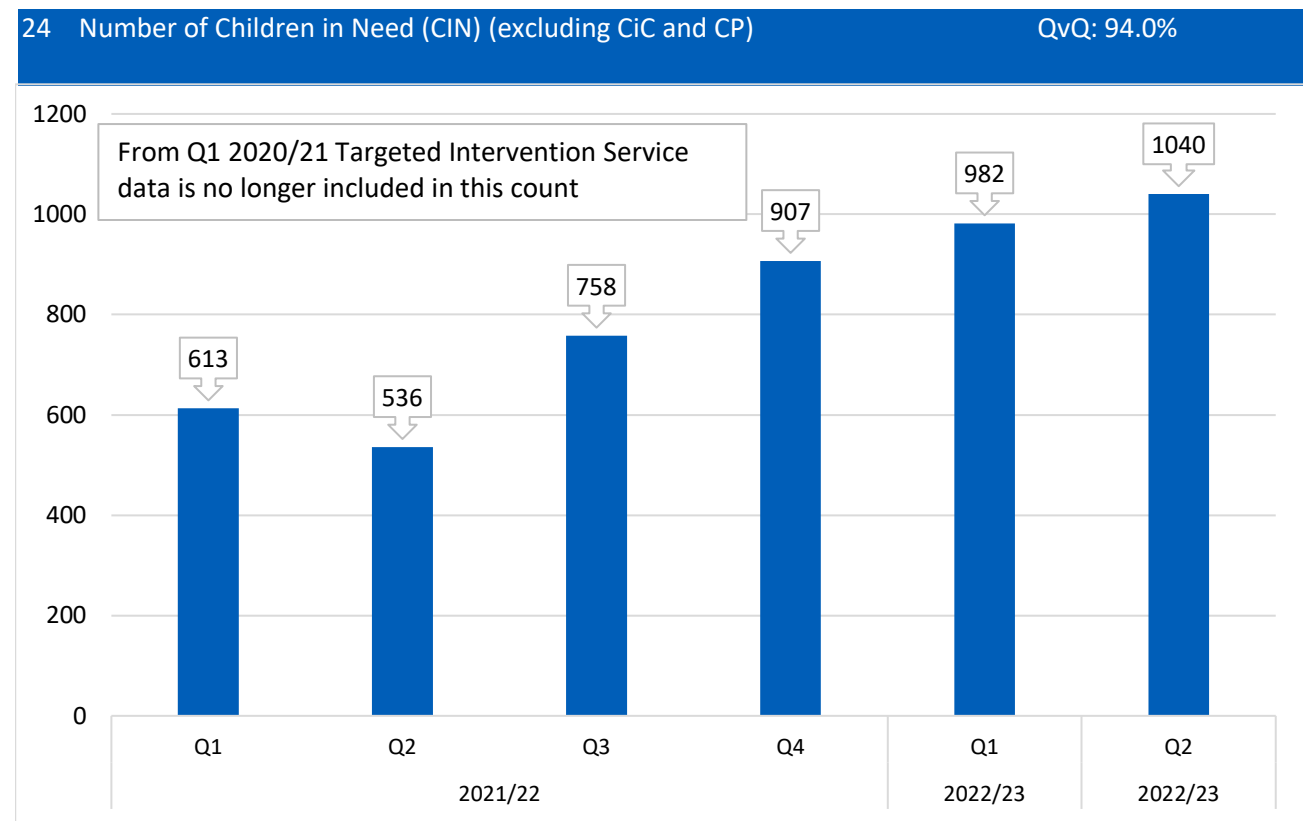
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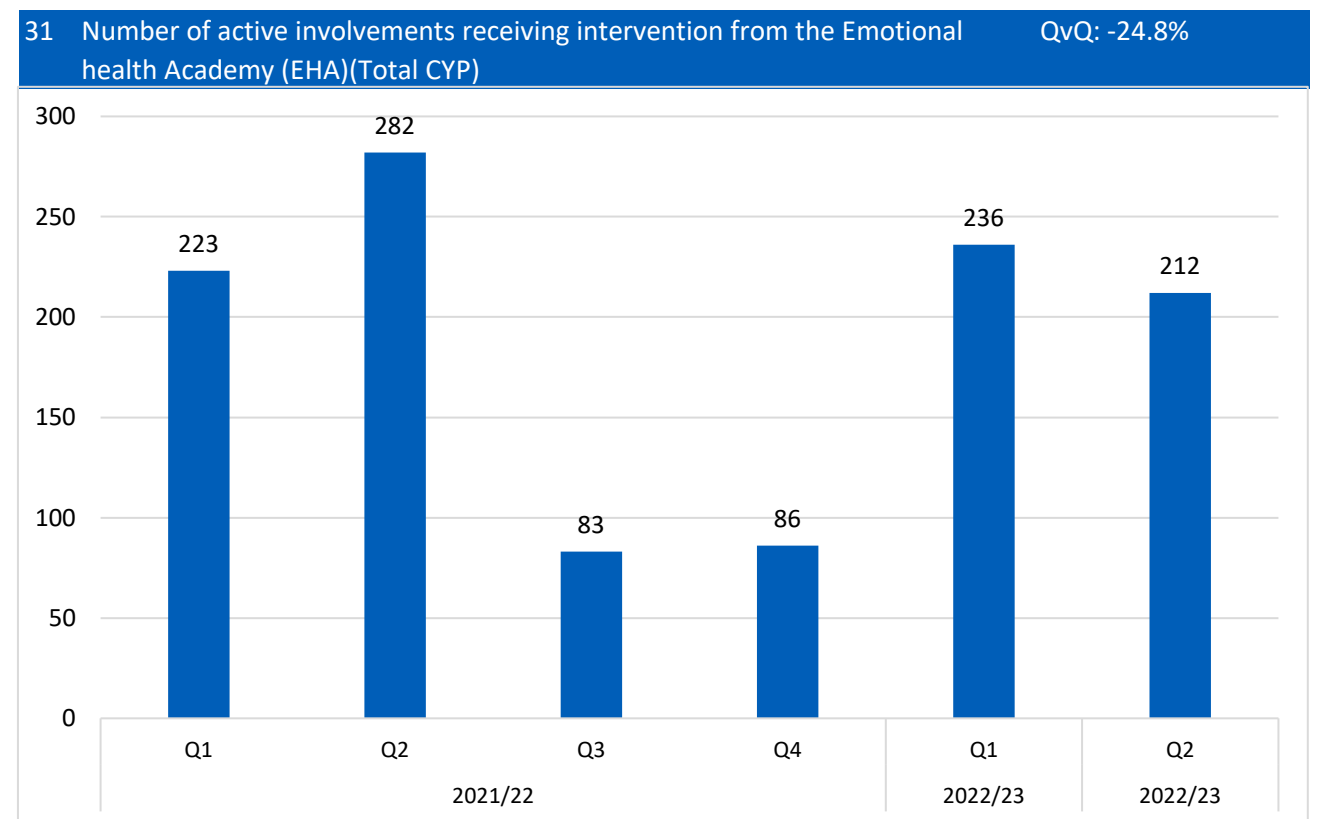
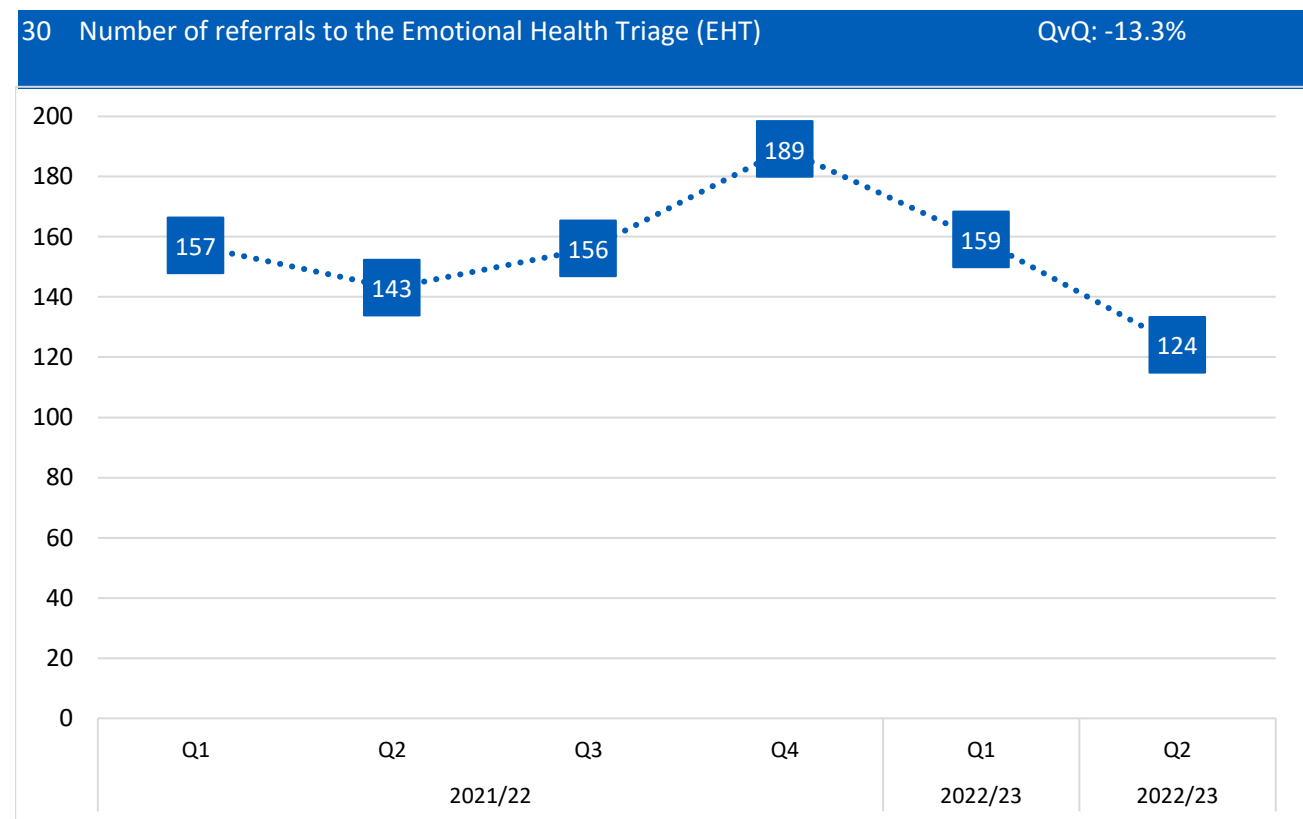
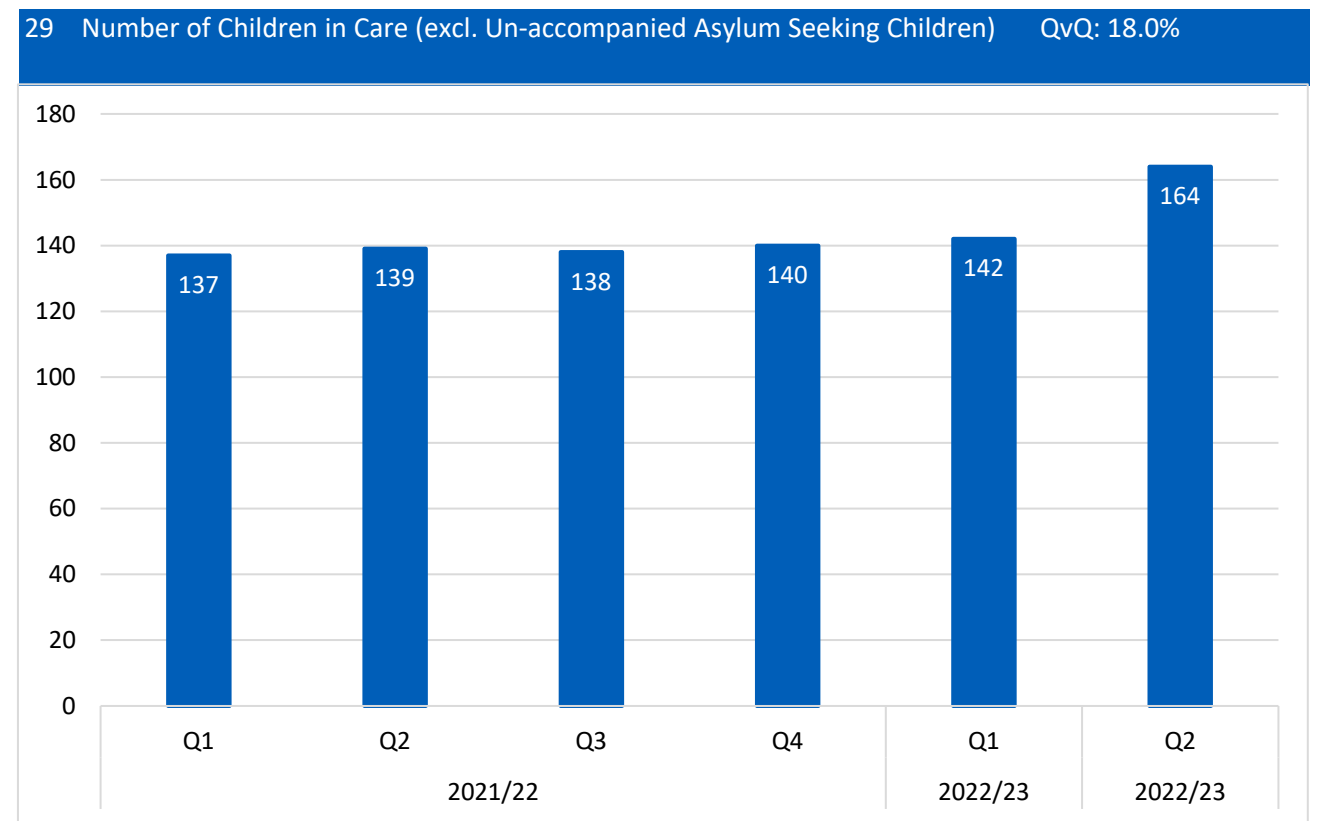
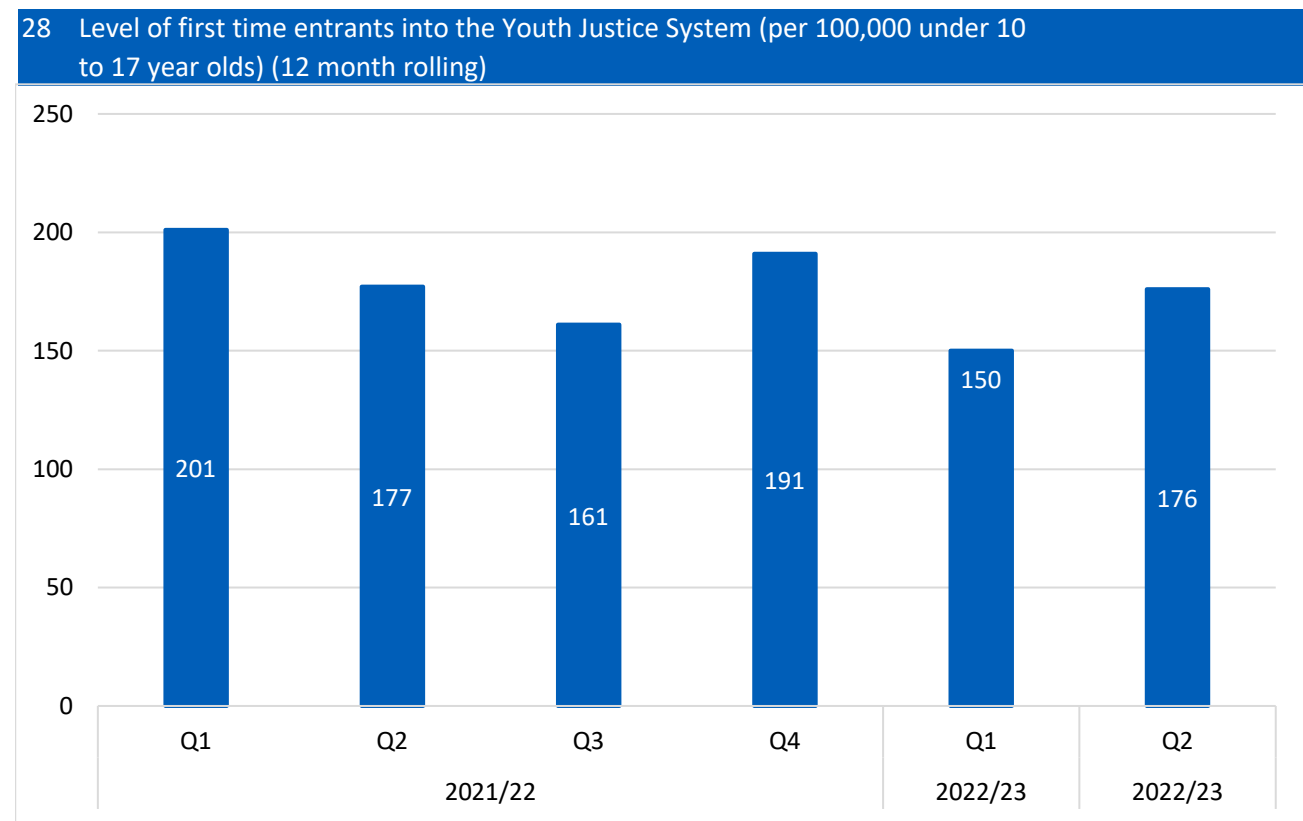
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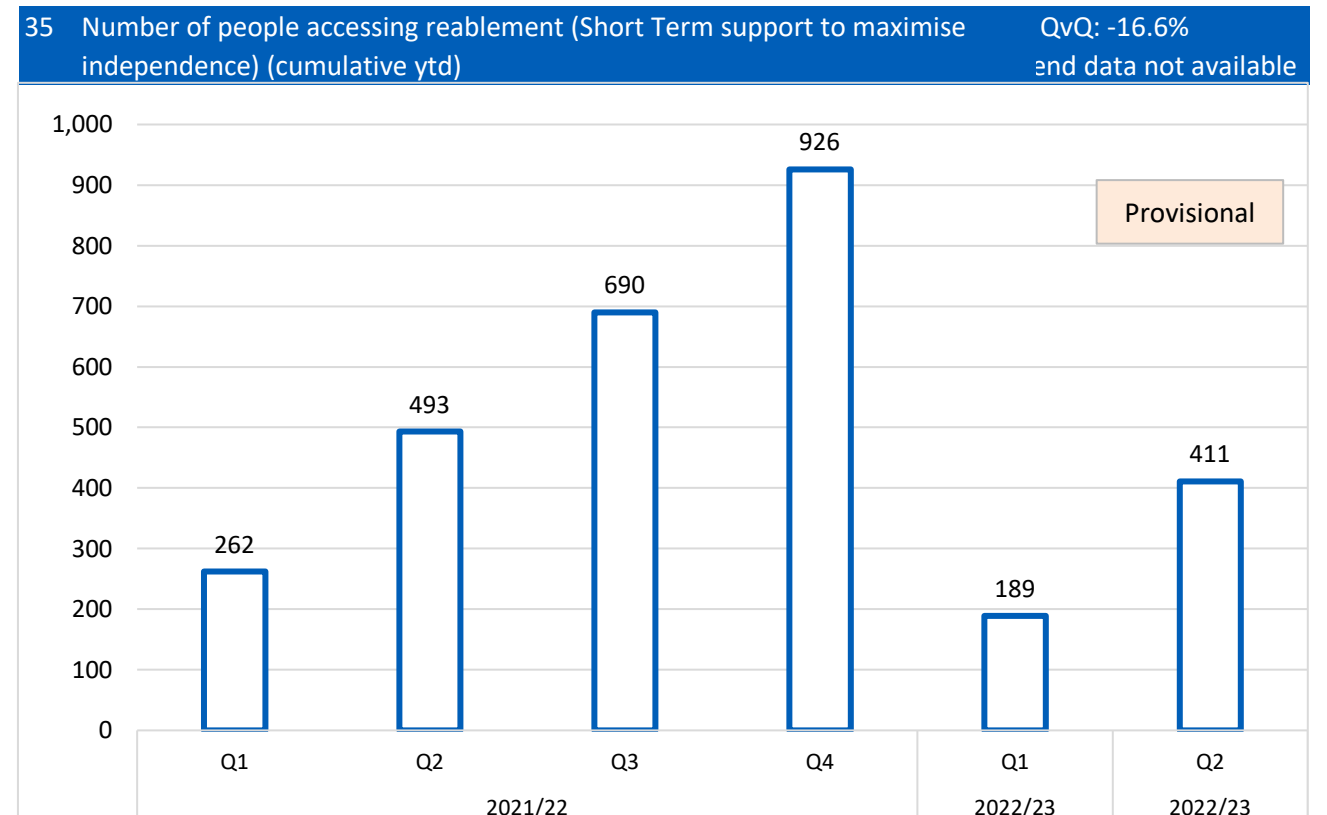
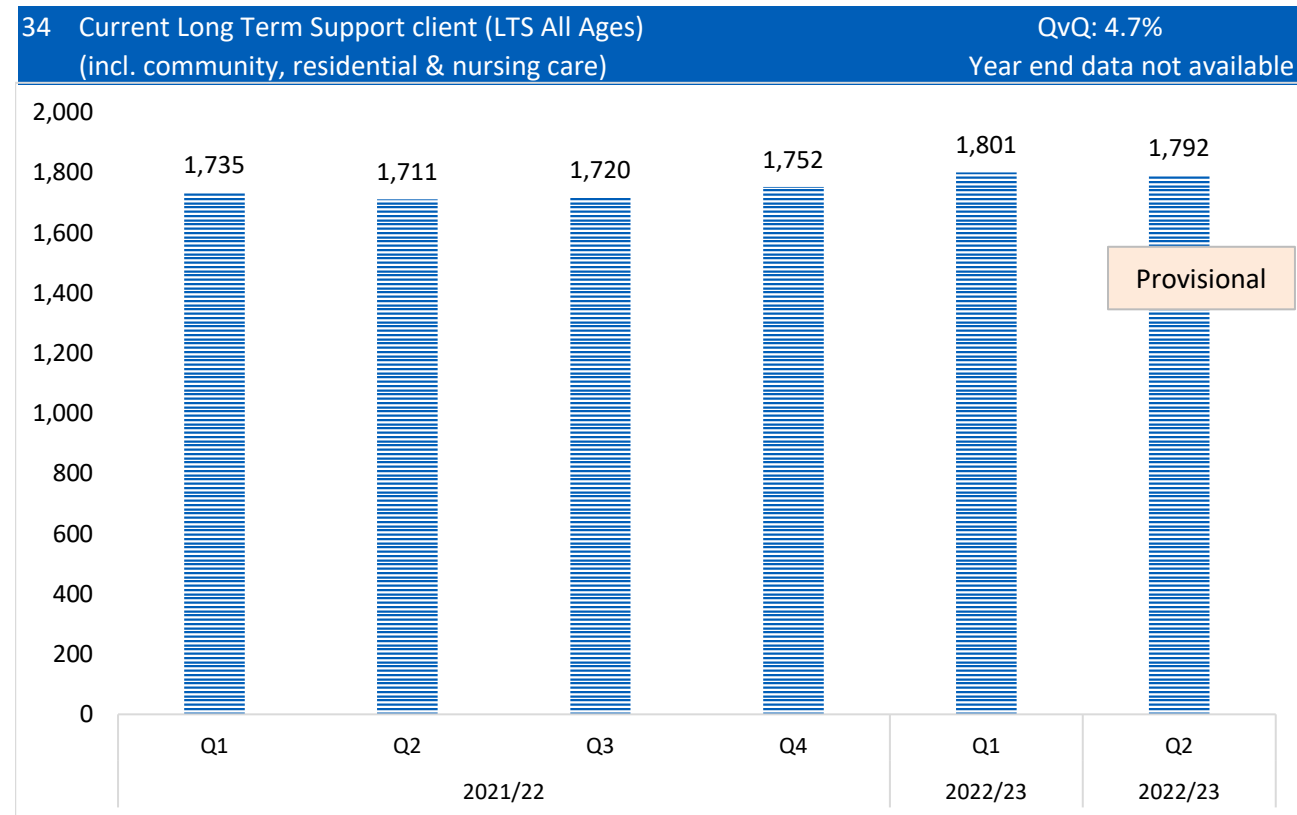
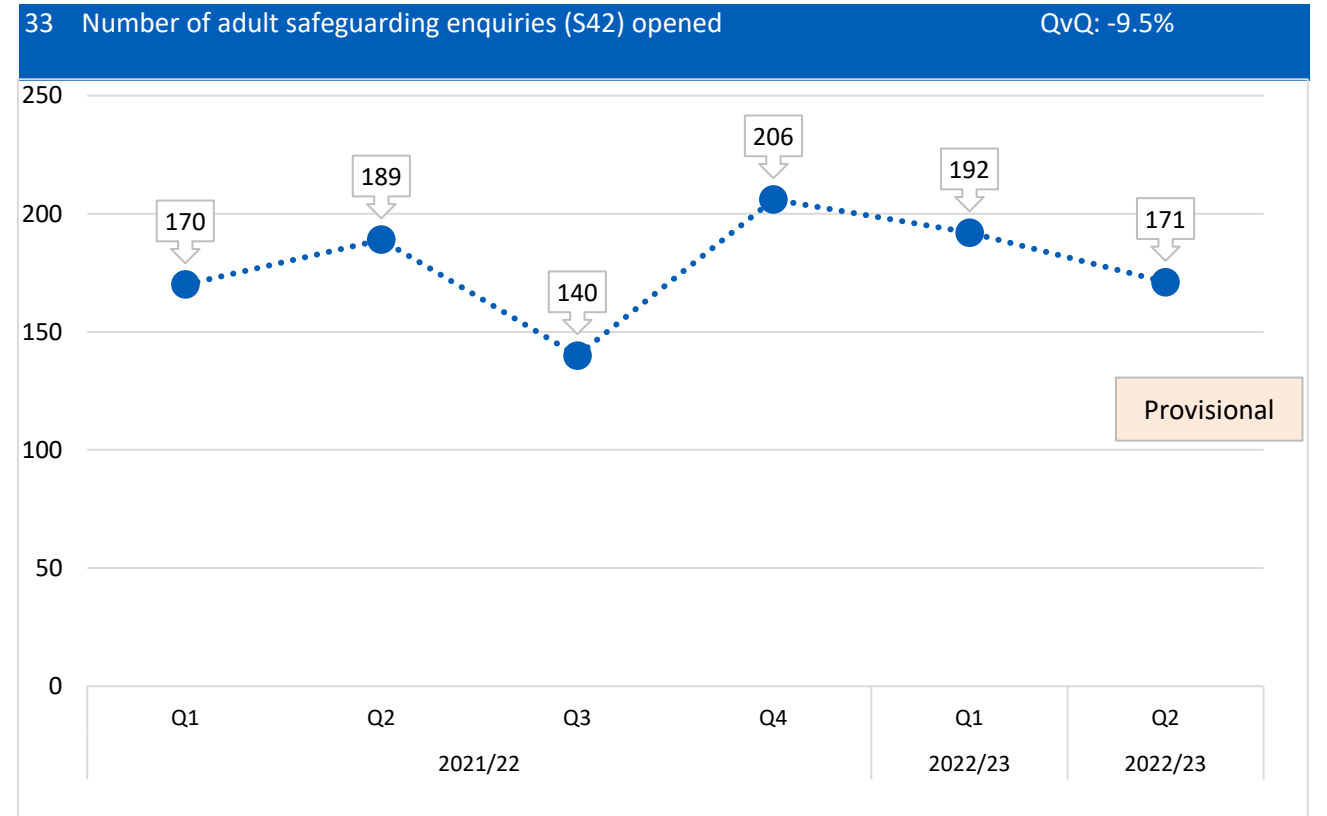
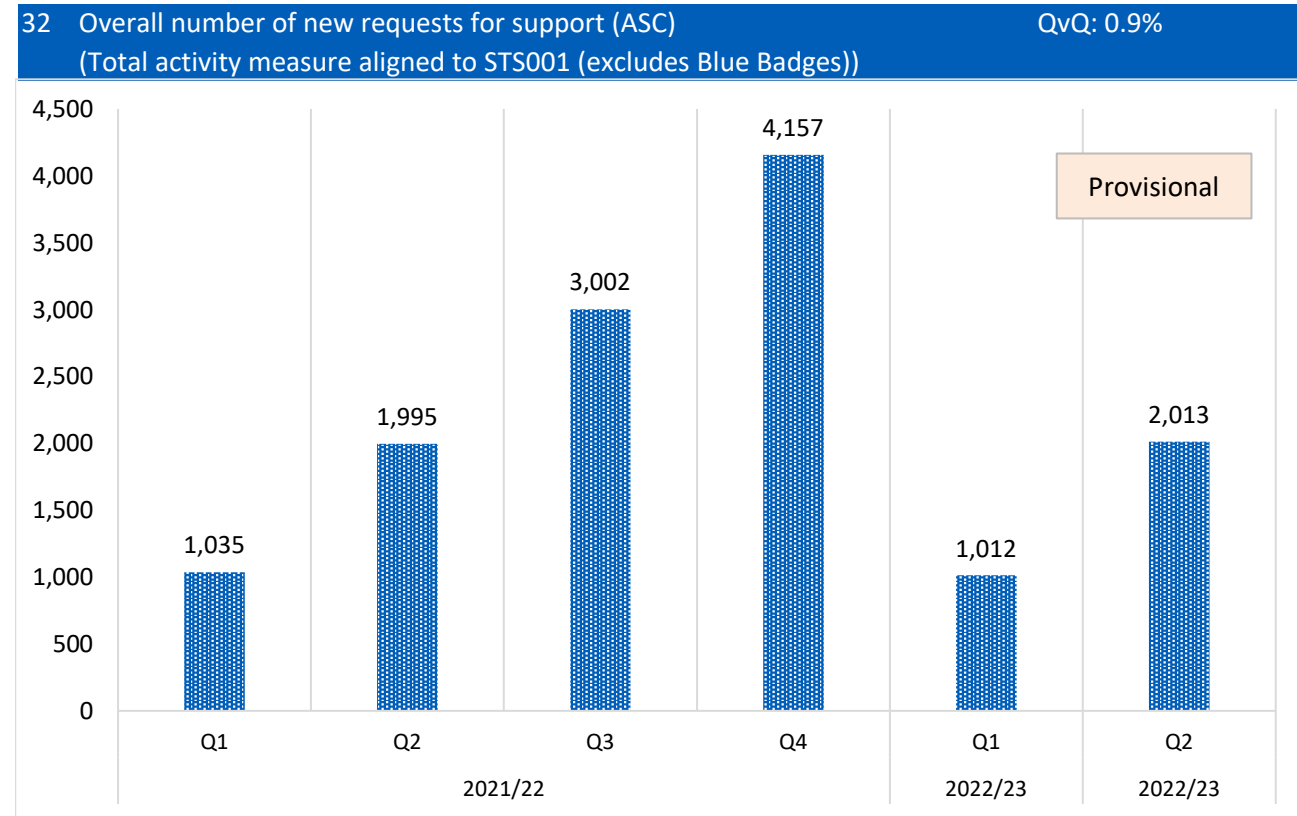
