



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
January - March 2025

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A note on performance benchmarking

Benchmarking can be a useful tool for driving improvement; by comparing our performance with other similar organisations, we can start a discussion about what good performance might look like, and why there might be variations, as well as learning from other organisations about how they operate (process benchmarking).

When we embark on performance benchmarking, it is important to understand that we are often looking at one aspect of performance i.e. the level of performance achieved. It does not take into account how services are resourced or compare in terms of quality or level of service delivered, for example, how satisfied are residents and customers? Furthermore, each council is unique with its own vision, aim and priorities, and services operate within this context.

Benchmarking has been included wherever possible ranking against other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire County Council. The Councils included are Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

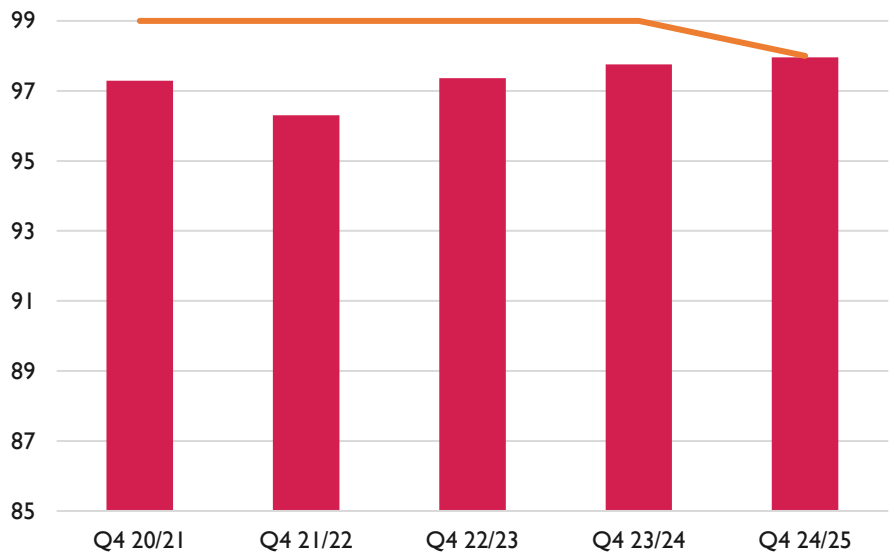
A RAG (red, amber, green) status has been applied to each KPI to provide a quick visual summary of the status of that KPI for the quarter. Additionally, RAG status has been added to the direction of travel for each metric to show how the performance against last quarter and the same quarter compared to last year is progressing.

Overall Performance

Overall, the Council's performance this quarter has been largely positive, with significant progress made in areas such as the reduction of long-term empty properties, the percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days and leisure centre visits. Customer satisfaction, planning determination times and gym memberships also remain strong, reflecting the Council's commitment to delivering quality services. However, there were some negative trends observed, particularly in the number of affordable homes delivered and the percentage of household waste recycled.


Moving forward, the Council remains committed to further enhancing its performance and service delivery. A key focus is on the development and implementation of automation and self-service options, aimed at providing customers with accessible and efficient self-help tools. By enabling customers to independently address their queries and concerns, the Council anticipates a reduction in the need for repeated interactions, streamlining services and improving overall efficiency. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of these improvement programs, assessing their effectiveness in reducing customer contact and enhancing operational processes to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to the community.

Percentage of Council Tax Collected



— Target

Direction of Travel

Against last
Year 
Improved since last year

2024-25 – Higher is Good

Target	98%
Actual	97.96%

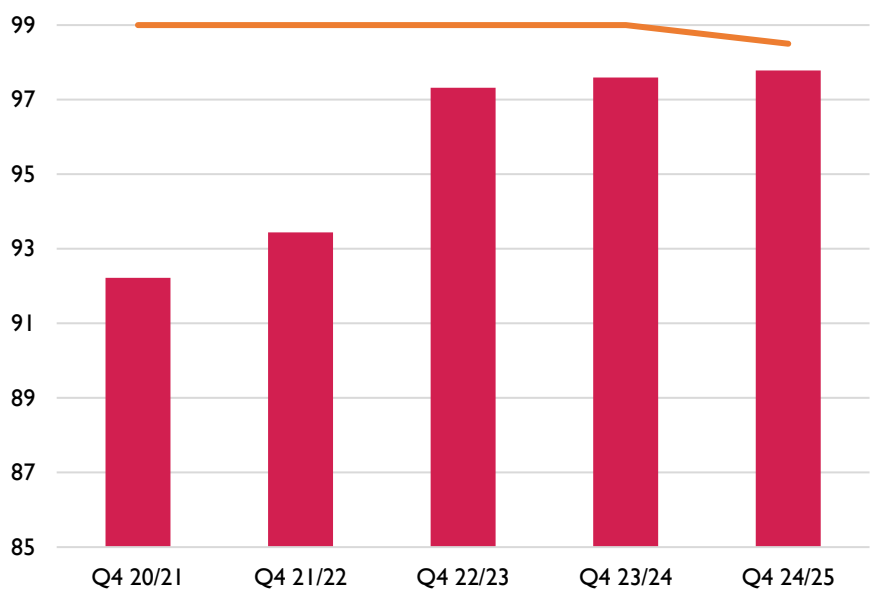
How do we compare?

Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire - Current Dataset is up to March '24 (Q4 23-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	98.02	1/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	97.95	2/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	97.94	3/5	Second
West Oxfordshire	97.81	4/5	Third
Oxford	96.33	5/5	Bottom

The Council achieved a 97.96% council tax collection rate in 2024/25, just 0.04% shy of the 98% target, underscoring the continued effectiveness of in-year strategies.

Percentage of Non-domestic rates collected



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last
Year

Improved since last year.



2024-25 – Higher is Good

Target	98.5%
Actual	97.78%

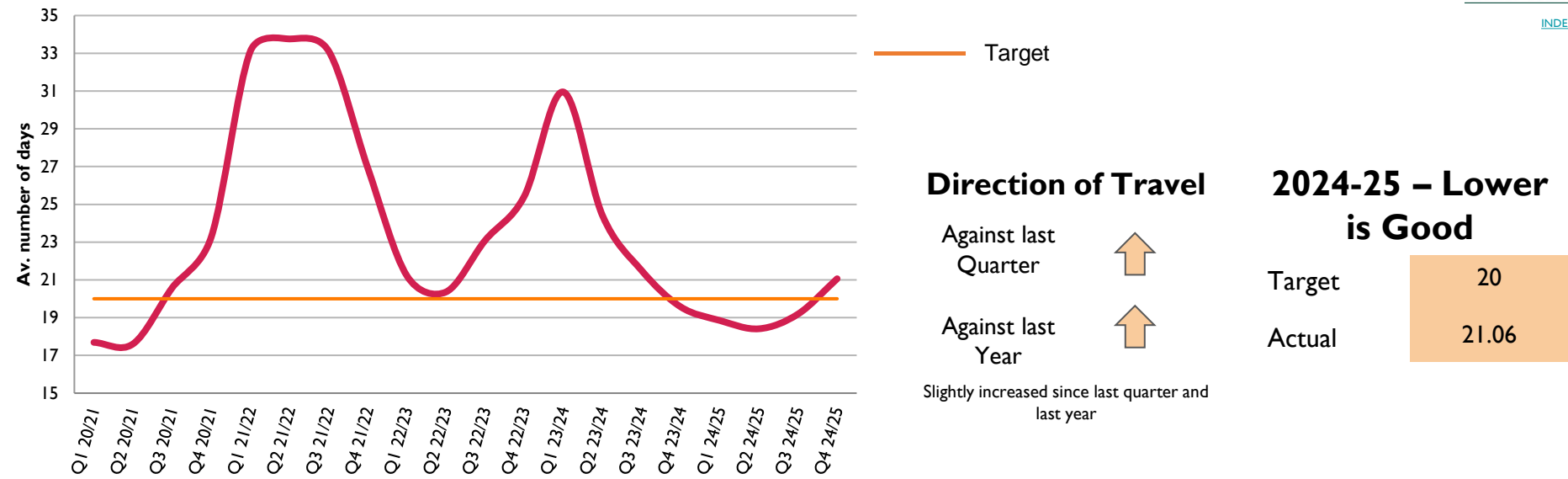
How do we compare?

Benchmarking via Gov.uk Tables and Individual Council Websites using other Local Authorities within Oxfordshire - Current Dataset is up to March '24 (Q4 23-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	98.63	1/5	Top
Oxford	98.61	2/5	Top
West Oxfordshire	97.89	3/5	Second
Vale of White Horse	96.88	4/5	Third
South Oxfordshire	93.92	5/5	Bottom

The Council ended 2024/25 with a 97.78% Non-Domestic Rates collection rate—a slight rise from last year—demonstrating steady quarterly improvement and sustained recovery, despite narrowly missing the target.

Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims



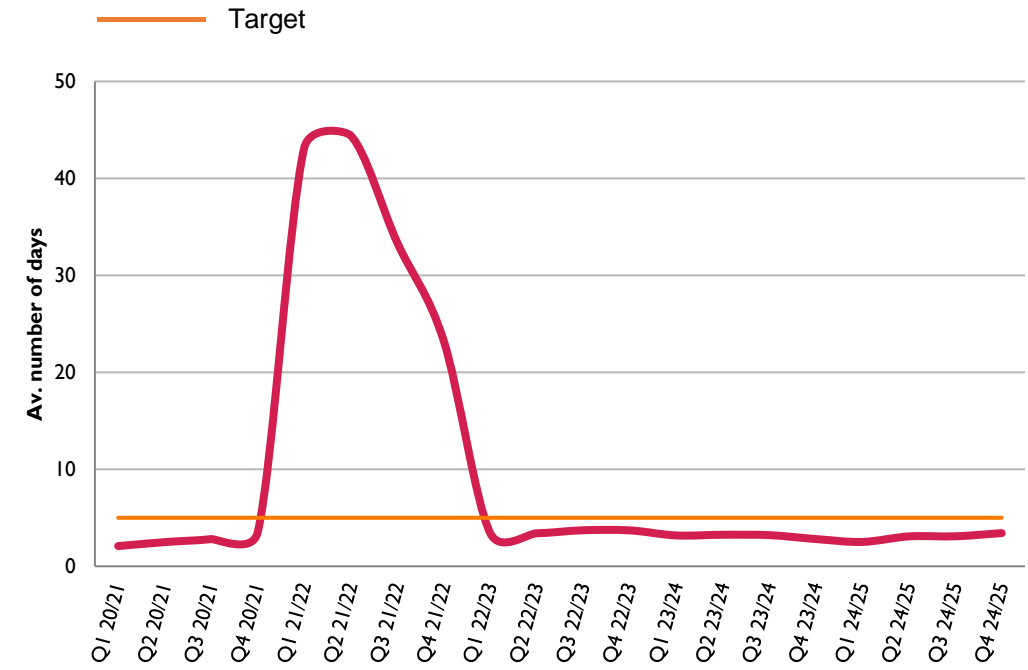
How do we compare?

