



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT:
January 2021 - March 2021

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).

A selection of readily available benchmarking data has been included in the 2020-21 Q4 performance report on a trial basis. Two comparator groups that are commonly used to benchmark Councils' performance are: all shire district councils and CIPFA Nearest Neighbours (NN). The CIPFA NN Model is based on family groups; it adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between councils taking into account a range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The standard model provides the 15 nearest neighbours to each council. In contrast, the all shire districts comparator group is a much larger dataset of 192 councils, and there will inevitably be a much greater variation between the councils in this group.

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. Although the CIPFA NN Model groups councils on the basis of similarity, these factors are external and based on 'place'. The model 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.

Therefore, the benchmarking data provided in this report should be viewed as a 'guide' and as a starting point for discussion. It is important to understand performance within context, and there will be a variety of internal factors that determine performance including costs, workloads and quality.

Note

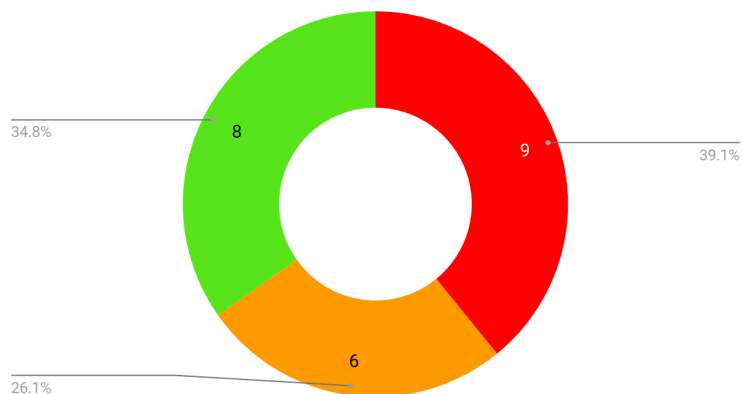
The data has been extracted from LG Inform, a benchmarking tool, which contains a range of routinely published data. It should be noted that:

- the extracted data may differ from the Council's own data;
- the median and top (best 25%) quartile lines are based on annual outturns but applied to the quarterly data;;
- 2020/21 benchmarks are not yet available, so the previous year's benchmarks have been used

KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

At a glance...

Summary of Performance



OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The majority of staff continue to work from home as the nation entered its third lockdown on 5 January 2021. Although some services are accessing external resources to help manage workloads, overall, performance has dipped in Q4 reflecting the significant impact of Covid-19 on some services. The Council's leisure facilities have been closed for a large part of the year; some services such as housing, planning land charges and customer services have experienced higher workloads to meet customer demand, and other services such as food safety and planning have had to find new ways of working or have been severely restricted in the way the service can be delivered creating backlogs of work.

In addition, many services including revenues and benefit, and community well-being have not just been doing the 'day job'; they have been supporting communities and businesses through the pandemic with the help of ICT and finance working in the background, as well as delivering the Council's priorities

Indicator	Status
Customer satisfaction - phones	Green
Customer satisfaction - F2F	n/a
Customer satisfaction - website	Green
Customer satisfaction - email	no target set
% calls responded within 20 secs	Red
% abandoned calls	Red
CT collection rate	Red
NNDR collection rate	Red
Average days to process HB new claims	Red
Average days to process HB change events	Red
% HB overpayment	Orange
Households in Emergency Accommodation under 28 days	Green
Households in Emergency Accommodation over 28 days	Red
% major applications determined within time	Green
% minor applications determined within time	Green
% others applications determined within time	Orange
% appeals allowed	Green
Affordable homes delivered	Green
% land charge searches dispatched within time	Orange
% high risk notifications assessed within time	Green
% high risk food premises inspected within time	Red
Residual waste per household (kg)	Orange
% combined recycling rate	Red
Missed bins per 100,000	Red
Leisure visits	no target set
Gym memberships	no target set
Parking enforcement hours	Green

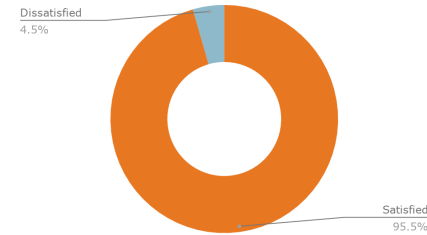
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer satisfaction