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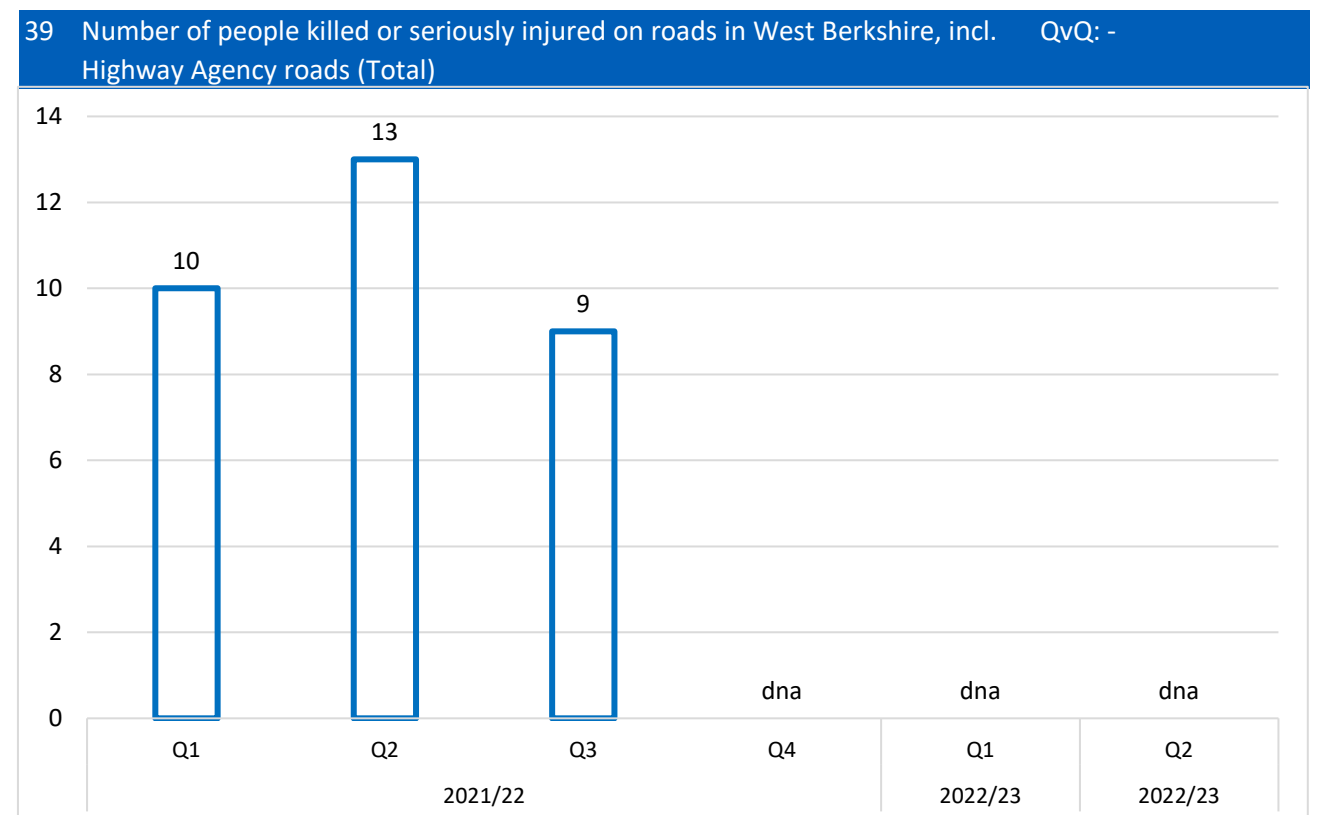
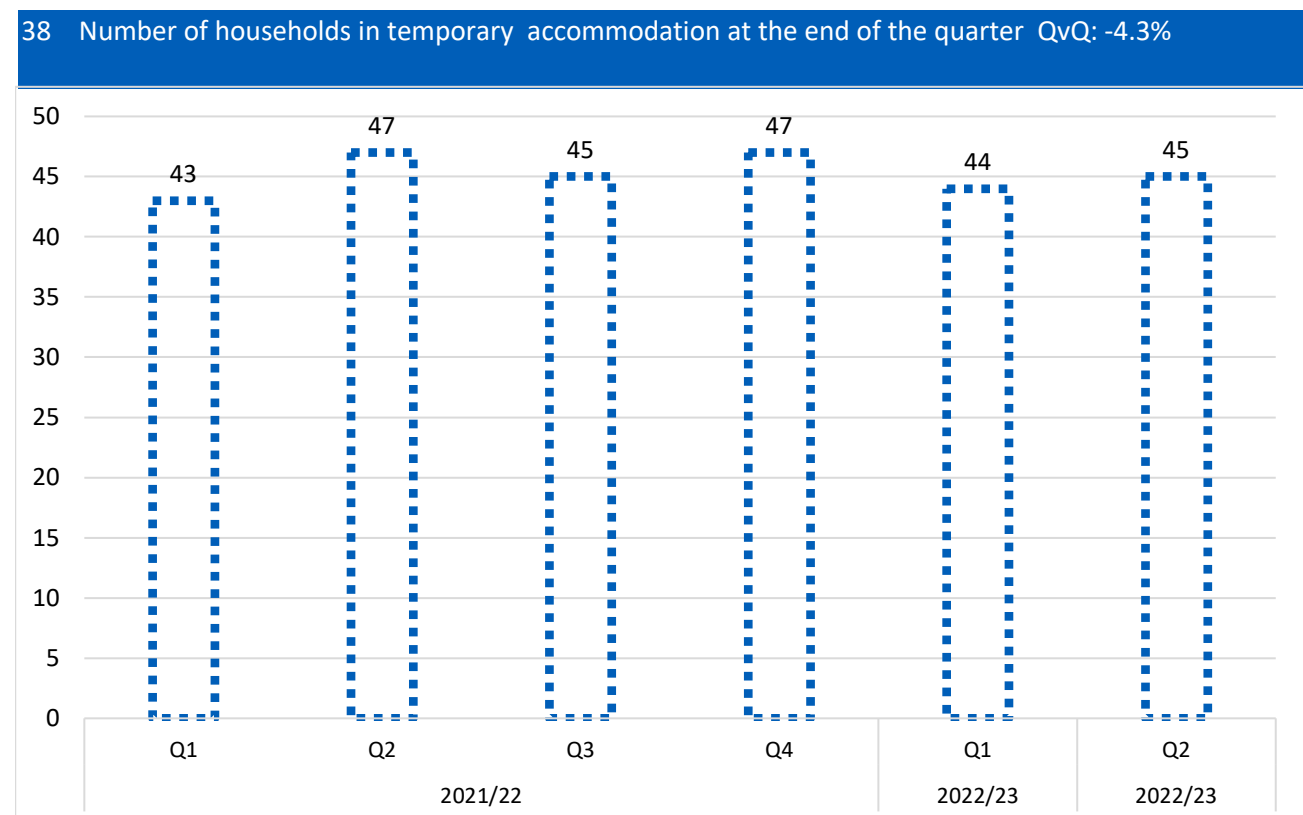
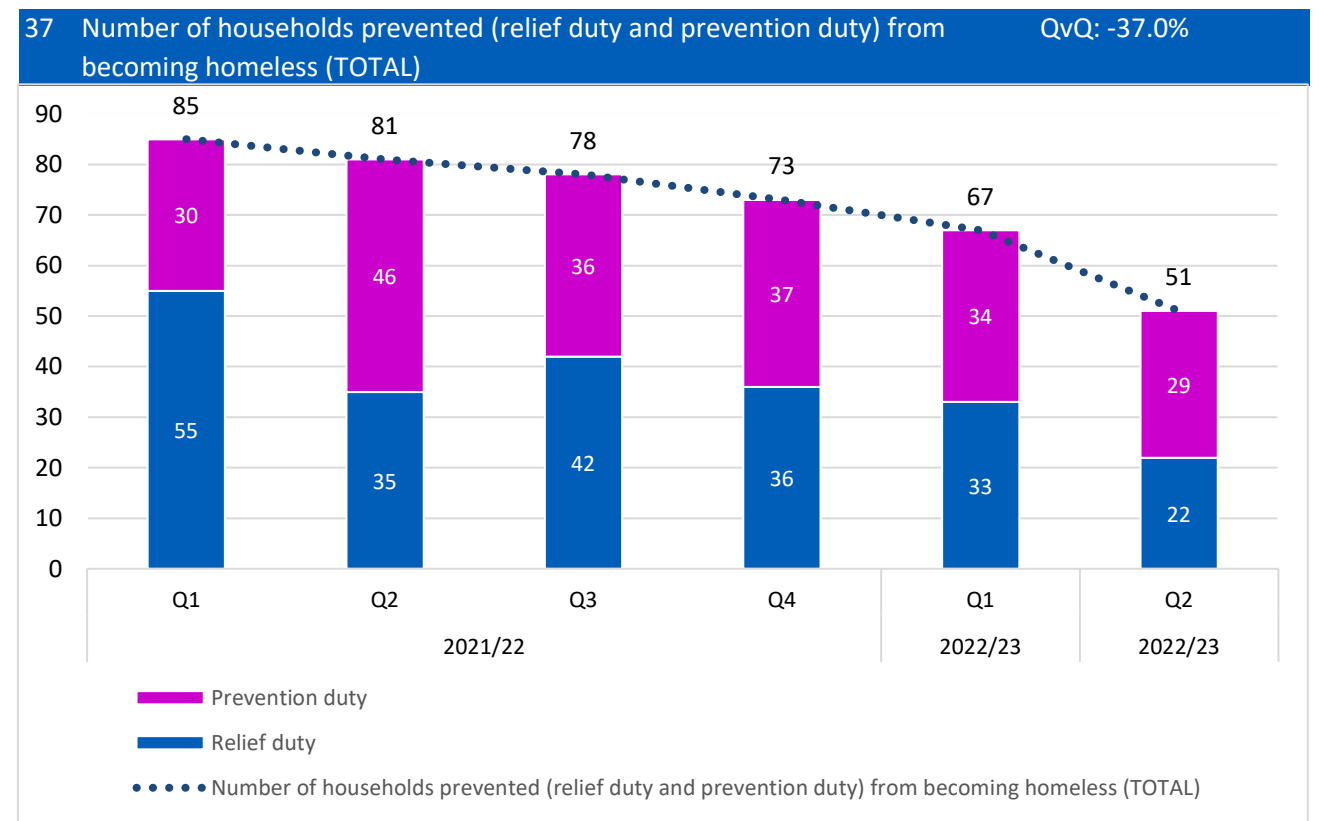
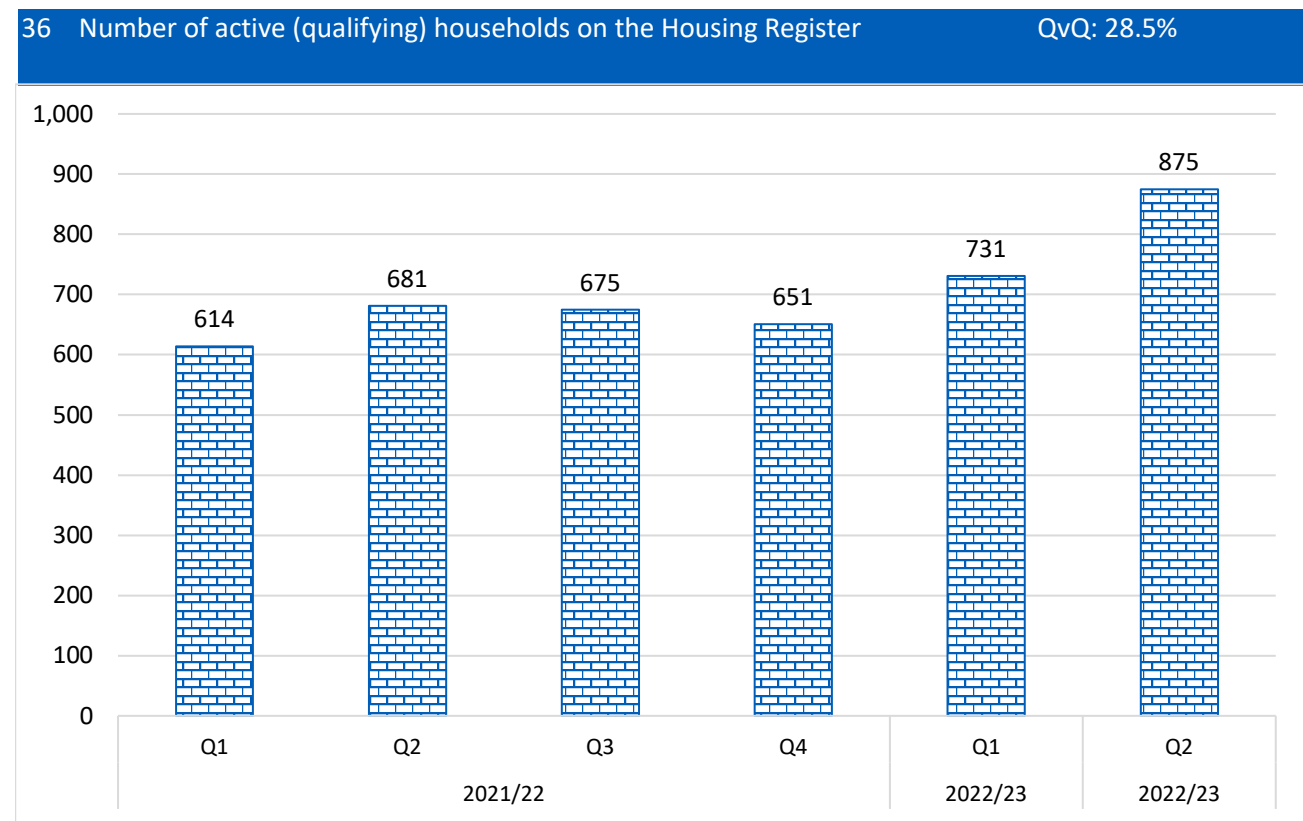
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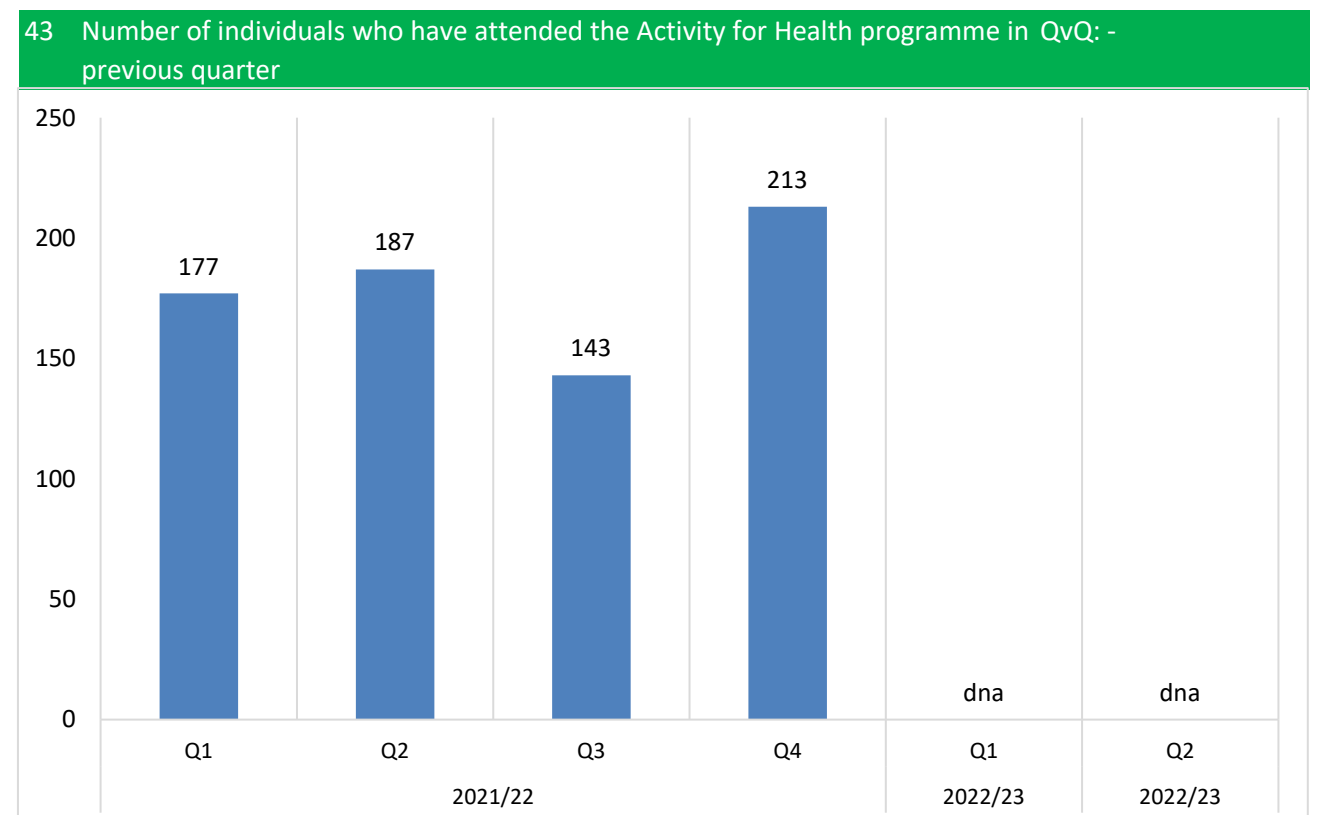
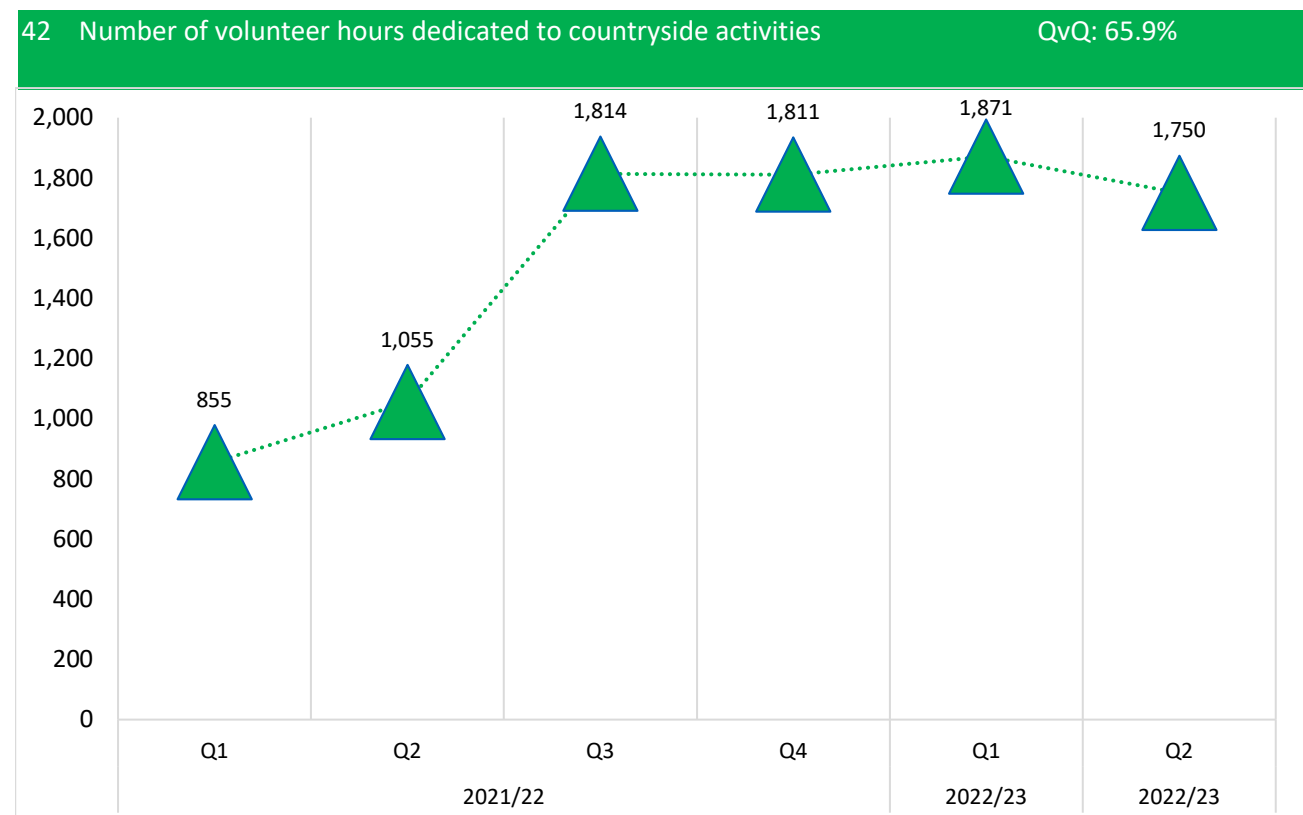
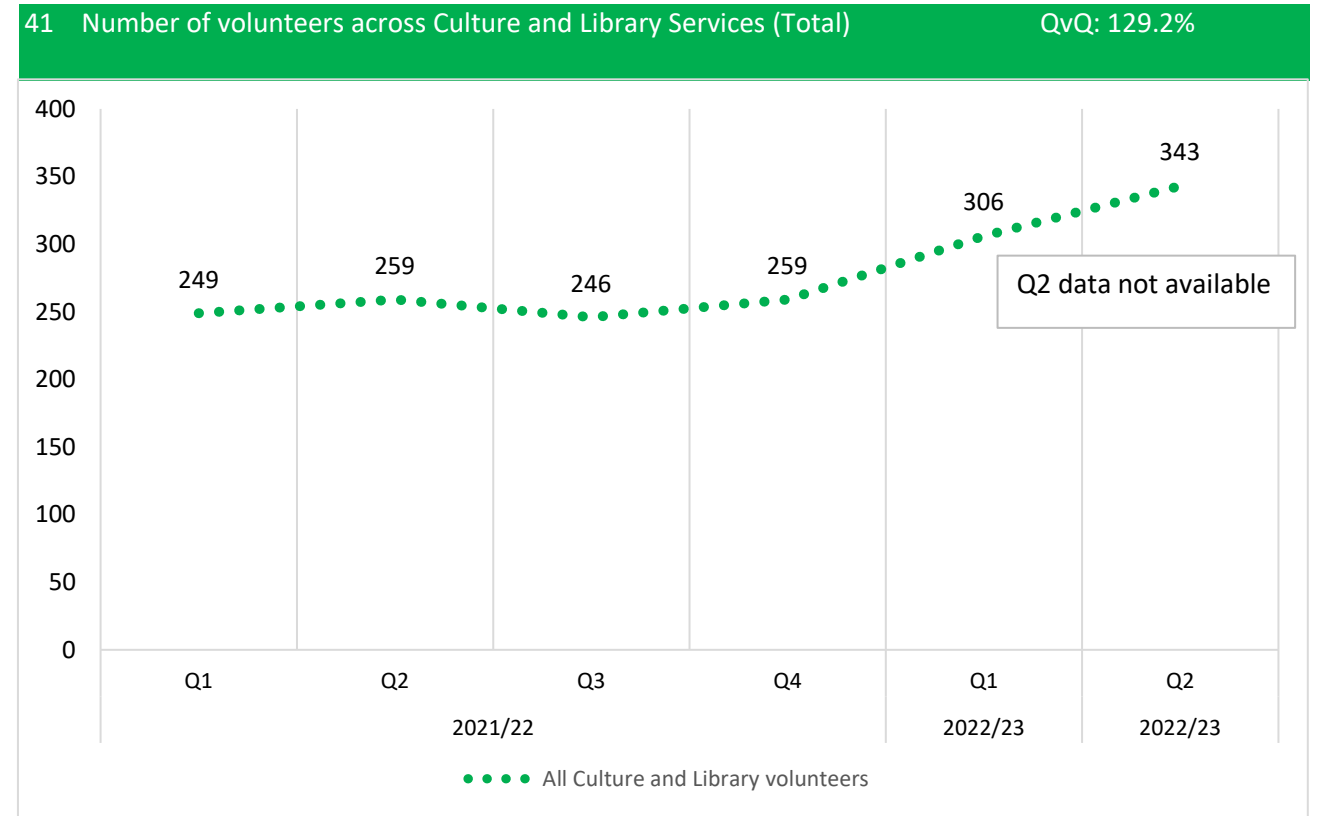
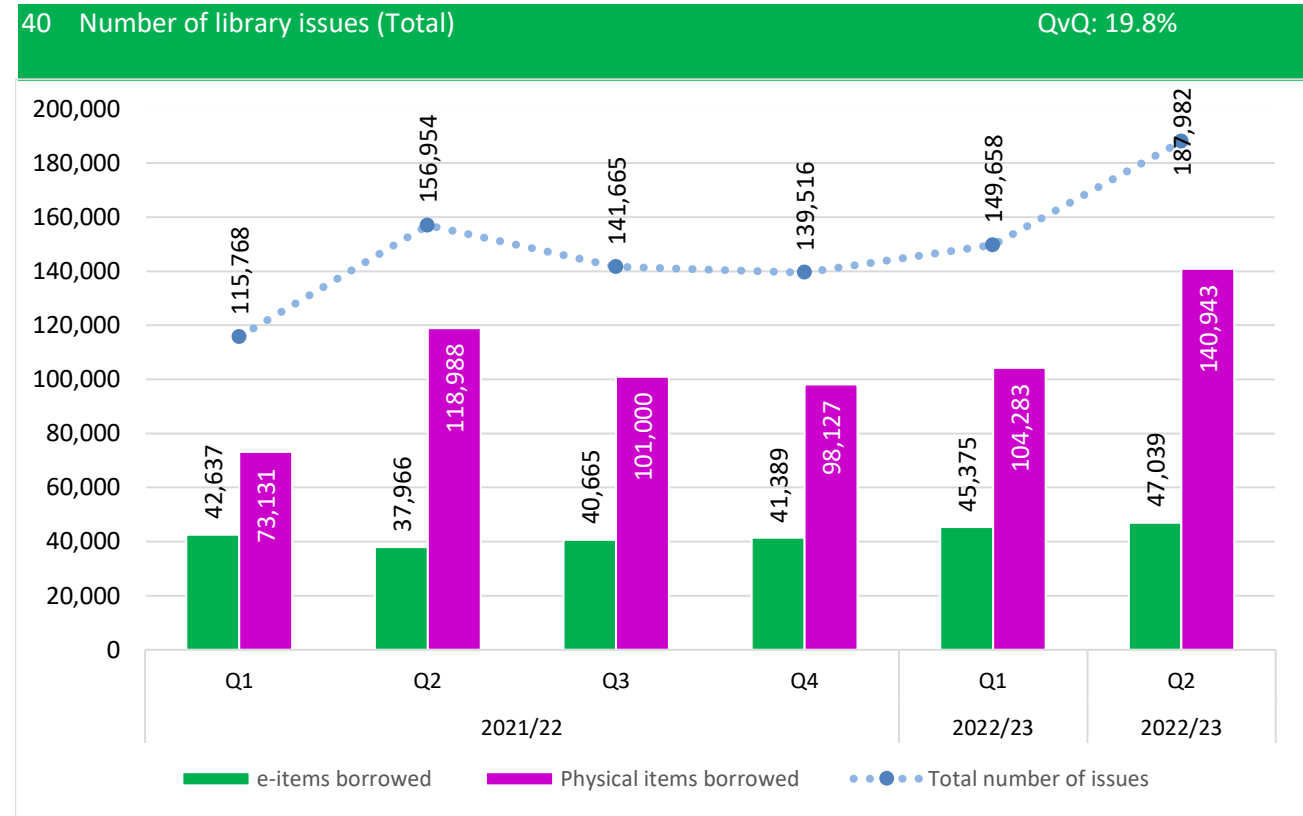