Gov.uk produces tables to show a snapshot of the number of CTS claimants at the end of each financial year. The below table shows number of claimants at the end of December 2024 and the percentage change from December 2023 for each authority,


	Number of Claimants at end of Sept 2024	Percentage Change since Sept 2023	County Rank (Higher = less claimants)
South Oxfordshire	4,894	-2.06%	1/5
Cherwell	5,916	-0.60%	2/5
Vale of White Horse	4,776	0.06%	3/5
West Oxfordshire	4,368	0.23%	4/5
Oxford	9,640	7.69%	5/5


Processing times rose slightly to 21.06 days due to seasonal demand and service pressures.

Processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

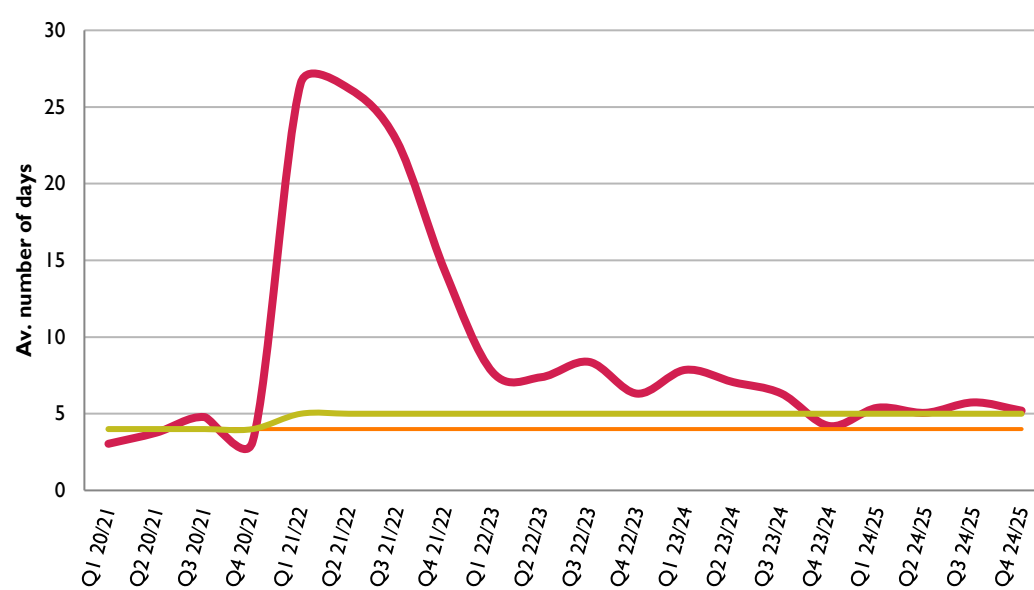
Against last Year 

Slightly increased since last quarter and last year

2024-25 – Lower is Good	
Target	5
Actual	3.42

The processing times for Council Tax Support Change Events consistently remain well below the 5-day target.

Processing times for Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Slightly improved since last quarter but
slightly increased since last year

2024-25 – Lower is Good

Target

4

Actual

5.2

How do we compare?

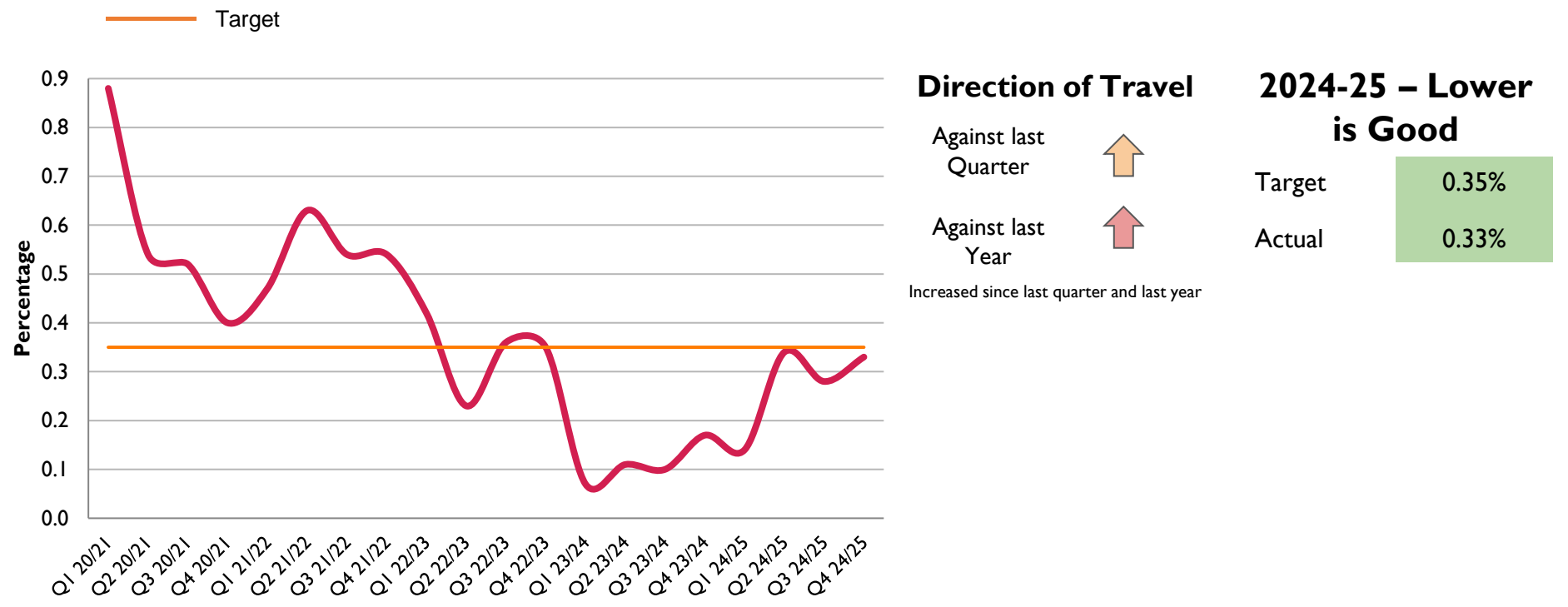
Gov.uk produces tables showing statistics on the average number of days to process a change in circumstance of an existing Housing Benefit claim. Latest Release – July – September 2024 (Q2 24-25)

Q2 24-25 Benchmark	Days	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	4.64	1/5	Top
West Oxfordshire	4.65	2/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	6.36	3/5	Second
South Oxfordshire	6.81	4/5	Third
Oxford	34.22	5/5	Bottom

Please see [Processing times for Council Tax Support new claims.](#)

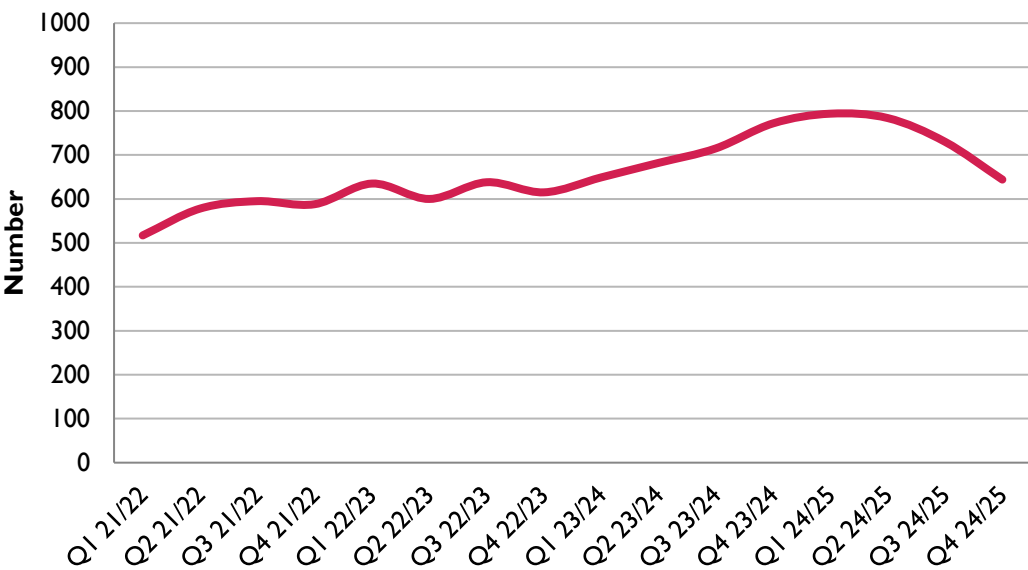
The Council maintains consistent performance on Housing Benefit Change of Circumstances processing times.

Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayment due to LA error/admin delay

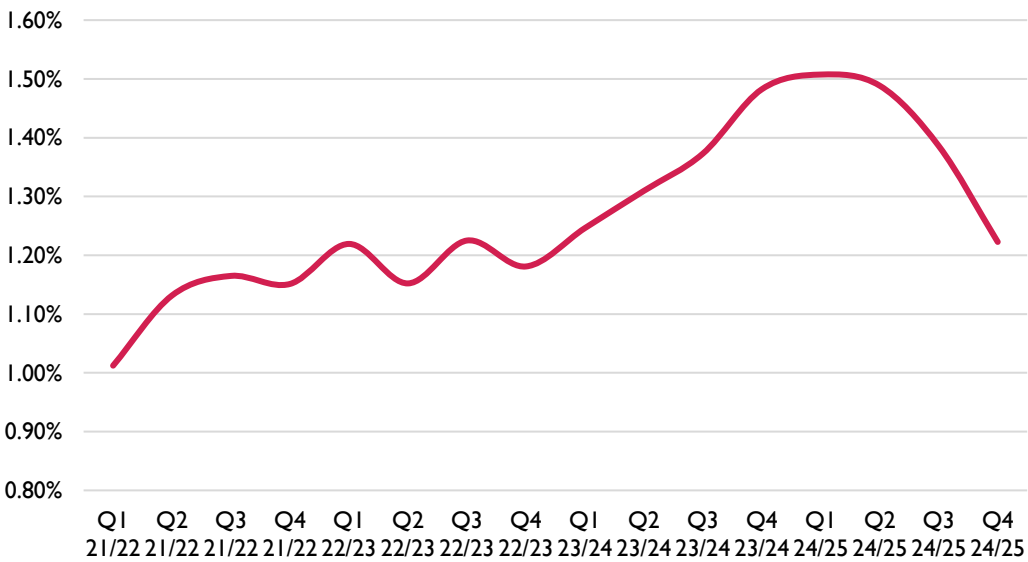


The Council remains below the national target of 0.48% and the stricter service target of 0.35%.