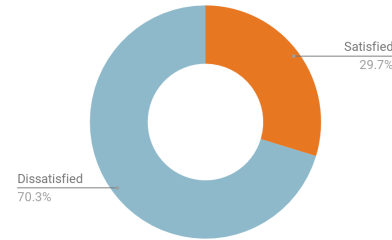
Face to face - no surveys due to Covid19



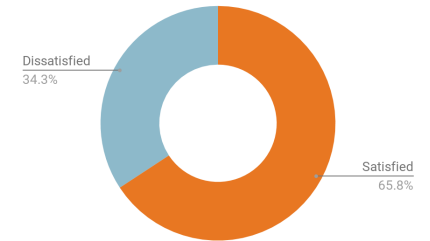
Phone - 381 respondents



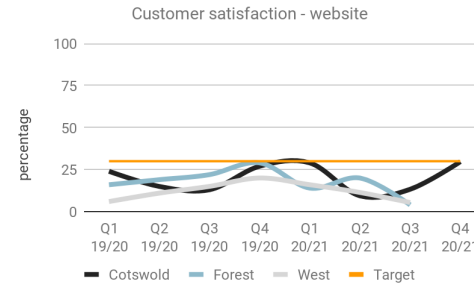
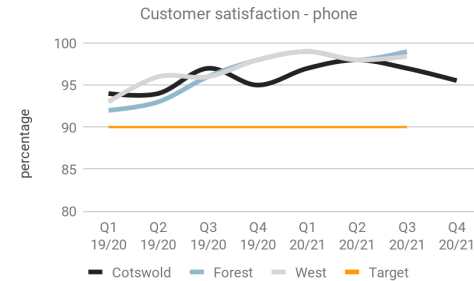
Website - 138 respondents



Email - 508 respondents



What's the trend?



OBSERVATION

Due to Covid-19, the Council closed its reception areas in March 2020 and therefore no face to face surveys have been completed so far for the year. The the nation emerged from the third lockdown on the 29 March 2021 in phased stages; and although Trinity Road and Moreton Area Centre re-opened to customers from 12 April 2021, usage is currently low.

Overall, satisfaction ratings for services delivered via the phone continue to be high, while satisfaction for services via the website appears to be low, but has improved in the last quarter. The process of rating the website and leaving feedback is simple with a feedback button on every web page. Despite this, the number of responses to the website survey, although up on the previous quarter at 138 (from 77) remains an extremely small proportion of the 522,922 visitors, and is therefore unlikely to be representative. An analysis of the survey data was completed to understand the issues and to determine whether satisfaction is with service provision or the website. A significant proportion of the qualitative feedback was about service provision or were categorised as user error e.g. mistyping a postcode rather than comments about content or website functionality improvements. Website content continues to be reviewed and new processes to improve user experience have been introduced; and a new framework to measure the effectiveness of the Councils' websites and gather customer feedback is planned