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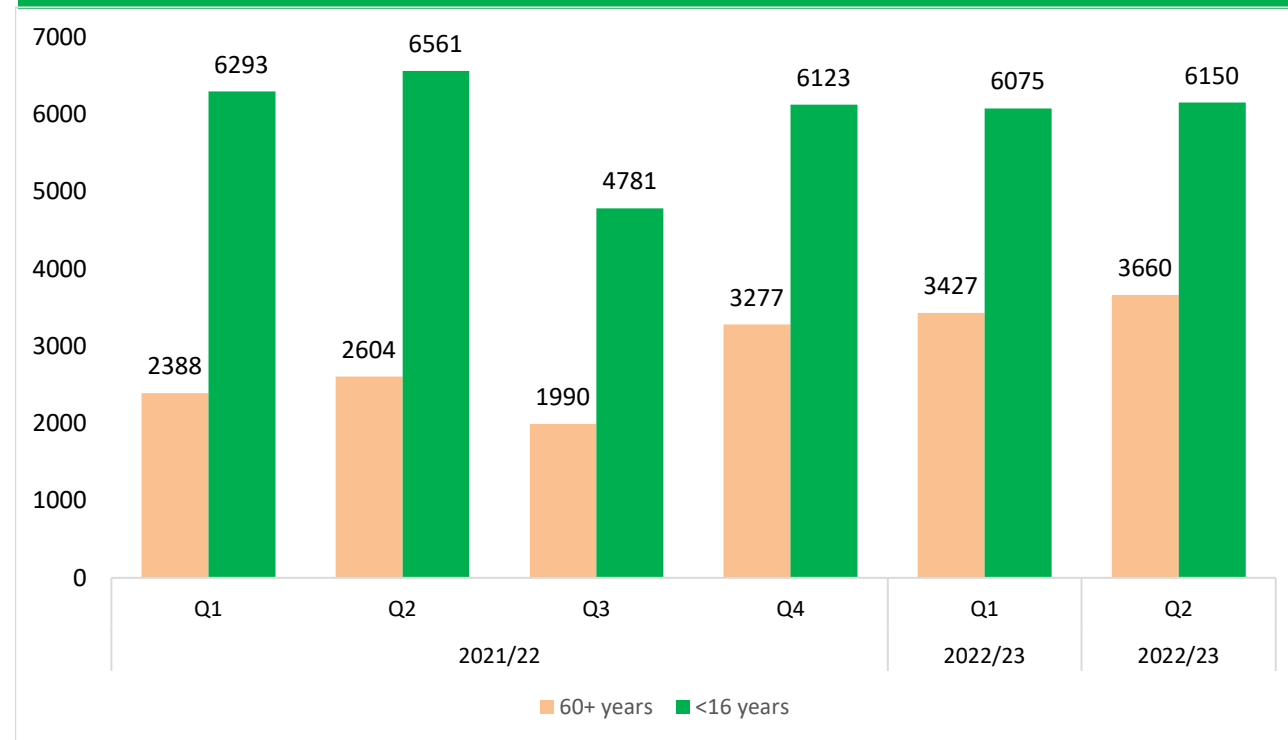
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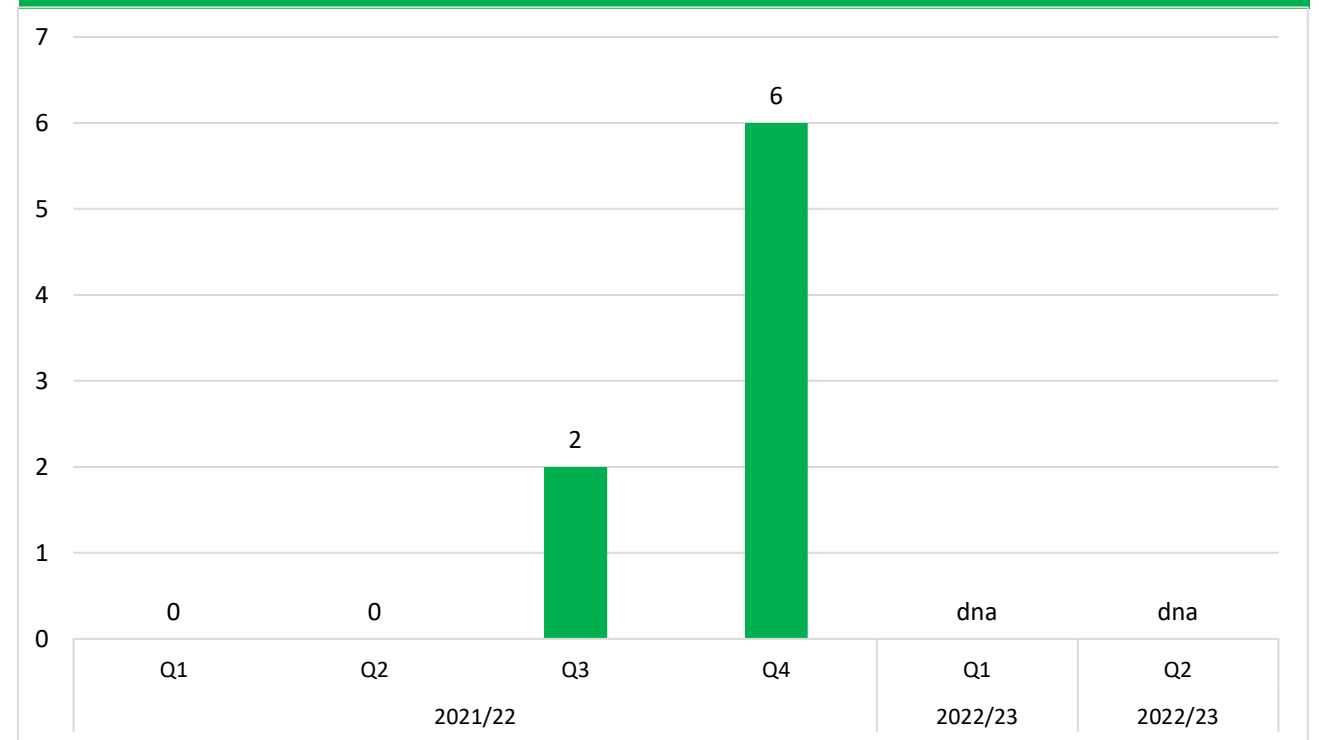
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44 Number of individuals aged 60 years and over who have used a sports or leisure centre in previous quarter QvQ: 40.6%
 Number of individuals aged under 16 years who have used a sports or leisure centre in previous quarter QvQ: -6.3%