(Snapshot) Long Term Empty Properties




% of LTEs of the Total Housing Stock



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

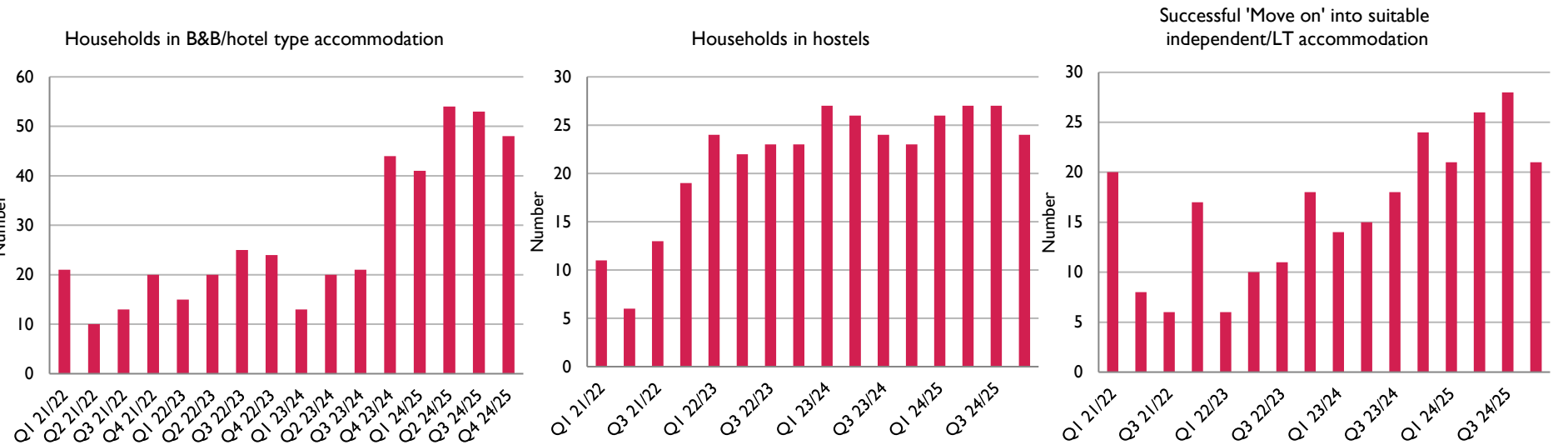
Decreased since last quarter and last year

**2024-25 –
Lower is Good**

644

The Council has recorded its lowest number of properties on the long-term empties list in two years.

(Snapshot) Number of households in B&B/hotel-type accommodation & Hostels (LA owned or managed); and Number of successful 'Move On' into suitable independent/long-term accommodation from B&Bs/hotels/hostels



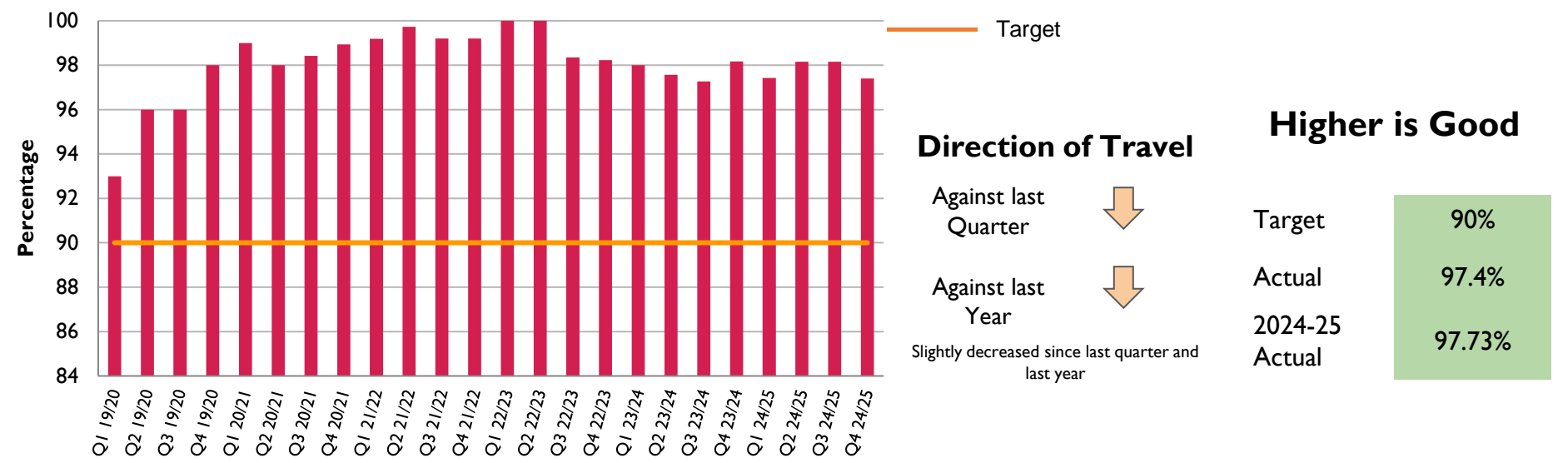
Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter	B&B/Hotels	↓
Against last Year	B&B/Hotels	↑
Against last Quarter	Hostels	↓
Against last Year	Hostels	↑
Against last Quarter	Move Ons	↓
Against last Year	Move Ons	↓

During Q4, a new Homelessness Prevention Officer has been appointed, a drop-in session at the Home Office Hotel has been established, and the council is bringing a new hostel online while welcoming three new starters to focus on general homelessness prevention.

The team remains dedicated to preventing homelessness, successfully averting it for 220 households in 2024-25, including 125 cases within the statutory 56-day period and 95 cases before statutory duties were triggered. These figures are approximations pending official confirmation.

Customer Satisfaction - Telephone



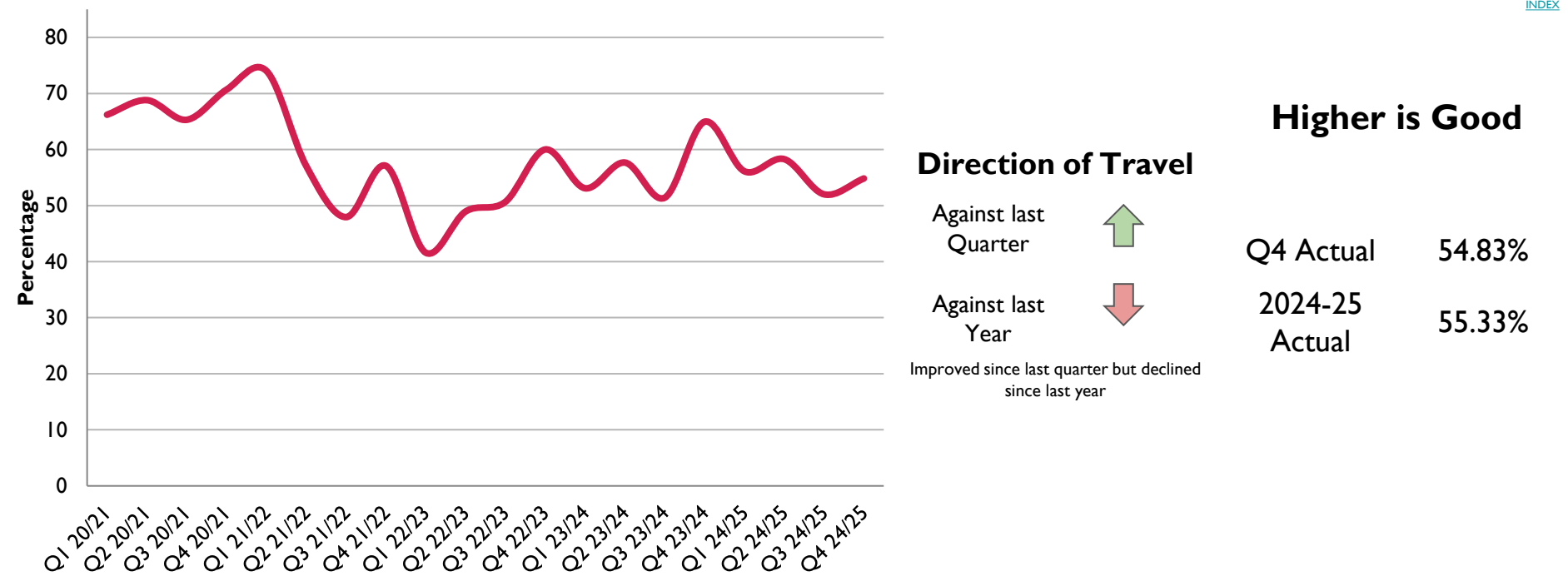
How do we compare?

The Govmetric Channel Satisfaction Index is a monthly publication of the top performing councils across the core customer access channels. At least 100 customers need to be transferred to the survey to be included in the league table so even if satisfaction is high, it may not be included.