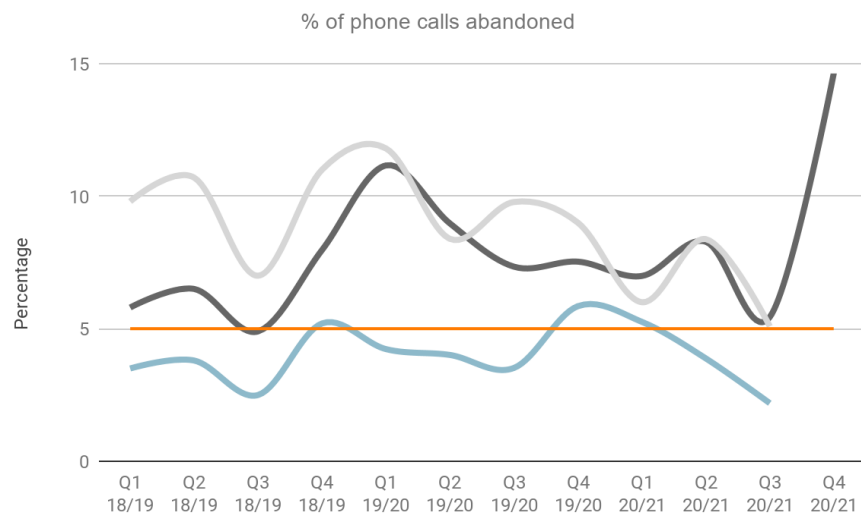
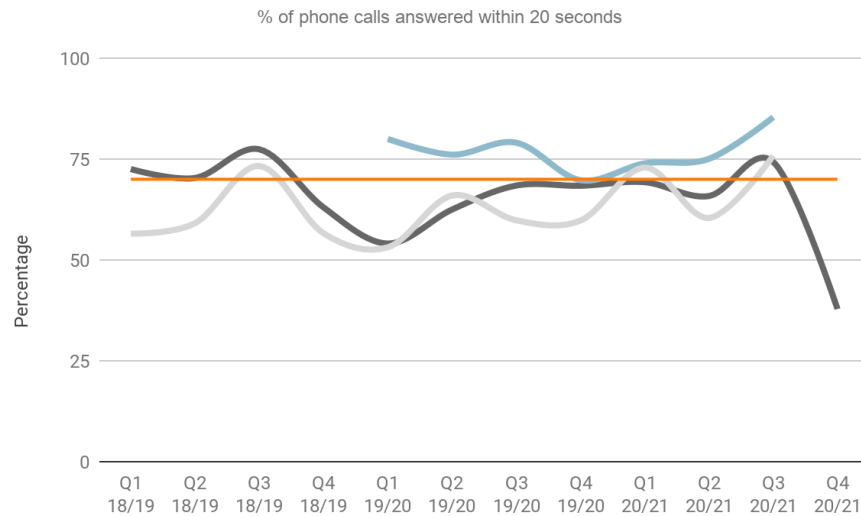
Telephone calls - response and abandonment

Target

Cotswold

Forest of Dean

West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION

The service is currently reviewing its indicators and targets in preparation for 2021/22 to ensure that they are appropriate to customers' needs; so for example, ensuring that satisfaction for our services remains high while also taking into account the benefits of channel shift and providing more options for accessing our services.

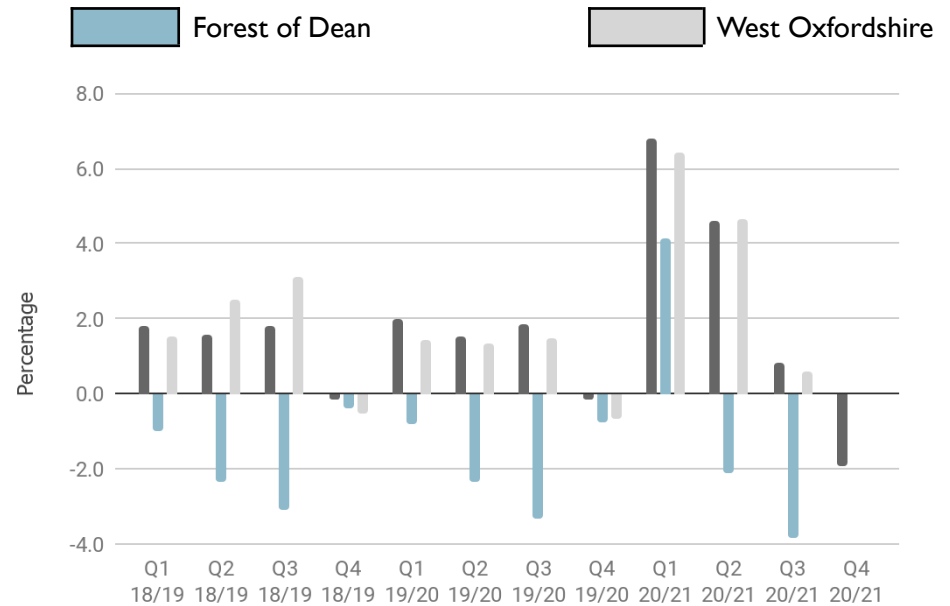
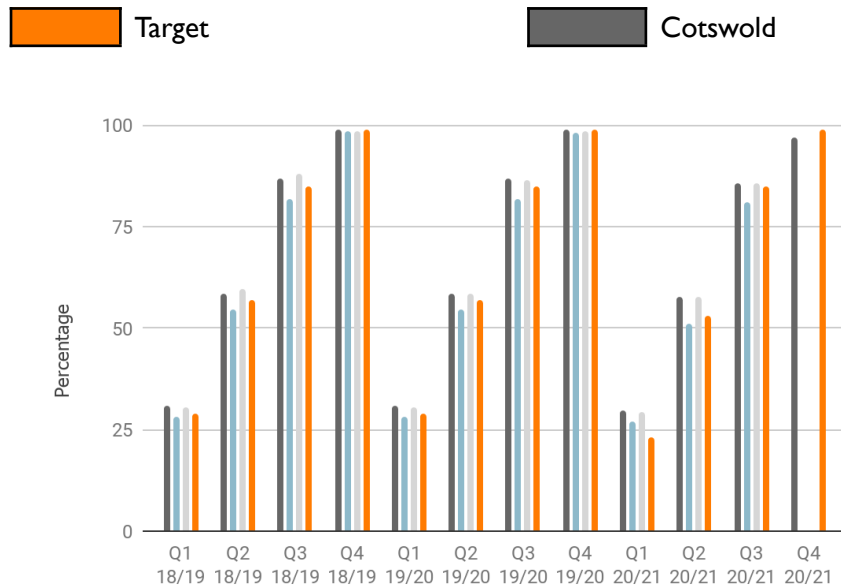
Workloads are generally higher in Q4 due to normal annual billing processes. However, performance has reduced significantly due to staff turnover during the quarter and higher call volumes related to Covid-19, for example, responding to calls about business grants and supporting calls to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, as well as taking garden waste payments and queries. In addition, council tax bills with the wrong payment schedule were sent to around 3,000 residents; although this error resulted in increased calls, revised bills were sent out before any payments were due.