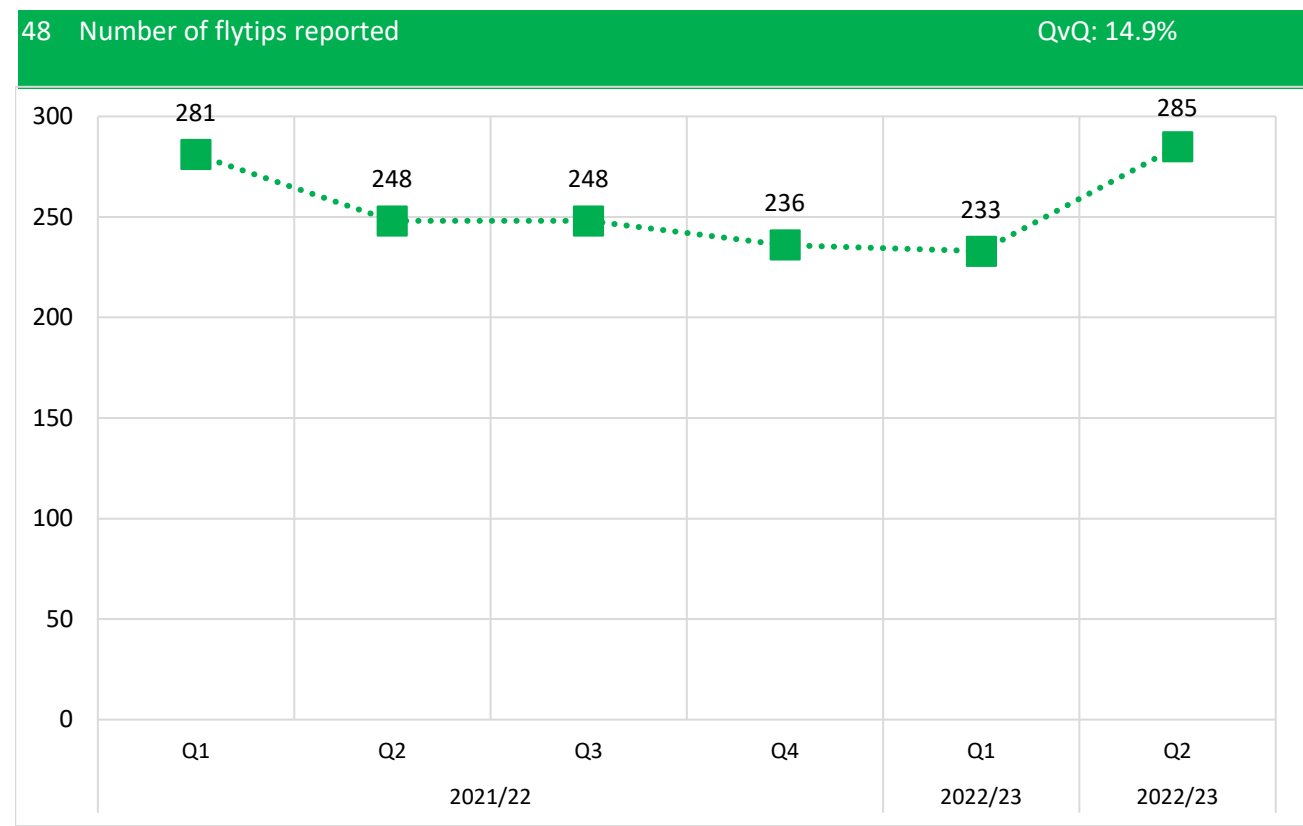
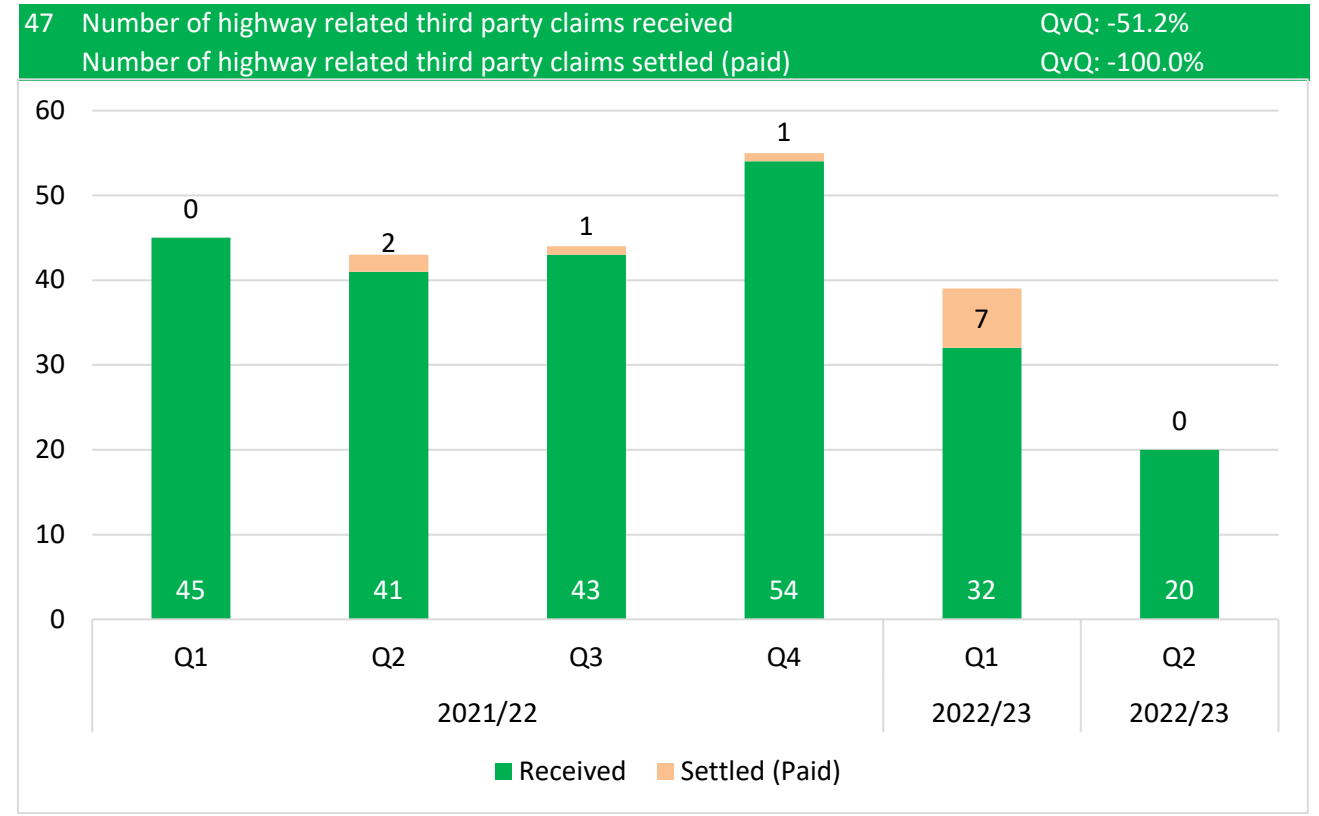
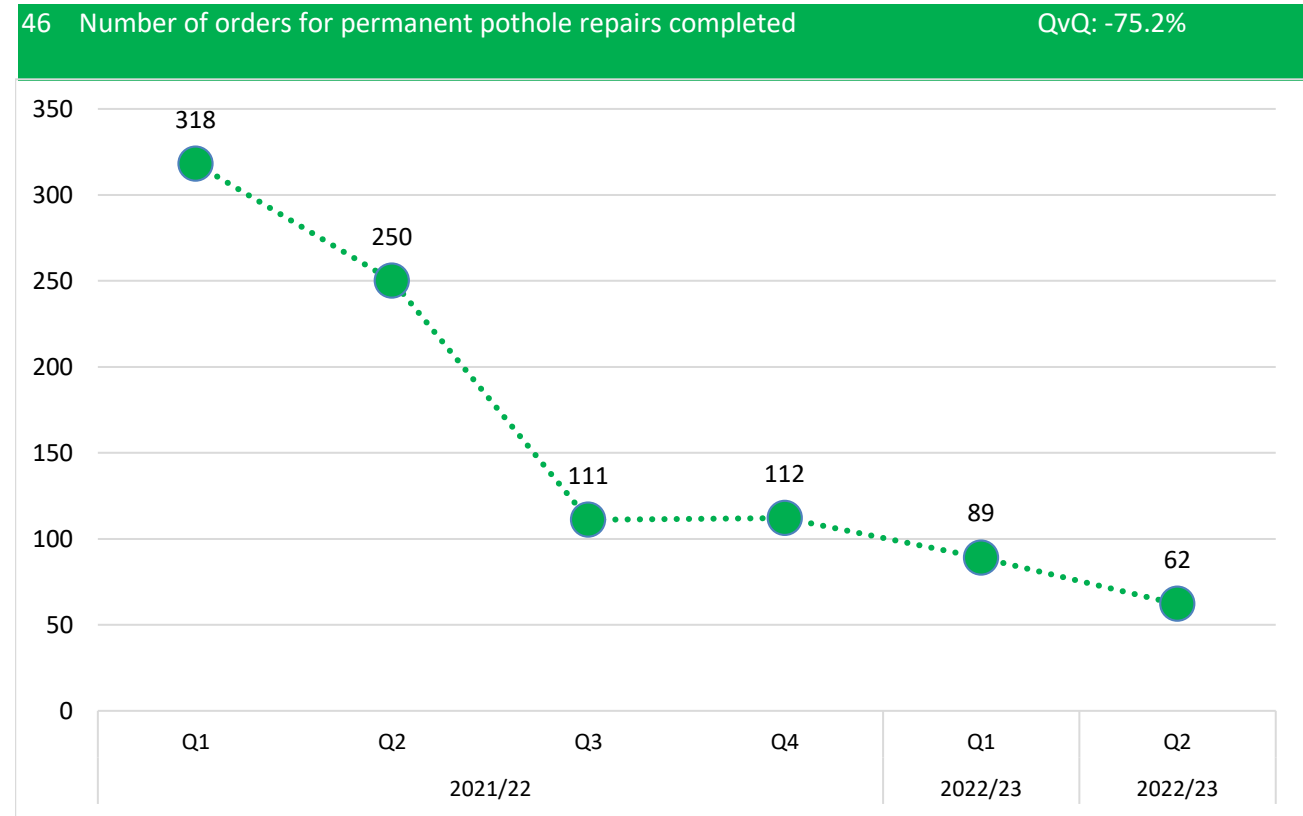