	Jan Rank	Jan Net Sat.	Feb Rank	Feb Net Sat.	Mar Rank	Mar Net Sat.
West Oxfordshire	1	95%	2	94%	3	95%

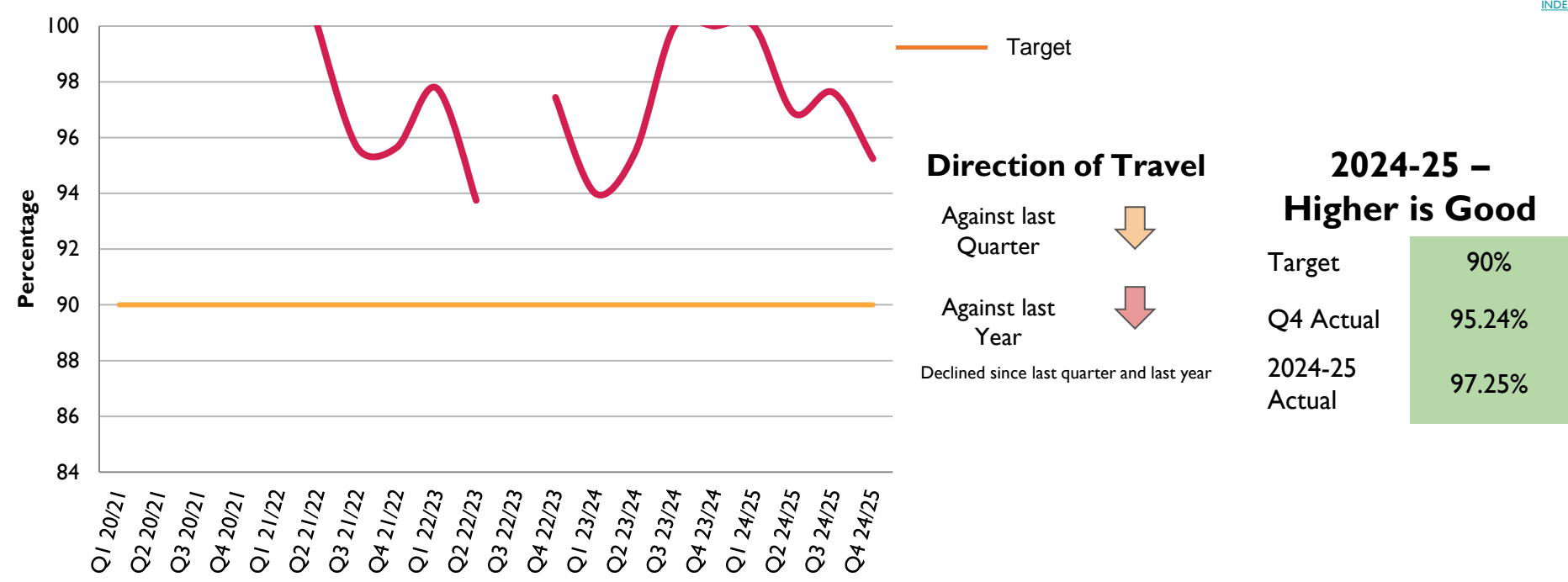
A total of 693 residents participated in the survey, of these, 675 customers reported being satisfied with the service, reflecting a high level of overall satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction - Email



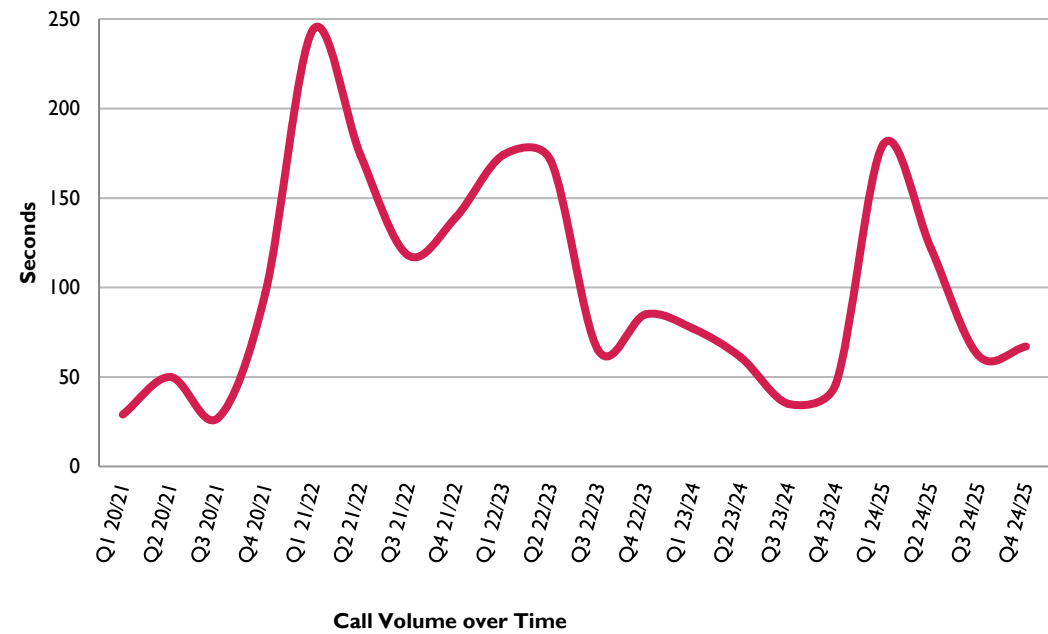
673 residents responded to the survey, with 369 expressing satisfaction (54.83%), up from 52.01% in Q3, with all outbound customer service emails including a survey link.

Customer Satisfaction - Face to Face




Customer satisfaction from face-to-face interactions remains exceptionally high, with a remarkable 95% satisfaction rate this quarter. Out of 21 individuals surveyed, 20 expressed their satisfaction with the service.


Customer Call Handling - Average Waiting Time



Direction of Travel

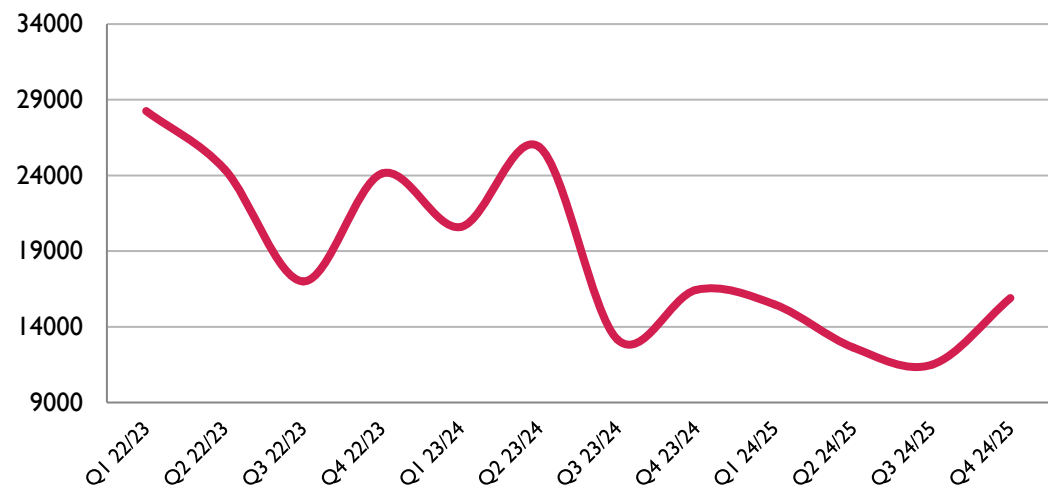
Lower is Good

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

67 Seconds

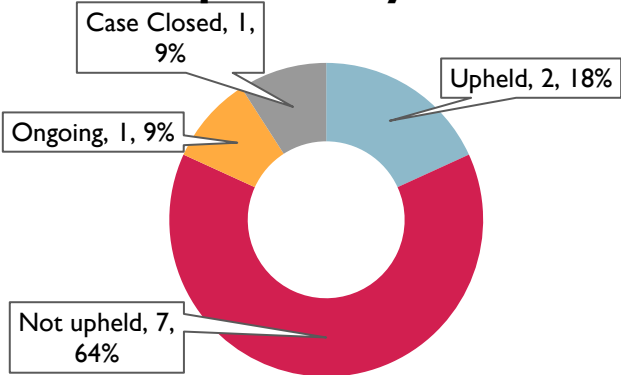
Slightly increased since last quarter and increased since last year



Despite seasonal demand in Q4, average wait times remained stable with a slight increase. The reduction of phone lines achieved the Council's target of £125,000 in annual staff savings and the team successfully launched the Alloy upgrade.


Number of complaints upheld


Complaints by Status



Direction of Travel

Complaints upheld or partly upheld at Stage 1

Against last Quarter 

Against last Year 

Increased since last quarter but declined since last year

How do we compare?

The table outlines the complaints received by the Ombudsman over the period, the decisions made on these cases, and the Council's compliance with any recommendations issued by the Ombudsman during this time. Complaints received by the Ombudsman reflect cases where customers, having completed the Council's complaint process (see to the right), feel that the Council has not satisfactorily resolved the matter.

2023-24	Complaints Investigated	Percentage Upheld	Upheld decisions per 100,000 residents	Percentage Compliance with Recommendations	Percentage Satisfactory Remedy
Cherwell	1	100	0.6	100	0
Oxford	4	75	1.8	100	33
South Oxfordshire	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vale of White Horse	2	0	0	N/A	N/A
West Oxfordshire	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

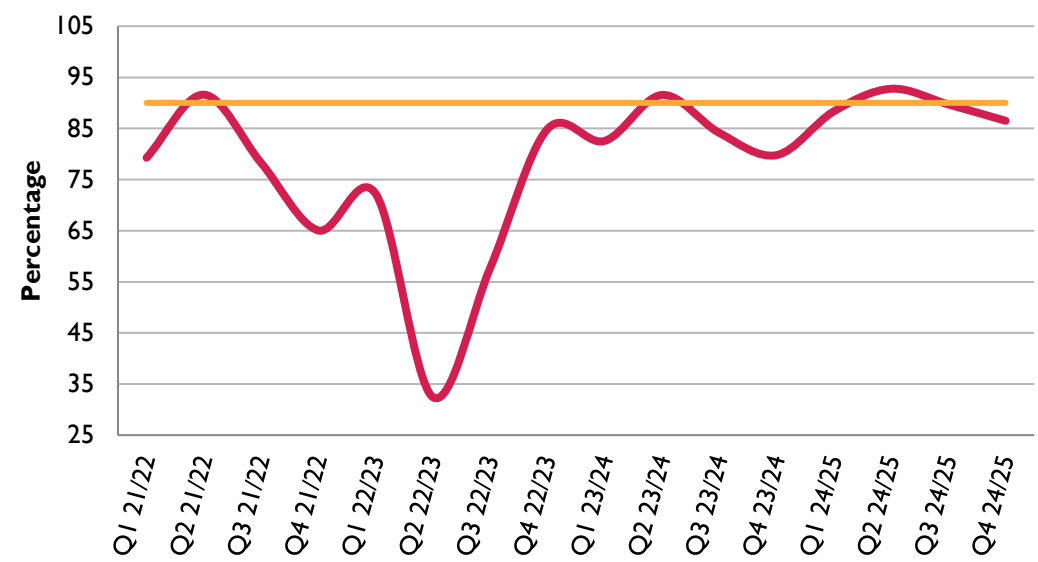
See the table on the following page for a breakdown of those upheld and partially upheld.