The call abandon rate increased due to the service managing call volumes by revising call waiting messages which provided advice/sign post customers to alternative ways to complete their transactions. Advisors are working to reduce the backlog of voicemails and emails that have built up; and recruitment to vacant posts has just taken place.

Note: a high abandon rate is not a sign of poor performance as customers may abandon their calls for many reasons including completing their transactions on the Council's website

Revenues and Benefits

(Cumulative) Percentage of council tax collected & the difference between the percentage of council tax collected and the target



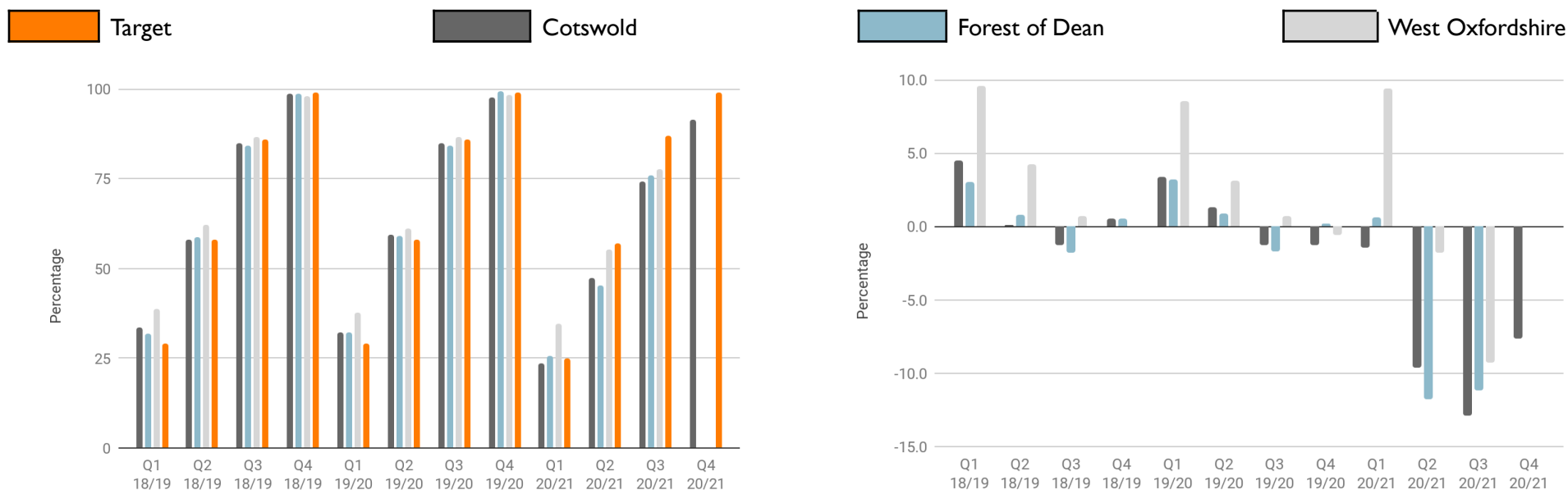
OBSERVATION:

At the end of Q4, the collection rate was just under two percentage points lower than previous years; all Gloucestershire authorities experienced a fall in the collection rate.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, all recovery action was paused initially following government guidance and Member decision; and the service worked with customers to re-align payment instalments. The service had the go-ahead at the end of September 2020 to re-commence recovery actions such as reminders and final payment letters. Some householders' income will have been impacted by job loss and furlough; the service is contacting customers by phone and email, as well as including a letter with reminders to encourage customers to contact the Council if they are experiencing problems with council tax payments. Furthermore, those residents in receipt of council tax support received an additional payment to their accounts from the government's Covid-19 Council Tax hardship fund.

Currently, the Magistrates Courts are not holding any liability order hearings which will mean the Council is unable to enforce any debts incurred in 2020/21. The debt will be rolled over into the new financial year, and added to residents' new payment schedules; and recovery action will continue.

(Cumulative) Percentage of business rates collected & the difference between the percentage of business rates collected and the target



OBSERVATION:

The collection rate at the end of Q4 was around six percentage points lower than the previous year; Covid-19 is having a major impact on business rate collection figures throughout the country. The Gloucestershire authorities experienced declines in the collection rate ranging from -1.71% to -8.13%.

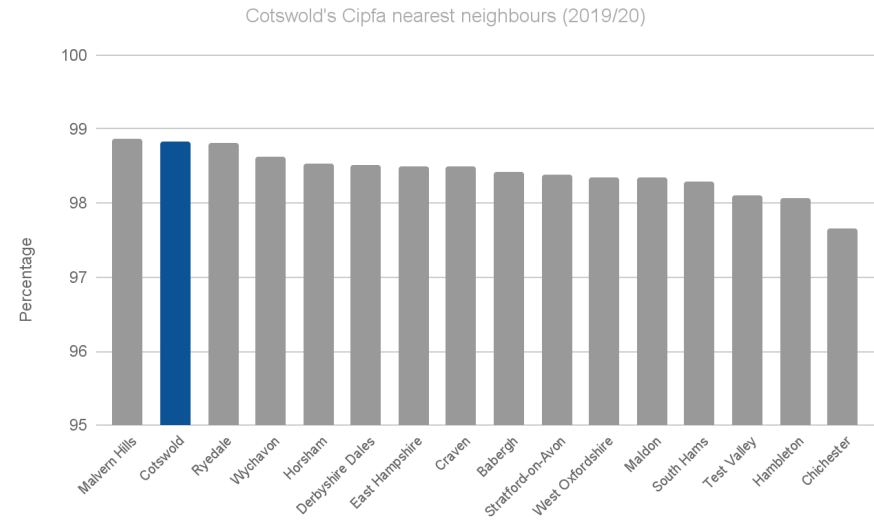
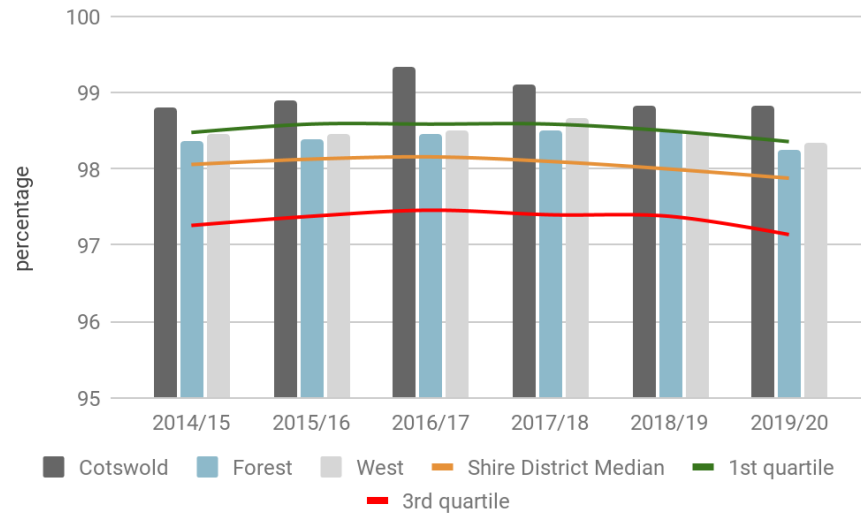
Due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions and three national lockdowns, many businesses had to close for many months in the year or operate under restrictions. Following an initial pause in undertaking recovery action, the service is sending out reminders, phoning and emailing businesses to encourage them to contact the Council so that we can support them via manageable repayment plans. Currently, the Magistrates Courts are not holding any liability order hearings which will mean the Council is unable to enforce any debts incurred in 2020/21, so the debt will be rolled forward into the next financial year, and added to the new payment instalments for 2021-22.