45 Number of Children in Care (and those care leavers aged 18 to 25 who left care due to age) who access a leisure centre in previous quarter QvQ: -



Appendix A: Influencer Measures Dashboard 2022/23 (current qtr v same qtr last year)

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| Andy Sharp / Dave Wraight | | | Children and Family Services | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|----|----|----------------|------------------|
| Indicator Ref: CFS-KPI-039 | | | % of CiC where the child has been visited in the past 6 weeks (or 12 weeks if the agreed visiting schedule) | | | | Type: Snapshot | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ■ | ★ | ◆ | | | ≥95% | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 60.3% (88/146) | 89.8% (149/166) | 97.13% (169/174) | 85.71% (168/196) | | | | |
| REASON FOR AMBER | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Children in Care visits are undertaken by a number of teams in Children and Family Services including the Children in Care Team, 16+/Leaving Care Team and the Family Safeguarding Teams. When exploring the data in detail the reduction in visit compliance is found in the FSM teams, this is due to the significant increase in all areas of their work (CIN, CP and CIC) and recruitment challenges thus making visit compliance more challenging.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>The ongoing processes of recruitment of staff will reduce the caseloads thus enabling greater compliance. The monitoring of compliance to Children in Care visits take place at Performance Board which scrutinises the performance to take appropriate action. Further training on specific recording is being planned as it has been identified that new and temporary staff require support using Care Director. Dedicated time has been created by managers to enable staff time for timely recording.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>No direct impacts on other measures, however Improved recording skill and compliance in one area has a beneficial effect on all areas.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Care Director upgrade should enable a number of enhancements that make recording more streamlined, however there are delays in the upgrade</p> | | | | | | | | |