- A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st October 2021. The new process has the following stages:
- Stage 1: Relevant service area responds to complaint within 10 working days
 - Stage 2: Complaint is reviewed by Corporate Responsibility Team, response is signed off by relevant Business Manager, and sent to complainant within 10 working days
 - Stage 3: Complaint is reviewed by relevant Business Manager, signed off by relevant Group Manager, and sent to complainant within 15 working days

Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld Breakdown

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Decision	Response time (days)
West Oxfordshire				
Revenues and Benefits	Wrong address on file led to recovery process being started	The summons and associated costs were refunded and the customer's address was updated. An apology was offered.	Upheld	1
Revenues and Benefits	Cheque cashed but associated letter not logged	The team responsible for payments was informed, and records were updated accordingly.	Upheld	10+

Percentage of FOI requests answered within 20 days



Target

Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter
↓

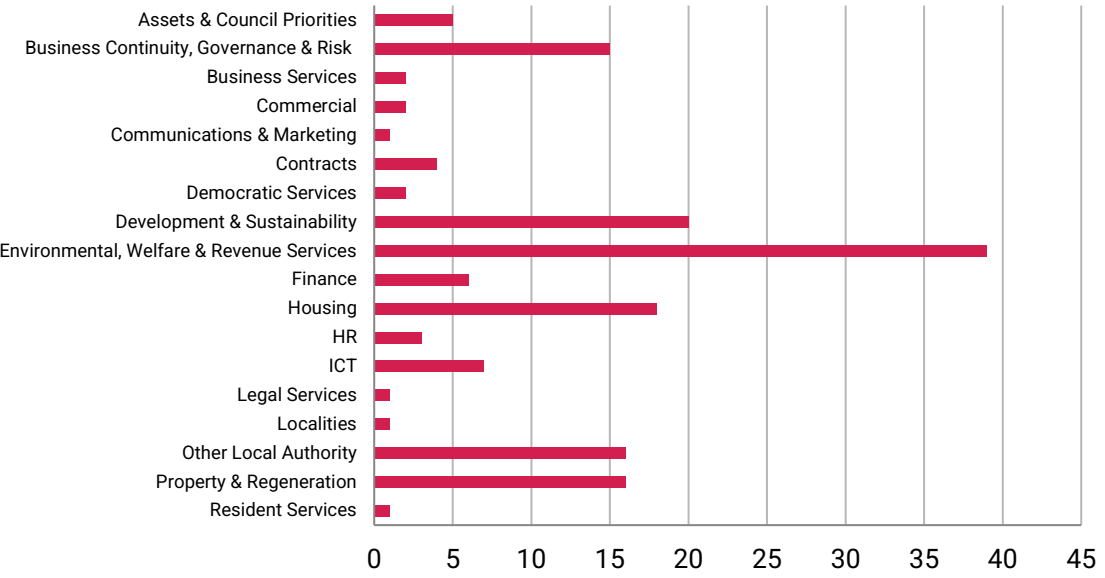
Against last Year
↑

Improved since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good

Target	90%
Q4 Actual	86.5%
2024-25 Actual	89.25%

Requests by Service Area

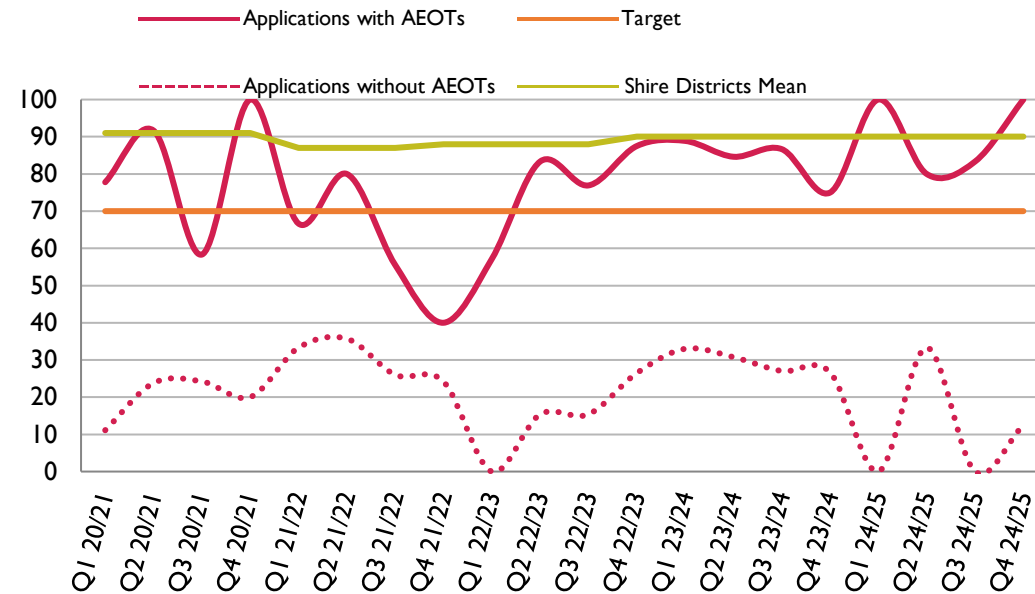


Reason FOI request was not Answered within 20 Days

Service Area not provided Information in time



Percentage of major planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Improved since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good

Target

70%

Q4 Actual

100%

2024-25

91.3%

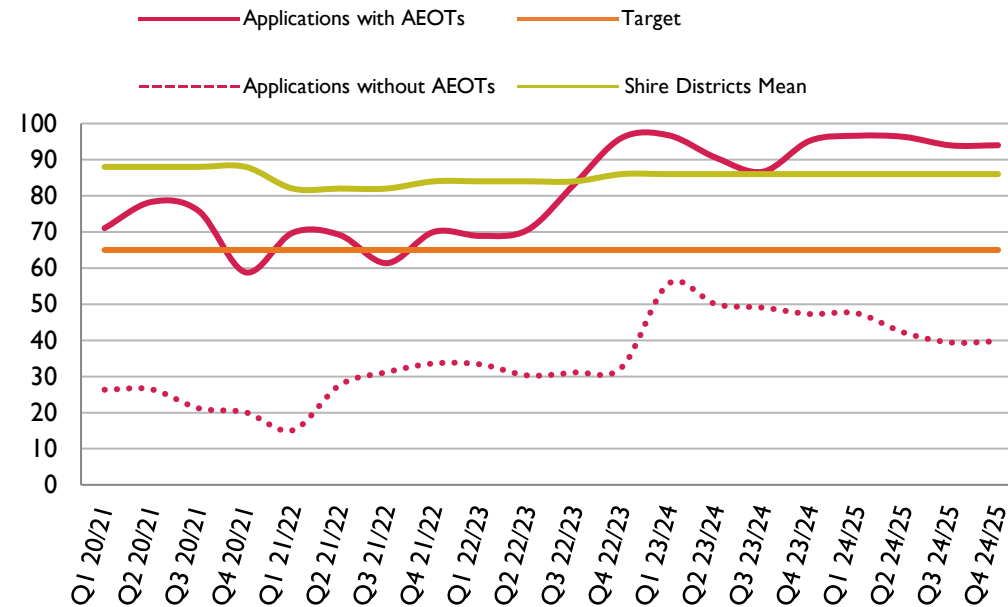
How do we compare?

Major Developments - % within 13 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform

Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Cherwell	100	1/5	Top
Oxford	100	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	100	1/5	Top
Vale of White Horse	100	1/5	Top
West Oxfordshire	83	5/5	Bottom

The service maintained strong performance in processing Major applications, with in-time determinations increasing from 83% in Q3 to 100% in Q4, and eight major applications determined in Q4.

Percentage of minor planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Steady since last quarter but slightly decreased since last year

Higher is Good

Target

65%

Q4 Actual

93.98%

2024-25

92.39%

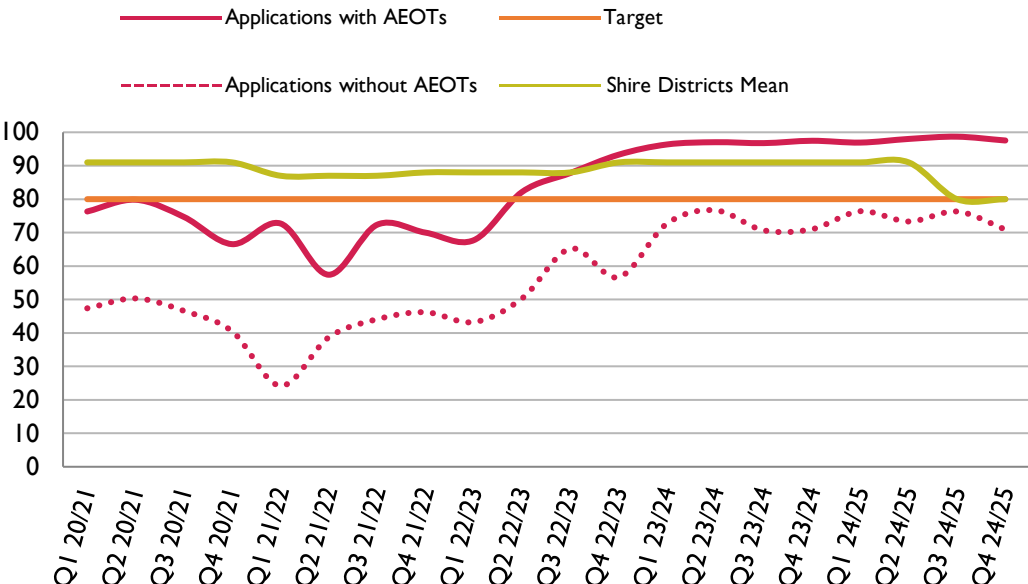
How do we compare?

Minor Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform

Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	90	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	89	2/5	Top
West Oxfordshire	86	3/5	Second
Cherwell	85	4/5	Third
Oxford	76	5/5	Bottom

This quarter, application numbers rose significantly ahead of April 2025 planning fee changes. The team is now fully resourced, with a Planning Services Transformation Lead to enhance service and efficiency.

Percentage of other planning applications determined within agreed timescales (including AEOT)



Direction of Travel

Against last Quarter
↓

Against last Year
↑

Slightly decreased since last quarter but slightly increased since last year

Higher is Good

Target	80%
Q4 Actual	97.54%
2024-25	95.67%

How do we compare?