Government has gone some way in helping certain businesses with 100% business rate relief, but there are still those businesses which have seen an impact on their out turn which have not received any assistance and are therefore struggling financially. A further tranche of business grants became available to cover the second and third lockdowns, and the Council is continuing to distribute a number of grants that are available to eligible businesses.

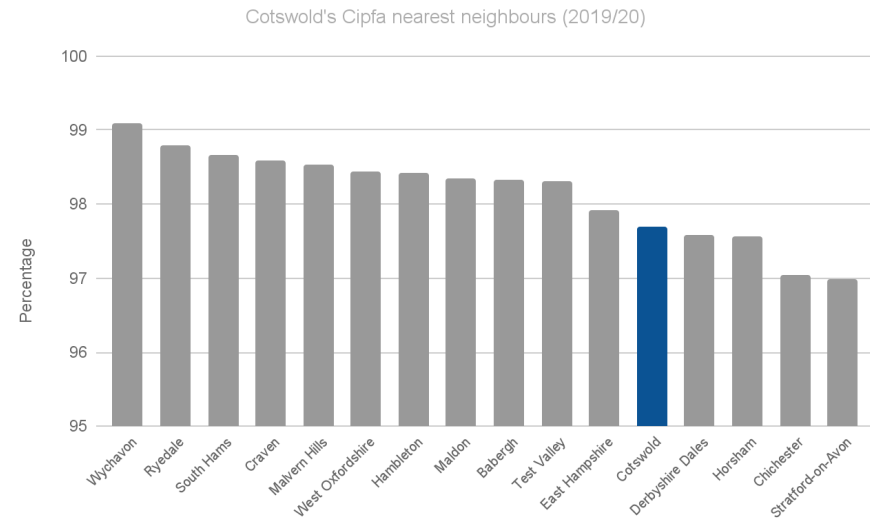
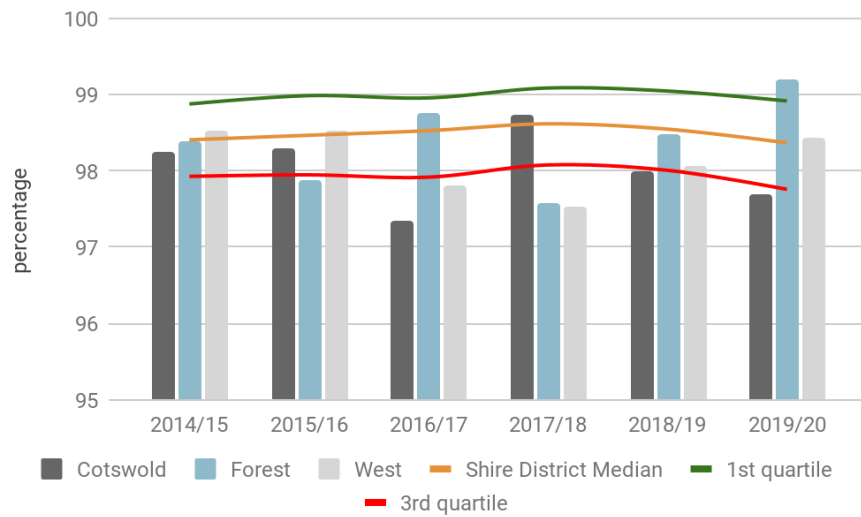
Note: central government funding to cover business rates relief is not included in the outturn