| Andy Sharp / Paul Coe | | | Adult Social Care | | | | Q2 2022/23 | RED |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--|------------|----|----|----------------|------------------|
| Indicator Ref: CBCasc2 | | | % of WBC provider services inspected by Care Quality Commission (CQC) that are rated good or better by CQC in the area of "safe" | | | | Type: Snapshot | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2020/21 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | 100% | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 5/6 83.3% | 4/5 80% | 4/5 80% | 4/5 80% | | | | |
| REASON FOR RED: | | | | | | | | |
| Birchwood Nursing Home was re-inspected in July 2022 and achieved an overall rating of Requires Improvement (RI). All other ASC Regulated services are rated 'Good'. | | | | | | | | |
| REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: | | | | | | | | |
| During this inspection the rating for Well Led improved from Inadequate to Requires Improvement. The home also met its enforcement notice actions and has moved to a regular inspection framework. An action plan is in place and is moving forwards with the identified improvements. | | | | | | | | |
| The home is being supported by an external consultant on a one day a week basis. This will end in Dec 2022. | | | | | | | | |
| The health and safety team have been working closely with the home management team and they have indicated that we are now compliant with all health and safety issues previously identified. All audits, actions and reports will continue to be updated and undertaken. The annual inspection is due in January 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| The Fire Service have recently visited and they have also indicated that we are now meeting their requirements relating to fire safety. | | | | | | | | |
| The West Berkshire Council Care Quality team have lifted the embargo on placements as the work that has been put into making the improvements within Birchwood has embedded. The home will now implement a managed programme of admissions. The admission rate will be reviewed regularly. | | | | | | | | |
| We will shortly to be introducing an Electronic Medication Administration Record System (eMAR) which will help to reduce the number of medication errors within the home. | | | | | | | | |

Having moved to the normal inspection regime we will need to follow the necessary timelines being experienced by regular providers. This means that we cannot guarantee when a new inspection will be undertaken at this time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: There will be some financial impact from reduced admissions, however this will not be as severe as when we were under embargo and unable to accept new residents.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: None, as this is already incorporated in the ASC Service Plan and monitored through the Council Delivery Plan.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: None

| Eric Owens / Jon Winstanley | | | Environment | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|------------------------|----|----|---------------------|------------------|
| Indicator Ref: TC-KPI-071 | | | % of household waste recycled, composted and reused | | | | Type: Snapshot/Nos+ | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ■ | ★ | ◆ | | | ≥ 49.5% | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | 49.5% (9295/18760) | 48.0% (8187/17051) | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 49.0% | 49.1% | 49.5% (9295/18760) | 48.8% (17482/35812) | | | | |

REASON FOR AMBER:

A comparison of this year's data with those from 2021/22 shows that there is a significant drop in overall waste generation. 2022/23 Q1 overall waste tonnages were about 1,000 tonnes lower and Q2 tonnages were 2,657 tonnes lower than the same period in the preceding year. Over 80% of the fall in both quarters is contributed by a drop in recycling and composting tonnages. The sustained period of dry weather during summer 2022 resulted in a considerable reduction of garden waste tonnages collected; the impacts on composting and recycling was experienced across most of England (see: <https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/warning-over-impact-of-dry-weather-on-garden-waste-tonnage/>). The table below shows how garden waste tonnage collected in West Berkshire was affected by the dry weather this year.

| | 2022/23 | 2021/22 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Quarter 1 Garden Waste (tonnes) | 4,859 | 5,120 |
| Quarter 2 Garden Waste (tonnes) | 3,659 | 5,390 |

Another trend that we are actively monitoring is the extent to which residents are changing their buying habits in response to concerns over the ongoing cost of living crisis.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

The recently introduced separate food waste service (which started on 31 October 2022) is expected to contribute to significant improvements in the overall recycling performance from Q3. Renewed emphasis is being placed on engaging with residents to provide them more information and tools to help them recycle, compost and reuse more of their waste. For example, in this financial year two new mini-recycling centres have been installed at Theale and East Garston, with a third new site being planned for installation in the Tilehurst area around Christmas 2022. A paint reuse scheme has also

been introduced at our two large household waste recycling centres from October 2022, with over 338 litres of paint already supplied to residents free of charge.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:

None. Key internal stakeholders to be kept up-to-date on progress with new initiatives such as the separate food waste service.

| Eric Owens / Jon Winstanley | | | Environment | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---|--------------|----|----|------------|----------|
| Indicator Ref: TC-KPI-074 | | | Maintain an acceptable level of litter, detritus and graffiti (as outlined in the Keep Britain Tidy local environmental indicators) | | | | Type: Text | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ■ | ⌚ | ◆ | | | Good | N/A |
| Qrtly outturn | | | Not available | Satisfactory | | | | |
| YTD outturn | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | | | | | | |
| REASON FOR AMBER: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>The outturn on this measure has been below target over the past two years. The pandemic put significant pressure on available contractor resources partly due to an increase in littering and fly-tipping during the lockdown periods. The situation has been improving in recent quarters but it will take some time and more resources to meet the target. The results reported during Q2 are based on the Tranche 2 data (note: 3 tranches of the LEQ are typically done each year). <i>Tranche 1 of the Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) survey was not completed this year due to reprioritisation of the team's resources to focus on the launch of the new garden waste season and to prepare for the new food waste collection service.</i></p> <p>Context: The Council stripped significant financial efficiencies (c. £600k) from the street cleansing service in 2018. At the time, the target was reduced to Satisfactory to reflect the reduction in resources. The target has subsequently been changed back to Good and it has been difficult to achieve Good since the pandemic started due to the increased stretch on resources.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>A series of activities have been agreed with the contractor to progressively align resources to the streets cleansing function. Council waste officers have also increased their monitoring of the district in recent months. Progress is being made and will take some time to fully manifest, with improvements expected from Q3 2022/23. Two newly-appointed Waste Enforcement Officers (WEOs) are also a welcome addition to the team's capacity to monitor, deter and prosecute waste crime such as fly-tipping.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: None | | | | | | | | |
| STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>None. Operations Board was briefed on progress during December 2021. Communications plan which incorporates the cost of clearing litter being progressed and more outreach work is planned for Q4 2022/23.</p> | | | | | | | | |

| Joseph Holmes / Andy Walker | | | Finance and Property | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|--|-------|----|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Indicator Ref: CBffp13 | | | Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new Housing Benefit claims | | | | Type: Snapshot | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ★ | ■ | ◆ | ◆ | | | ≤19 days | Lower is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 18.27 | 20.93 | 21.67 | 19.68 | | | | |
| REASON FOR AMBER: | | | | | | | | |
| Main reason relates to the recovery from Covid-19, staffing and now the effects of the increases in the cost of the living. | | | | | | | | |
| Self-Isolation (Track & Trace) grant applications and payments stopped at the end of April, but processing has also continued in relation to the 2022/23 COVID hardship payments for working age benefit claimants. | | | | | | | | |
| We are now seeing an increase in claims for Exceptional Hardship as recovery and enforcement action continues and household costs rise. | | | | | | | | |
| We are currently recruiting two assessors, the training of which will take some time to have an effect on performance | | | | | | | | |
| REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: | | | | | | | | |
| Performance has improved over last quarter, but the additional members of staff should also have an effect. | | | | | | | | |
| IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: | | | | | | | | |
| There is a fine balance between changes in circumstances and new claims. If more focus is placed on one measure then it will have an effect on the other. | | | | | | | | |
| STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: | | | | | | | | |
| None | | | | | | | | |

| Joseph Holmes / Andy Walker | | | Finance and Property | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|---|--|---|--|--|----|----|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Indicator Ref:CBgfp15 | | | Council Tax collected as a percentage of Council Tax due | | | | Type: Snapshot | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ■ | ★ | ◆ | | | Year end ≥98.8% Q2 57.7% | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 95.9% (118,441,582/ 123,532,276) | 97.3% (124,502,423 / 128,011,136) | 28.94% (38,809,508/ 134,120,405) | 55.96% (75,218,811/ 134,419,822) | | | | |
| REASON FOR AMBER: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Although collection is better than it was for the same period last year, we are still not at pre-Covid 2019/20 levels.</p> <p>As a comparison with previous years: 2019/20 Q2 = 56.58%, 2020/21 Q2= 54.7%, 2021/22 Q2 = 55.0%</p> <p>The effects of Covid, and now potentially the cost of living, is still having an impact on customers' ability to pay. So far this year over 600 special arrangements have been made offering greater flexibility with payment. This along with over 6,500 reminder notices and 2,500 summons being issued clearly shows the challenges facing some.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: | | | | | | | | |
| Further debt recovery action is being planned and enforcement agents (Bailiffs) are again visiting properties where no payment or contact has been made. | | | | | | | | |
| IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES: | | | | | | | | |
| Reduction in income. | | | | | | | | |
| STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: | | | | | | | | |
| None. But this is still a very challenging target bearing in mind the circumstances. | | | | | | | | |

| Eric Owens | | | Development and Regulation | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------|----|----|---------------------------|------------------|
| Indicator Ref: PLS-KPI-001 | | | % of 'major' planning applications determined within 13 weeks or the agreed extended time | | | | Type: %+ | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ★ | ◆ | ◆ | | | ≥90% (England average) | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | 93.3% | 95% (19/20) | 80% (12/15) | 84.38% (27/32) | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 78.1% (75/96) | 93.4% (71/76) | 80% (12/15) | 83.0% (39/47) | | | | |