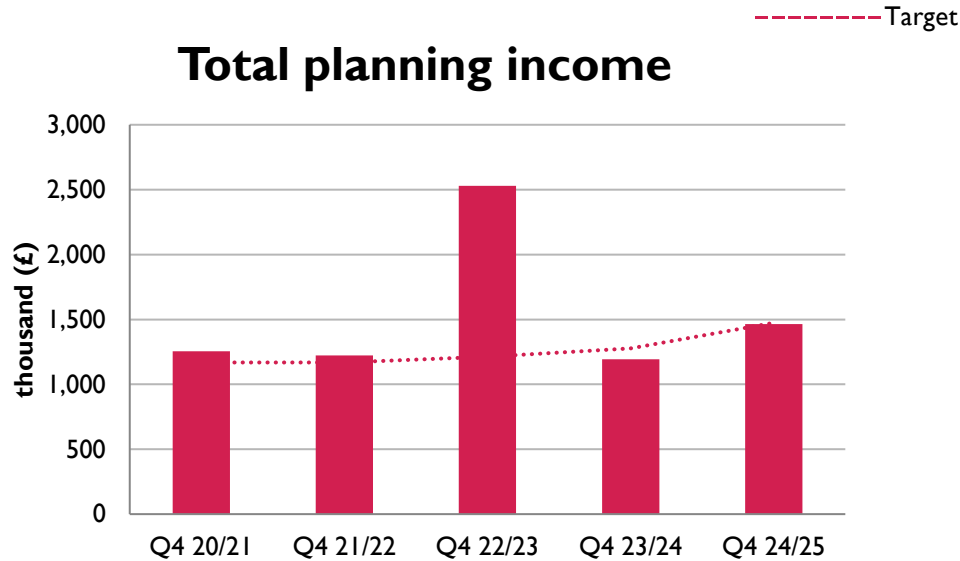
Other Developments - % within 8 weeks or agreed time – LG Inform

Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	96	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	94	2/5	Top
West Oxfordshire	92	3/5	Second
Cherwell	86	4/5	Third
Oxford	83	5/5	Bottom

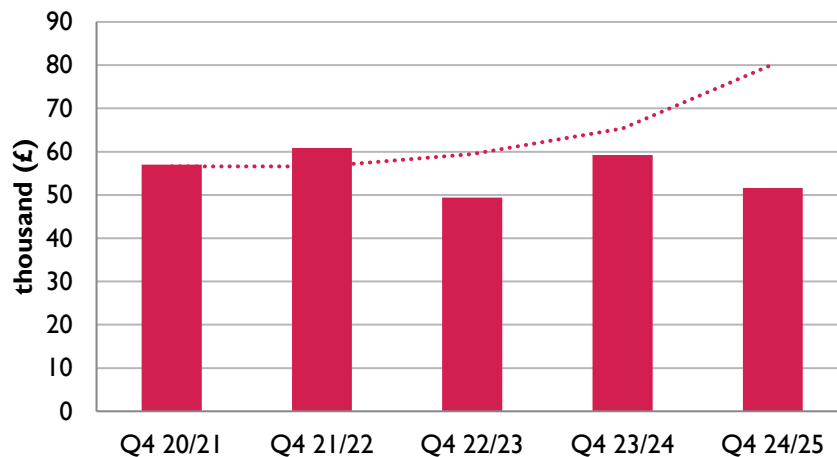
Determination times remain high, with 203 applications processed in Q4, including 198 within agreed timescales.

Total Income achieved in Planning & Income from Pre-application advice

Total planning income



Pre-application income



Direction of Travel

Total Planning Income

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Pre-Application Income

Against last Quarter



Against last Year



Higher is Good

Total Planning Income (£)

Target 1,473,973

Actual 1,463,401

Pre-Application Income (£)

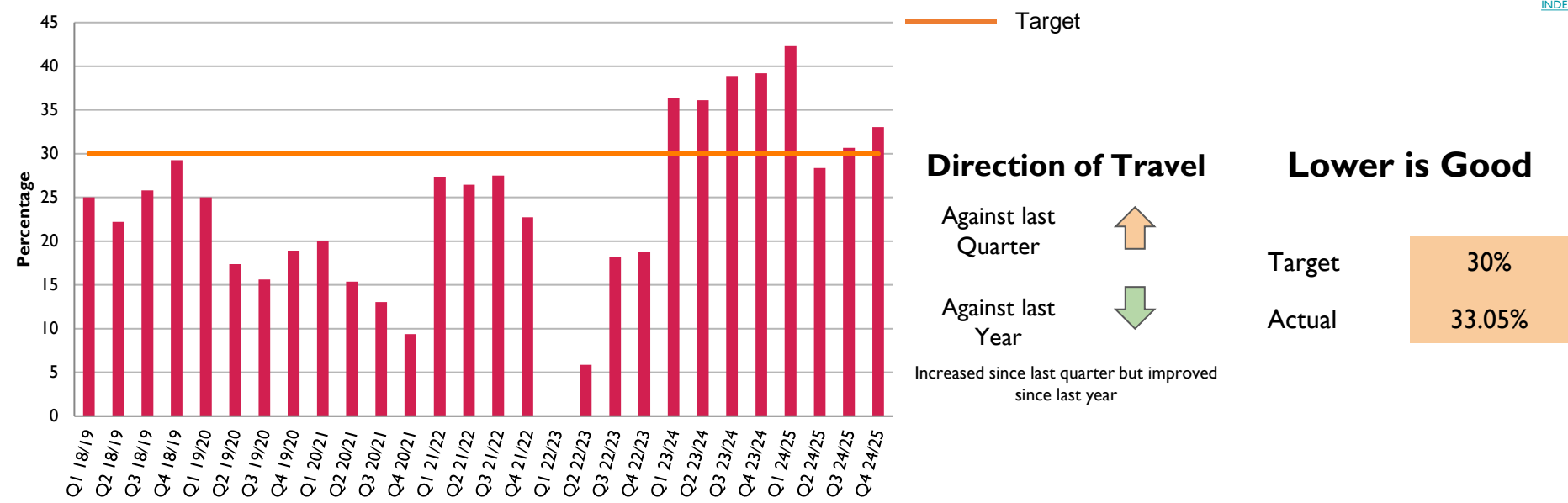
Target 80,173

Actual 51,606

Total Income increased since last quarter and last year
Pre-App Income declined since last quarter and last year

The Council fell just £10k short of its annual planning income target in Q4, with underperformance in pre-application fees contributing to the gap.

Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed (cumulative)



How do we compare?

Percentage of planning appeals allowed – LG Inform

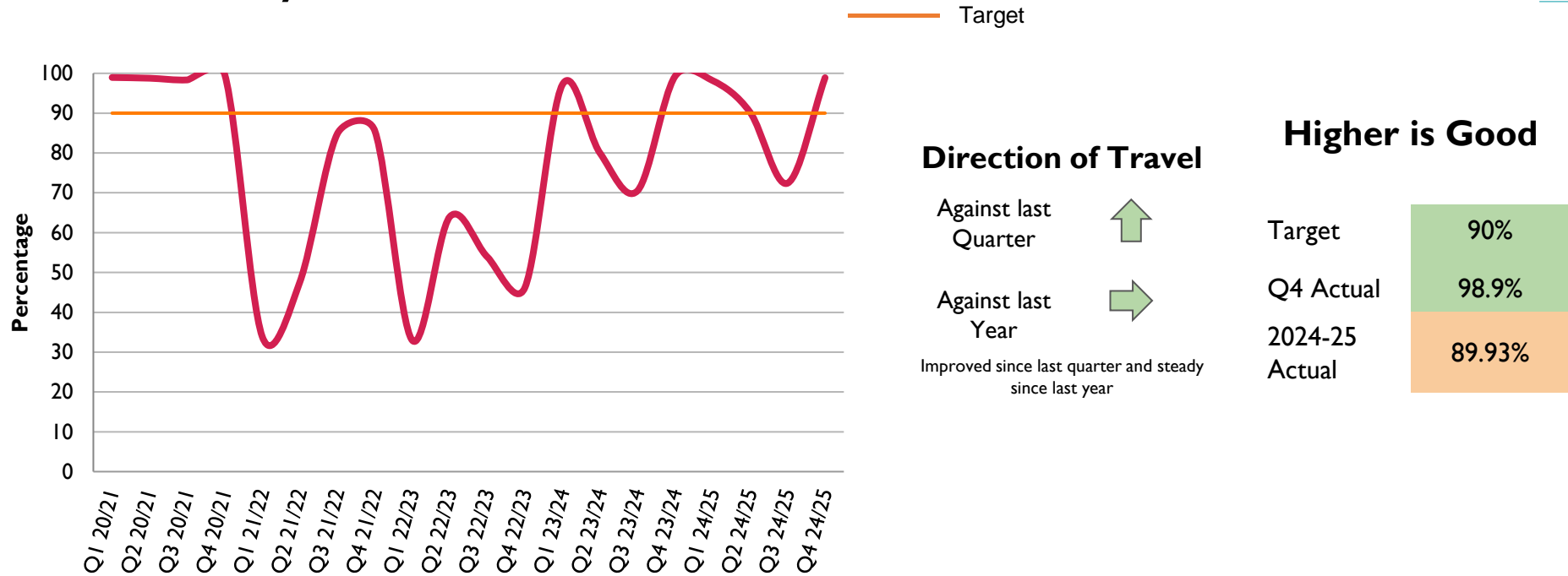
Q3 24-25 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	0	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	25	2/5	Top
Oxford	29	3/5	Second
Cherwell	50	4/5	Third
West Oxfordshire	60	5/5	Bottom

This indicator aims to ensure that no more than 30% of planning appeals are allowed in favor of the applicant, with a lower percentage being more favorable. According to the latest statistics from the Planning Inspectorate, the national average for Section 78 planning appeals granted is 28% (source: gov.uk).

The below shows the appeal split between Uplands and Lowlands for the year;

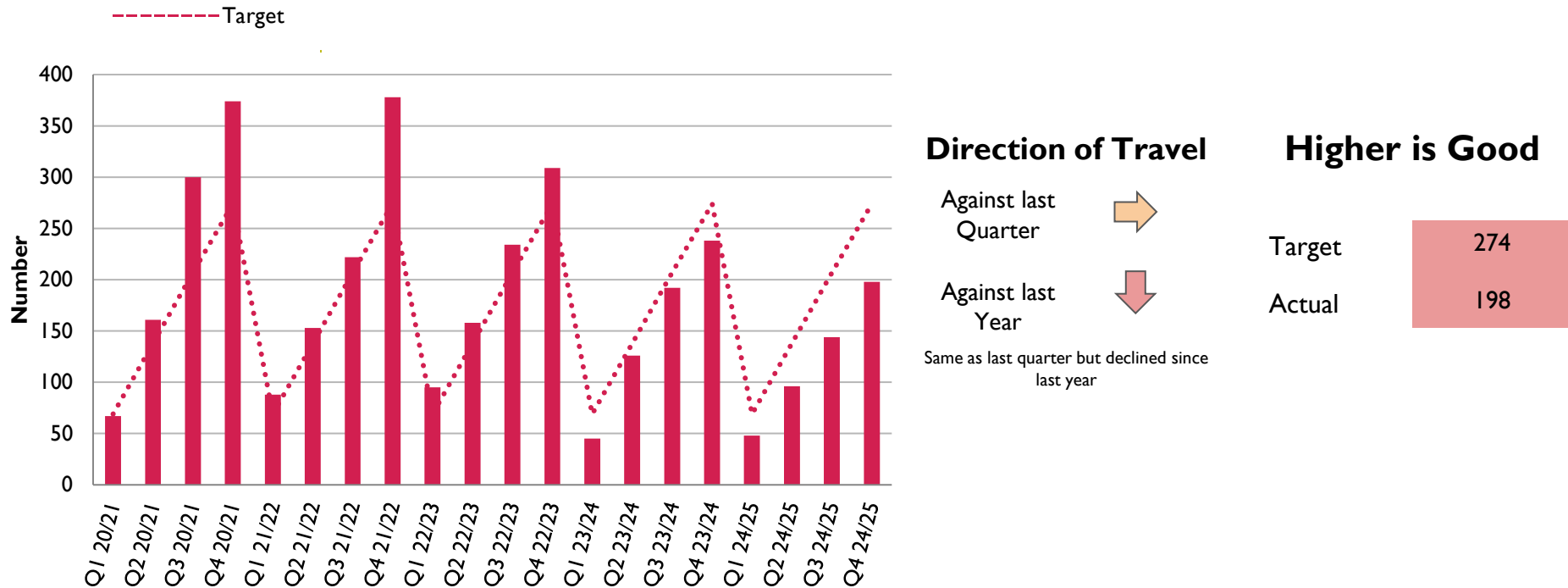
	Decided	Allowed	% Allowed
Uplands	24	8	33.33%
Lowlands	35	11.5	32.86%

Percentage of official land charge searches completed within 10 days



In Q4, the Council improved land charge search completion rates from 72.41% to 98.9%, aided by the centralised dashboard introduced to monitor and address delays.

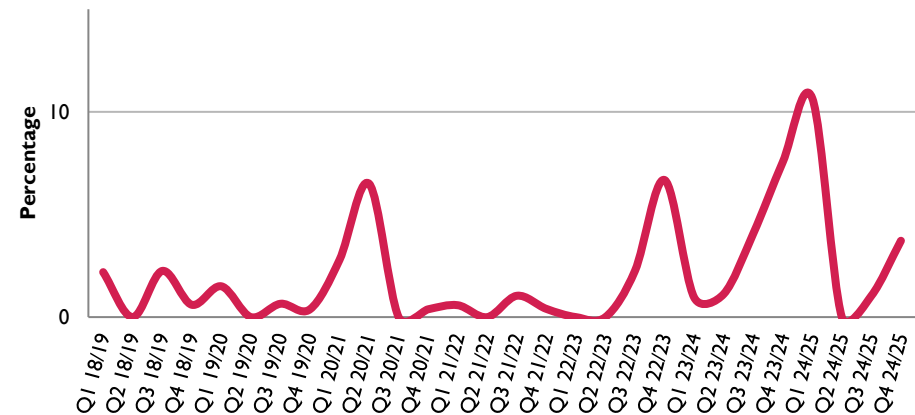
Number of affordable homes delivered (cumulative)



54 affordable homes were delivered in Q4, totaling 198 for the year, just below the start of year forecast of 218. With 122 homes expected by July, performance remains strong despite missing the 274-home target. Notably, 101 homes were for social rent, addressing the district's growing demand for affordable housing.

Number of fly tips collected and percentage that result in an enforcement action

(defined as a warning letter, fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)

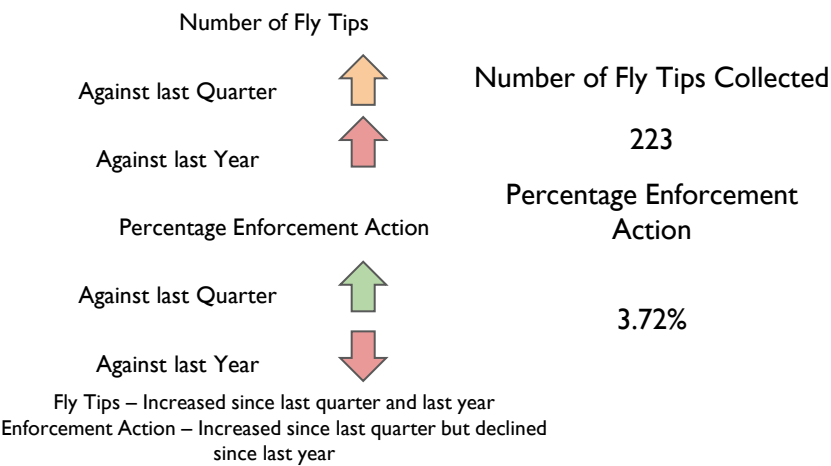


How do we compare?

Number of Fly Tips reported for year 2023-24 for Local Authorities in England – Gov.uk. The latest dataset available is 2023-24.

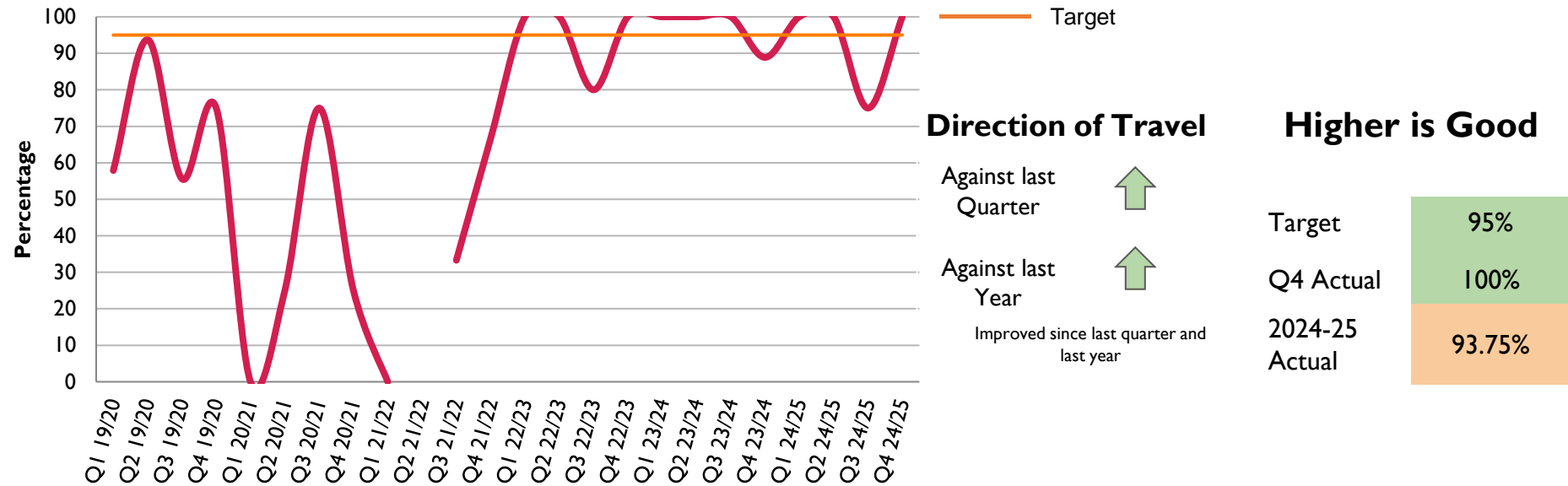
	Total Fly Tips	Total Enforcement Actions	Total FPNs	% FPNs per Fly Tip	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	445	580	18	4.04%	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	873	467	21	2.41%	2/5	Top
Cherwell	1101	1136	26	2.36%	3/5	Second
West Oxfordshire	1135	76	13	1.15%	4/5	Third
Oxford	4959	297	7	0.14%	5/5	Bottom

Direction of Travel



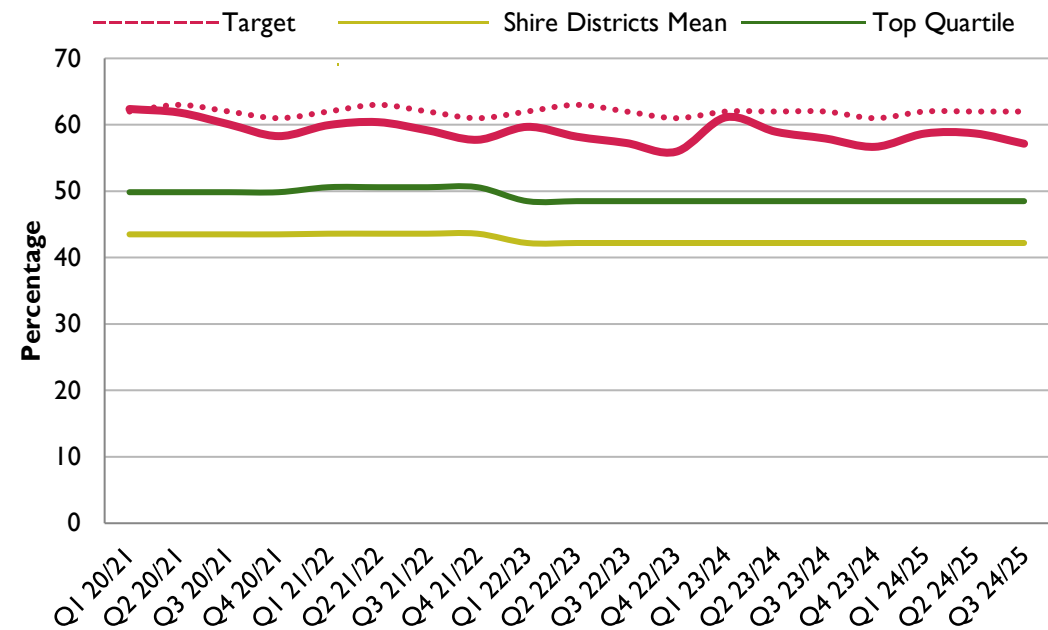
The Council is working with the Safer Streets initiative to raise awareness of rural and environmental crimes in high-crime areas. By attending Parish Council meetings, the Council educates residents about fly-tipping, environmental responsibilities, and local concerns.