REASON FOR AMBER:

The service is carrying a number of vacant posts (currently at 6.6 FTE) and that, together with sustained application numbers overall, is resulting in officers carrying high individual workloads. There are also issues with the timeliness of consultation responses, including those from internal consultees which is also affecting the throughput of applications. Furthermore, the recent introduction of nutrient neutrality considerations into the application process has also affected timely progress on a considerable number of applications. In addition to affecting the timely throughput of applications, these issues have also led to a backlog of planning applications developing in the service. The backlog is sufficiently large for us to have to advertise the issue publicly on our website. There has been an impact through the teams at all Officer and Team Leader levels. These issues have together led to an impact of not meeting locally set performance targets.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

In order to manage the issues going forward, performance will continue to be monitored. Subject to Recruitment Agency Panel (RAP) approval, we will also be seeking to recruit 3 FTE planning officers to fill some of the vacant posts in the service. With regard to the backlog of planning applications in the service, we are already taking a range of actions to address this. The approach we are taking is already publicised on the website to ensure that customers are aware of the situation and about what we are doing to address the issue which includes a new negotiations strategy, working with our internal consultees to address delays in consultation responses and also reviewing our processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our service. We are currently employing temporary planning consultants to assist with the current high volume of applications (we currently have 3 FTE agency workers dealing with planning applications) and are seeking to recruit replacement planning officers for these agency staff. Other measures are also being prioritised to improve the service and minimise the risk of repeated backlogs in the future.

A Service Improvement Plan consisting of a number of priorities and other tasks has recently been developed. As part of these we are intending to review many of our processes and the way we work across the Planning Service and with other parts of the Council. Through that work we plan to identify and

make adjustments where these can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way we work, the quality and consistency of our work and also providing clarity as to the level of service we deliver to our customers.

For completeness when looking at the national picture and having regard to designation of authorities, on the basis of applications determined in the 24 month period to end of June 2022, the performance is recorded as 88.6% on 'Majors' and 85% on 'Non-Majors' against the respective national measures of 60% and 70%. There is therefore no risk at present of the authority being designated for poor performance. A review of internal targets is also underway as part of the Service Improvement Plan to ensure that targets meet customer aspirations.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:

None

| Eric Owens | | | Development and Regulation | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------|----|----|---------------------------|------------------|
| Indicator Ref: PLS-KPI-004 | | | % of 'minor' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time | | | | Type: %+ | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ★ | ★ | ◆ | ◆ | | | ≥86% (England average) | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | 80.56% (58/72) | 75.86% (44/58) | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 89.5% (281/314) | 90.7% (244/269) | 80.56% (58/72) | 78.5% (102/130) | | | | |

REASON FOR AMBER:

The service is carrying a number of vacant posts (currently at 6.6 FTE) and that, together with sustained application numbers overall, is resulting in officers carrying high individual workloads. There are also issues with the timeliness of consultation responses, including those from internal consultees which is also affecting the throughput of applications. Furthermore, the recent introduction of nutrient neutrality considerations into the application process has also affected timely progress on a considerable number of applications. In addition to affecting the timely throughput of applications, these issues have also led to a backlog of planning applications developing in the service. The backlog is sufficiently large for us to have to advertise the issue publicly on our website. There has been an impact through the teams at all Officer and Team Leader levels. These issues have together led to an impact of not meeting locally set performance targets.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

In order to manage the issues going forward, performance will continue to be monitored. Subject to Subject to Recruitment Agency Panel (RAP) approval, we will also be seeking to recruit 3 FTE planning officers to fill some of the vacant posts in the service. With regard to the backlog of planning applications in the service, we are already taking a range of actions to address this. The approach we are taking is already publicised on the website to ensure that customers are aware of the situation and about what we are doing to address the issue which includes a new negotiations strategy, working with our internal consultees to address delays in consultation responses and also reviewing our processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our service. We are currently employing temporary planning consultants to assist with the current high volume of applications (we currently have 3 FTE agency workers dealing with planning applications) and are seeking to recruit replacement planning officers for these agency staff. Other measures are also being prioritised to improve the service and minimise the risk of repeated backlogs in the future.

A Service Improvement Plan consisting of a number of priorities and other tasks has recently been developed. As part of these we are intending to review many of our processes and the way we work across the Planning Service and with other parts of the Council. Through that work we plan to identify and

make adjustments where these can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way we work, the quality and consistency of our work and also providing clarity as to the level of service we deliver to our customers.

For completeness when looking at the national picture and having regard to designation of authorities, on the basis of applications determined in the 24 month period to end of June 2022, the performance is recorded as 88.6% on 'Majors' and 85% on 'Non-Majors' against the respective national measures of 60% and 70%. There is therefore no risk at present of the authority being designated for poor performance. A review of internal targets is also underway as part of the Service Improvement Plan to ensure that targets meet customer aspirations.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:

None

| Eric Owens | | | Development and Regulation | | | | Q2 2022/23 | AMBER |
|--|----------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------|----|----|---------------------------|------------------|
| Indicator Ref: PLS-KPI-007 | | | % of 'other' planning applications determined within 8 weeks or the agreed extended time | | | | Type: Snapshot/Nos+ | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | ■ | ■ | ◆ | ◆ | | | ≥90% (England average) | Higher is better |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | 85.17% (224/263) | 85.26% (266/312) | | | | |
| YTD outturn | 84.9% (919/1,083) | 87.1% (1,085/1,245) | 85.17% (224/263) | 85.2% (490/575) | | | | |
| REASON FOR AMBER: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>The service is carrying a number of vacant posts (currently at 6.6 FTE) and that, together with sustained application numbers overall, is resulting in officers carrying high individual workloads. There are also issues with the timeliness of consultation responses, including those from internal consultees which is also affecting the throughput of applications. Furthermore, the recent introduction of nutrient neutrality considerations into the application process has also affected timely progress on a considerable number of applications. In addition to affecting the timely throughput of applications, these issues have also led to a backlog of planning applications developing in the service. The backlog is sufficiently large for us to have to advertise the issue publicly on our website. There has been an impact through the teams at all Officer and Team Leader levels. These issues have together led to an impact of not meeting locally set performance targets.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT: | | | | | | | | |
| <p>In order to manage the issues going forward, performance will continue to be monitored. Subject to Subject to Recruitment Agency Panel (RAP) approval, we will also be seeking to recruit 3 FTE planning officers to fill some of the vacant posts in the service. With regard to the backlog of planning applications in the service, we are already taking a range of actions to address this. The approach we are taking is already publicised on the website to ensure that customers are aware of the situation and about what we are doing to address the issue which includes a new negotiations strategy, working with our internal consultees to address delays in consultation responses and also reviewing our processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our service. We are currently employing temporary planning consultants to assist with the current high volume of applications (we currently have 3 FTE agency workers dealing with planning applications) and are seeking to recruit replacement planning officers for these agency staff. Other measures are also being prioritised to improve the service and minimise the risk of repeated backlogs in the future.</p> | | | | | | | | |
| <p>A Service Improvement Plan consisting of a number of priorities and other tasks has recently been developed. As part of these we are intending to review many of our processes and the way we work across the Planning Service and with other parts of the Council. Through that work we plan to identify and</p> | | | | | | | | |

make adjustments where these can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way we work, the quality and consistency of our work and also providing clarity as to the level of service we deliver to our customers.

For completeness when looking at the national picture and having regard to designation of authorities, on the basis of applications determined in the 24 month period to end of June 2022, the performance is recorded as 88.6% on 'Majors' and 85% on 'Non-Majors' against the respective national measures of 60% and 70%. There is therefore no risk at present of the authority being designated for poor performance. A review of internal targets is also underway as part of the Service Improvement Plan to ensure that targets meet customer aspirations.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

None

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED:

None

| Andy Sharp / Steve Welch | | | Communities and Wellbeing | | | | Q2 2022/23 | RED |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|---------|----|----|--|----------|
| Indicator Ref: PC2cl45 | | | Complete the Newbury Sports Hub project | | | | | |
| Executive | 2020/21 Year End | 2021/22 Year End | 2022/23 | | | | Target | Polarity |
| | | | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | |
| RAG | | | ■ | ■ | | | TBC – subject to planning permission, complete by March 2023 | Project |
| Qrtly outturn | - | - | - | - | | | | |
| YTD outturn | - | - | Pending | Pending | | | | |

REASON FOR RED:

The project has been placed on hold until the Judicial Review process has been concluded, following an application for an appeal (heard in August 2022) the claimant was granted a restricted appeal which will be heard in the High Court on January 19, 2023. If the Council is successful the High Court can grant the claimant permission to a further appeal and they will have 90 days to lodge such an appeal. If the claimant does not lodge a further appeal the project can proceed at which time there is a 16 week lead in time to get power to the site followed by a 26 week build programme, this means the project is unable to be completed by the end of March 2023.

REMEDIAL MANAGEMENT ACTION BEING UNDERTAKEN, ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT:

Legal advice is that the Council should wait until the Judicial Review process is concluded, once due process has been completed a new timeline will be created for the conclusion of the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital allocation towards the project will require slippage to 2023/24.

Given the current high inflation levels in the construction field a review of the cost of the project will be required before the project proceeded.

IMPACT ON OTHER MEASURES:

None in 2022/23 but the Sports Hub is included within the parameters of the new leisure management contract which will have a suite of KPI's attached to it. These will need to be reviewed and revised if there are further delays to the project.

SERVICE PLAN UPDATES REQUIRED: Project will need to be moved to 2023/24 with associated target date recalculated once the Judicial Review is concluded.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS REQUIRED: A watching brief on the appeal at the High Court

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Technical Conventions

This report sets out the Council's progress against its Priorities for Improvement set out in the [Council Strategy](#). Performance is presented by priority and augmented with Influencer measures to further describe the operating environment and / or challenges.

Activities are monitored within the council priorities and RAG rated by projected year end performance, e.g. a prediction of whether the target or activity will be achieved by the end of the financial year (or, for projects, by the target date):

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Red (R) | Indicates that we have either not achieved (or do not expect to achieve) the activity or target by year end, or the specified target date. |
| Amber (A) | Means we are behind schedule, but still expect to achieve or complete the measure or activity by year end, or the specified target date. |
| Green (G) | Means we have either achieved or exceeded (or expect to achieve or exceed) what we set out to do. |
| Annual | Indicates that the measure that can only be reported against at a particular point in time e.g. at quarter 4. |
| Baseline | Means that the measure is not targeted and the results are provided as a baseline for future monitoring. |
| Data not available (dna) | Indicates that the quarterly data is not yet available and will be updated at a later date, usually the following quarter. |
| Data not provided (dnp) | Means that data has not been provided and will be updated at a later date, usually the following quarter |
| (E) | Indicates a result is an estimate and will be updated during the year, as and when data becomes available. |
| (P) | Means a result is provisional and subject to further validation e.g. from an external body, and will be updated during the year, as and when data becomes available. |

Where a measure is reported as 'amber' or 'red', an exception report is provided. This identifies the reasons for this assessment and shows what remedial action has been put in place to either bring the measure back on target or to mitigate the consequence of it not being achieved; and whether any Strategic action is required.

Benchmarking

Where possible our progress is compared to all English single tier and county councils, where available, by quartile and rank. Due to the timescales involved in central government publication these are usually available 6-12 months in arrears.

Influencer Measures

Non-targeted measures are reported to either illustrate the demand on a service or provide context for the demand, e.g. economic activity.

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Social Value Update

| | |
|---|---------------------------|
| Committee considering report: | Executive |
| Date of Committee: | 12 January 2023 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Ross Mackinnon |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 7 December 2022 |
| Report Author: | Kate Pearson |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX4305 |

1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Social Value Policy which was adopted by the Council at Executive on 18 November 2021. The paper will provide details of the uptake and impact of the inclusion of social value measures within contracts arising from the procurement process.

2 Recommendation

That the council continues to monitor the implementation of the Social Value policy to determine how it is embedded within the procurement process and what benefits are derived in the future.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|------------------------|---|
| Financial: | <p>Social value should be provided in addition to the benefits derived from the specification and there should be no cost to the council.</p> <p>Social value benefits offered by providers may have positive financial impacts on the local economy and may result in cost avoidance to the council or financial benefit to the local community, however it is usually very difficult to assign a financial value to the support received.</p> |
| Human Resource: | Social value is monitored and measured as part of contract management and does not require any additional resources |

| | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|-----------------|--|
| | therefore it is not considered that there are any HR implications. | | | |
| Legal: | There are no direct legal implications arising from this report as confirmed by Sarah Clarke on 8 th December 2022. | | | |
| Risk Management: | There are no significant risks associated with the implementation of the Social Value policy. | | | |
| Property: | There are no implications in relation to property associated with the implementation of the Social Value policy. | | | |
| Policy: | <p>The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires councils to consider how that can secure social, economic and environmental benefits at the pre-procurement stage of contracts.</p> <p>In addition, Crown Commercial Services published a Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 06/20 in September 2020 requiring central government to take social value into account when procuring contracts. It is not mandatory for local government to comply with the requirement, however the council's Social Value policy applies the same weighting to social value as set out in the PPN.</p> | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | | | | |
| A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality? | | X | | It is possible that social value provided by suppliers will impact inequality in a positive way, however this will be dependent upon the subject matter and the offering from the market |

Social Value Update

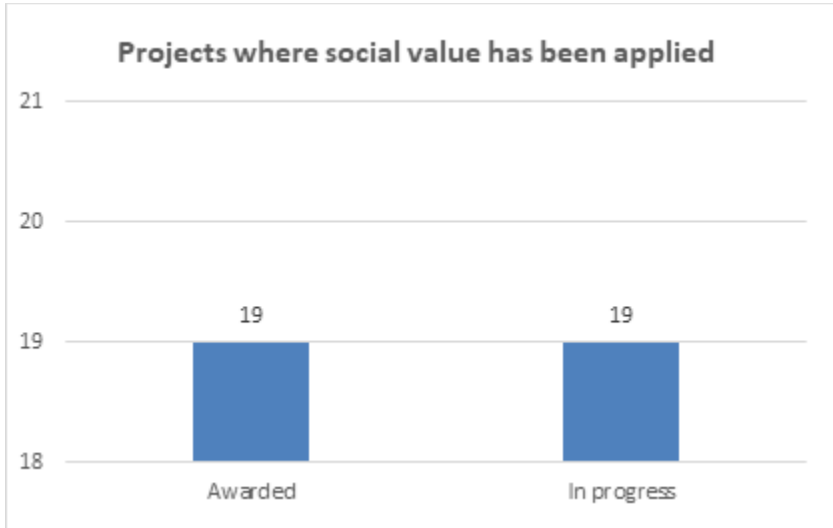
| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users? | | X | | It is possible that social value provided by suppliers will positively impact the lives of people with protected characteristics, however this will be dependent upon the subject matter and the offering from the market |
| Environmental Impact: | X | | | Positive environmental impact is an area where we have already seen suppliers offering social value benefits, such as moving towards a zero emissions fleet, using local supply chains etc. |
| Health Impact: | | X | | It is possible that social value provided by suppliers will have a positive health impact, however this will be dependent upon the subject matter and the offering from the market |
| ICT Impact: | | X | | None known |
| Digital Services Impact: | | X | | None known |
| Council Strategy Priorities: | X | | | Suppliers will be asked to link their social value propositions to the council's priorities to ensure that value offered is in line with the council's strategy |
| Core Business: | | X | | None known |
| Data Impact: | | X | | None known |
| Consultation and Engagement: | <p>The Commissioning and Procurement team has consulted with service areas who have been involved in contracts including social value as a requirement.</p> <p>The paper has been presented at Procurement Board and Corporate Board and feedback has been incorporated into this paper.</p> | | | |

4 Executive Summary

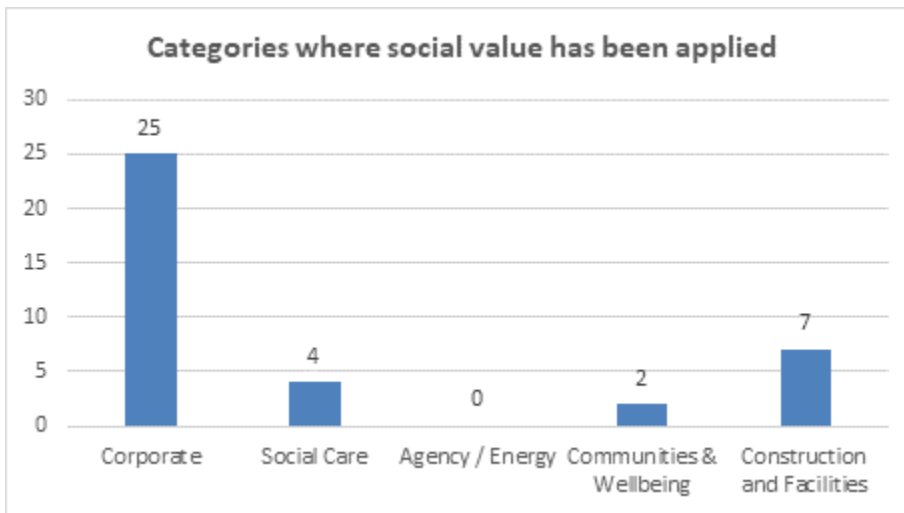
The following statistics show where social value has been applied (with the exclusion of transport DPS awards).

Since the Social Value Policy was implemented, the council has published 73 procurement projects (excluding projects for transport which are referenced below) of which 3 included a specific social value question.

Application of social value:

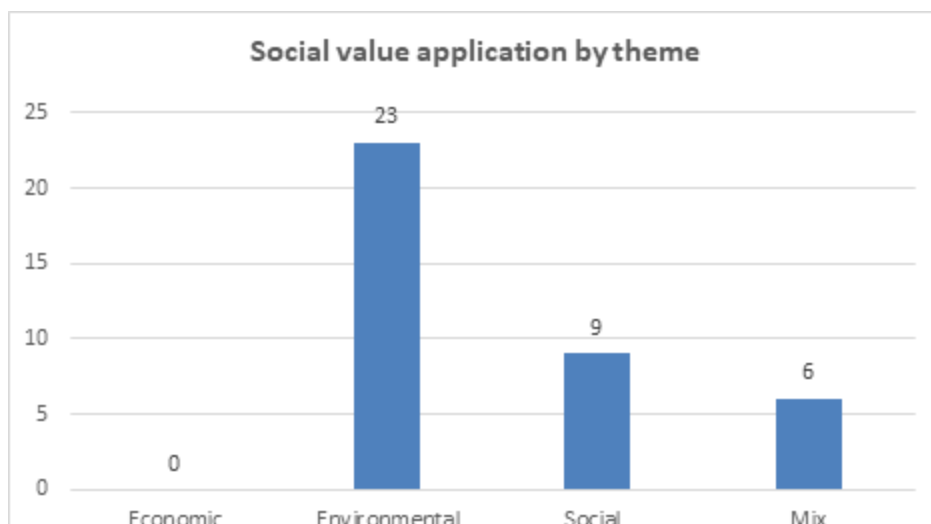


Categories where social value has been applied:



Themes applied:

Social Value Update



The transport team created a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to allow bidders access to opportunities and provide a quick and efficient process for the council to award individual call-off contracts.

The DPS has been in place since May 2022 and has resulted in the award of 57 call-off contracts to date, across which social value is applied in respect of environmental elements.

5 Supporting Information

This report is to provide an update on the implementation of the council's Social Value Policy to date.

Background

The stated goal of the Social Value Policy is:

“To generate greater positive economic, environmental and social outcomes for West Berkshire from the public contracts the Council commissions and tenders. It aims to achieve this by providing the principles that will allow Social Value considerations to be embedded in our procurement contracts. Finally, it enshrines a firm commitment to place social value at the heart of our procurement practice.”

Social value has been a focus of central government contracts for some time and, in September 2020, Crown Commercial Services issued a Policy Procurement Note setting out the explicit requirement to evaluate social value in all central government procurements, where the requirements are related and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.

Whilst this was an explicit requirement for central government, it is considered good practice for local government to follow this guidance.

It was recognised by the council that social value could be generated by the inclusion of criteria within the procurement process. The policy therefore prescribes that, where applicable, social value should be evaluated as part of the procurement process with a weighting of up to 10%.

Social Value Update

On reviewing the responses provided by suppliers, it is apparent that for some this is a new area which has not previously been considered. Some responses have been vague and non-committal, referring to CSR, environmental policies and charitable support or corporate ambitions which have no timescales attached without committing to any specific measures in relation to the contract or the benefit of the local area. These responses are typically shorter, more generic and not focussed on local benefits and score poorly as a result.

However there have been good examples of specific commitments to measurable benefits such as providing two volunteer days to support a charity of the council's choosing or working with schools and conservation groups to create habitats for wildlife and provide education about suitable environments.

Proposals

The council will continue to implement the Social Value policy and its impact.

Social value questions will be refined and improved to ensure that suppliers are specific in their offering, providing social value which can be monitored and measured and that the council achieves the best outcomes linked to the council's priorities.

Commissioning and Procurement will seek to understand where the social value response has been a deciding factor in the outcome of a procurement process and keep a record of these to be reported on regularly.

6 Other options considered

The council could choose not to evaluate social value, however this would not support the council delivering its priorities.

7 Conclusion

Whilst it is still early days for the implementation of the Social Value Policy, we have captured some good feedback from the service areas who are implementing this.

In particular, the transport DPS demonstrates that the social value requirement is driving better awareness and consideration within providers regarding what they could do to more, better or differently to deliver greater social value through this contract. This has led to one provider considering the electrification of their fleet, not only to deliver services to the council, but for their wider public routes, delivering environmental benefits beyond the scope of the council's contract.

However there is a need for questions to be more focused on the council's priorities to ensure suppliers provide specific social value measures which can be monitored and measured.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Service Area Feedback

Background Papers:

Not applicable

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

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Appendix A

Service area feedback

Youth Worker contract

The new contract went live at the start of the new academic term therefore too soon to measure Social Value Impact, however, the whole premise of the project is to reduce exclusion from school and increase engagement/attendance at school – research suggests that educational attainment is one of the strongest protective factors in reducing inequality and social exclusion therefore I would expect that over time we should be able to evidence social value.

Laptops for Virtual School

We have delivered 6 of these devices. They have been received by a mixture of young people, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children, Ukrainian refugees and children in care.

One notable recipient was a child who was accommodated just last week. So, within a week of coming into care, he has a laptop.

The key positive for us is that we don't have to wait for agreement from a school which can take an age.

Our 'contract' with the child and carers also makes expectations clear. The access carers have to a helpdesk is also positive, as is Stone's offer of disposal.

Shredding – Corporate Offices

The shredding company are Newbury based which means a very low carbon footprint for the fortnightly collections of the consoles.

BREAM Consultancy

Feasibility study has been completed and will start to consider the sustainability of the built environment moving forwards.

Corporate Office / Hardware requirement

Recyclable / plastic free packaging used for this large volume delivery.

Transport DPS

Generated a two-way awareness factor:

- suppliers now have a greater understanding of the importance of this to us as a Council; and
- we have gathered a greater understanding of how our suppliers are already adding social value.

Social Value Update

And then furthermore, it’s helped some suppliers to stop and consider what they could or can do more.

Within, the DPS application we require suppliers to provide a response on:

- 1) What will you do to reduce your organisation's carbon footprint?
- 2) What will you do to create opportunities or other benefits for local people?

Together, these questions form 10% of the quality scoring, and suppliers must achieve a minimum of 50% overall for the quality scoring to be approved onto the DPS.

Almost without exception, from the smallest to the largest suppliers, they have all been able to demonstrate some real thought and consideration to these questions. A small handful of the examples that they have provided of what our suppliers are currently doing are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Carbon Footprint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular vehicle maintenance, avoiding congestion, optimising routes, responsible driving, maximising vehicle usage and avoiding vehicles running empty, using cleaner fuels e.g. Adblue, turning engines off when stationary – all to reduce emissions. • Responsible waste disposal and recycling. • Only purchasing what they really need. • E-working to reduce paper waste, and use of refillable ink cartridges where they do need to print. • Minimising waste of water and energy. • Use of low-energy bulbs; fitting solar panels to premises. • Collecting rainwater for, and minimising use of solvents in, cleaning. • Investing in new technologies and looking to replace existing vehicles shortly with more efficient vehicles / greener vehicles / e-vehicles / hybrids. |
| Local opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local recruitment and local job advertising. • Using local businesses for supplies. • Providing support for local schools, football teams and charities – e.g. volunteer driving, financial support, sponsorship, publicity, fundraising - and support for NHS/care workers too during covid etc. • Apprenticeships and a whole range of qualifications, driver training and other professional training – not just for the drivers and passenger assistants but back-office and workshop staff too. • Flexible working • Work experience opportunities. • Employee loans or other financial support. • Providing targeted employment opportunities and career support – e.g. in deprived areas, for hard to reach groups, the unemployed, NEETs, individuals with disabilities, from ethnic minority groups, LGBGT+ communities. |

Social Value Update

We have also, as a result of this, been approached directly by one operator asking when might we issue some zero carbon or e-vehicle-only tenders as they start to investigate the procurement of these on their fleet – and only last week, not directly on our DPS tendered routes, but on one of their public bus routes, we've been advised by one of our DPS-approved suppliers that they will trialling/demonstrating an electric vehicle on their route tomorrow and throughout next week and asking if we want to come to see. So again, operators are becoming aware that this is something we might want to see implemented in contracts in the near future and as a result they are starting to prepare for this.

So although I think there is a lot more that could be done (and I'm sure will be done over the coming years), I think the awareness-generation has been a critical first step and puts us in a better place for developing targets for future reviews of the Council's ULEV strategy in relation to client passenger transport contracts.

And on a personal level, it makes me feel quite proud to see how collectively our suppliers, are not just delivering the basic minimum requirements that we ask of them in our specifications, but they are genuinely providing real-time support to their staff, local communities and the environment alike.

Item 10:

Member Questions to be answered at the Executive meeting on 12 January 2023.

Members of the Executive to answer questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution.

A. Question submitted by Councillor Nassar Hunt to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside:

“White lining in Thatcham Broadway has been degraded by time and was reported to the Highways department in early August after complaints from residents at a Thatcham Town Council Surgery. We have finally had a reply from the Highways Department that they are intending to reinstate white lining in key roads across Thatcham including the Broadway but no date for commencement of the works has been provided. Why does the Council not act sooner to re-fresh white lines before they are severely degraded and why does it take so long from this being notified to Highways for such work as this to be carried out?”

B. Question submitted by Councillor Jeff Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships:

“At the Council meeting held on 1st December 2022, the Leader of the Council informed members that Cllr Rowles was to be replaced on six Council Committees and as a Council representative on the outside body, the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (the TVPCP). It is my understanding that appointments to outside bodies are made (at least) annually and can only change mid-term if the appointed Cllr resigns from the outside body. Did Cllr Docherty have the authority to replace Cllr Rowles on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (the TVPCP) or should this have been effected at the Annual Council meeting?”

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