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



One high-Risk food inspection was undertaken during Q4, which was completed within the target timeframes.

Percentage of household waste recycled



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Declined since last quarter and last year

Q3 – Higher is Good

Target

62%

Actual

57.15%

How do we compare?

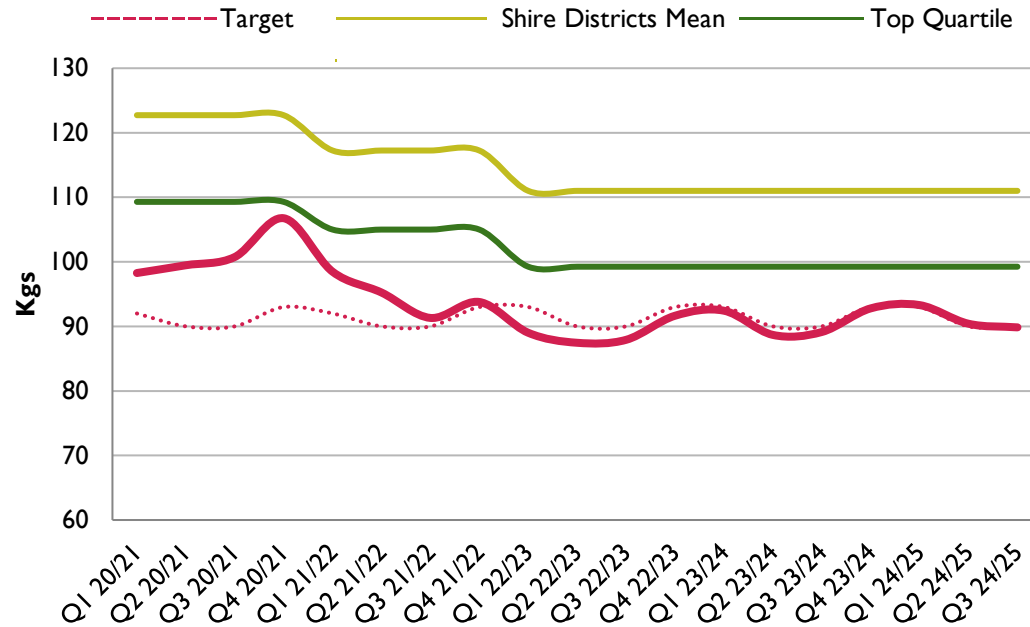
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in January – March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	57.53	1/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	56.53	2/5	Top
West Oxfordshire	54.81	3/5	Second
Cherwell	47.58	4/5	Third
Oxford	46.77	5/5	Bottom

The data team receives information on recycling rates from the respective County Councils, but there is a one-quarter delay. Consequently, the narrative and graphs reflect Q3 2024/2025 (October - December).

The combined recycling rates for the Council have declined compared to the same period last year by around 0.76%.

Residual Household Waste per Household (kg)



Direction of Travel

Against last
Quarter



Against last
Year



Improved since last quarter but
slightly increased since last year

Q3 – Lower is Good

Target

90

Actual

89.85

How do we compare?

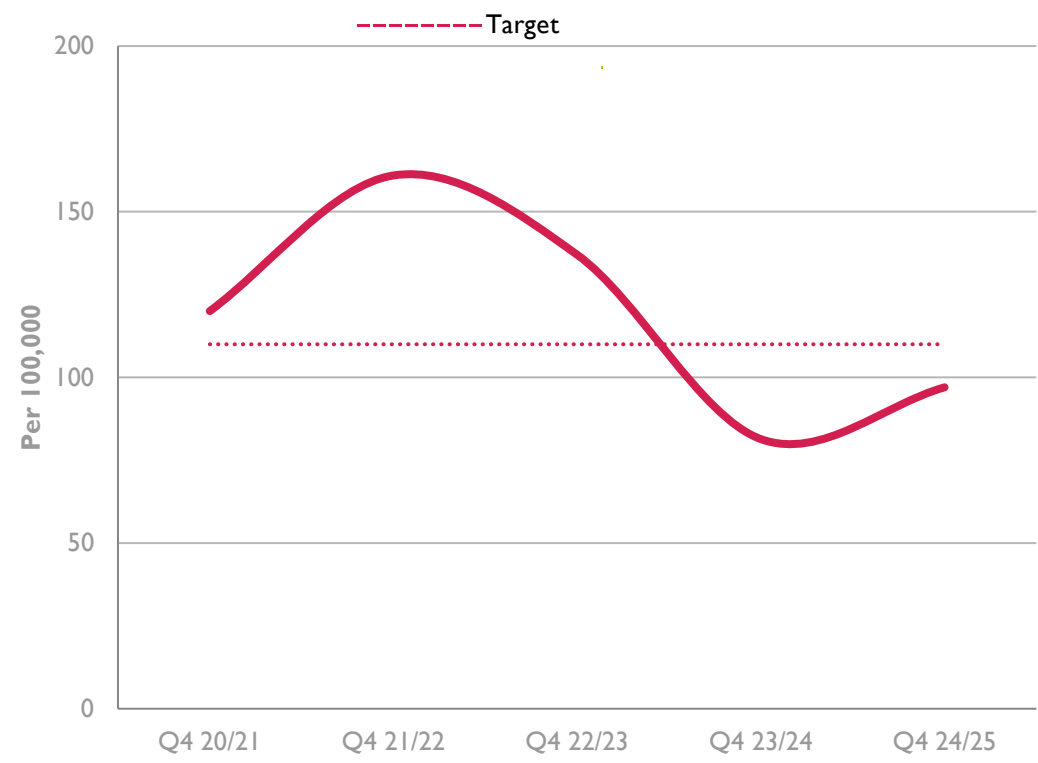
Residual household waste per household (kg/household) – LG Inform. The latest dataset available in January-March '24 (Q4 2023-24)

Q4 23-24 Benchmark	%	County Rank	Quartile
Vale of White Horse	76.1	1/5	Top
Oxford	82.18	2/5	Top
South Oxfordshire	82.23	3/5	Second
West Oxfordshire	85.42	4/5	Third
Cherwell	100.31	5/5	Bottom

The data regarding tonnage is received by the data team from the respective County Councils, but it is a quarter behind. Therefore, the narrative and graphs pertain to Q3 2024/2025 (October - December).

During Q3, the Council saw a slight decline in the tonnage of household waste in comparison to last quarter, decreasing by 0.56kg to 89.85kg. In comparison to Q3 2023-2024, the tonnage has increased by 0.72kg.

Missed bins per 100,000



Direction of Travel

- Against last Quarter 
- Against last Year 
- Increased since last quarter and last year

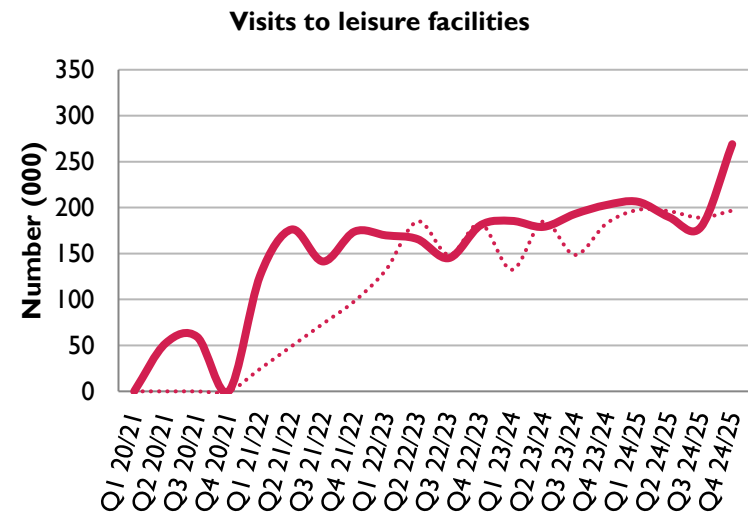
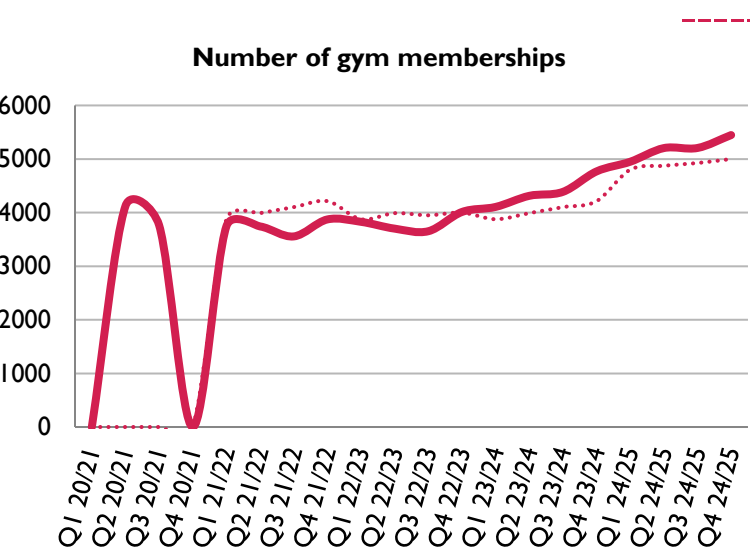
Lower is Good

Target	110
Q4 Actual	97
2024-25 Actual	87

High levels of staff sickness placed additional pressure on services during the quarter.

Number of visits to the leisure centres & (Snapshot)

Number of gym memberships



Direction of Travel

Gym Memberships

Against last Quarter

Against last Year

Leisure Visits

Against last Quarter

Against last Year

Gym Memberships – Improved since last quarter and last year

Leisure Visits- Improved since last quarter and last year

Higher is Good

Gym Memberships	
Target	5,447
Actual	5,206
Leisure Visits	
Target	196,780
Q4 Actual	269,003
2024-25 Target	779,280
2024-25 Actual	843,413

The quarter saw the highest number of visits and a record high in gym memberships.

Breakdown of Leisure Visits per facility:

Facility	Q1 24-25	Q2 24-25	Q3 24-25	Q4 24-25
Bartholomew Sports Centre	9,681	9,747	5,506	16,712
Carterton Artificial Turf Pitch	6,840	6,840	6,840	9,252
Carterton Leisure Centre	70,220	62,866	57,100	64,139
Carterton Pavilion	600	600	600	600
Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	22,907	21,717	18,804	54,713
Windrush Leisure Centre	76,286	65,250	73,237	103,947
Witney Artificial Turf Pitch	19,320	19,320	16,487	19,640
Woodstock Open Air Pool	516	3,126	0	0