Benchmarks against all Shire Districts and Cipfa nearest neighbours for council tax collection rates and business rates collection rates

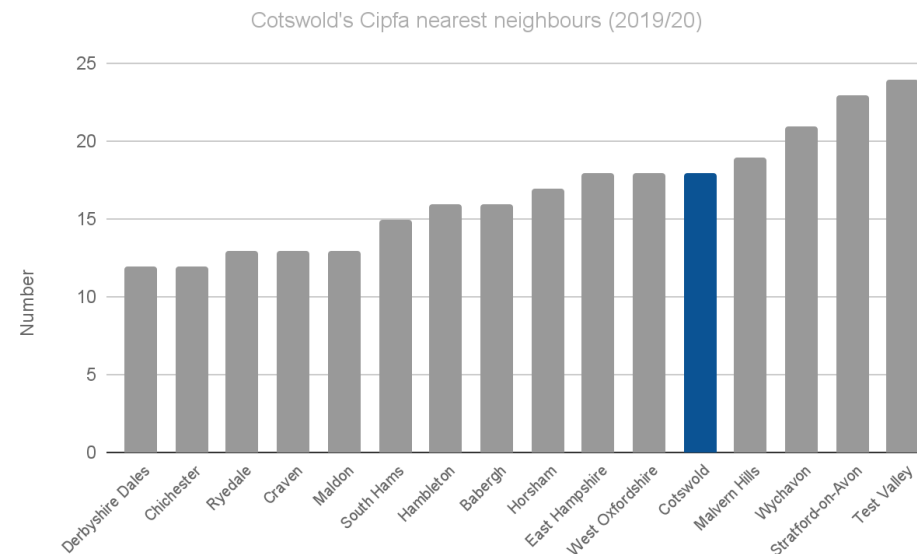
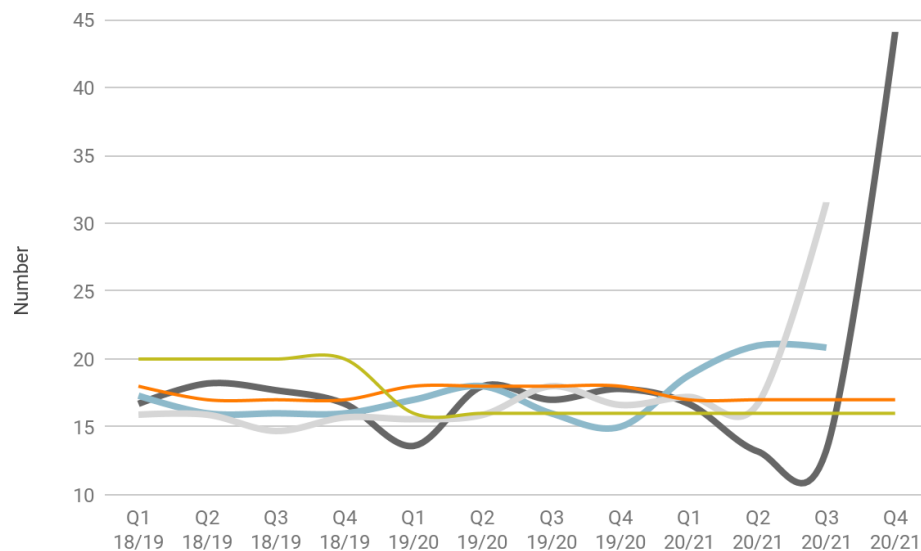
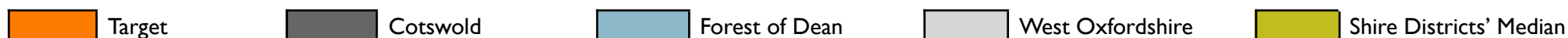
Percentage of council tax collected



Percentage of business rates collected



(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process new housing benefit claims



OBSERVATION:

At the end of Q4, processing times have increased significantly due to the implementation of a new revenues and benefits system on 10 December. Prior to 'go live', there was a period of time between switching the old system off and the new system on which created a backlog of applications which staff are still working through. During Q4, a range of end of year activities are administered including the benefit uprating and rent increases which require system parameter changes and testing, which has placed additional burdens on staff.

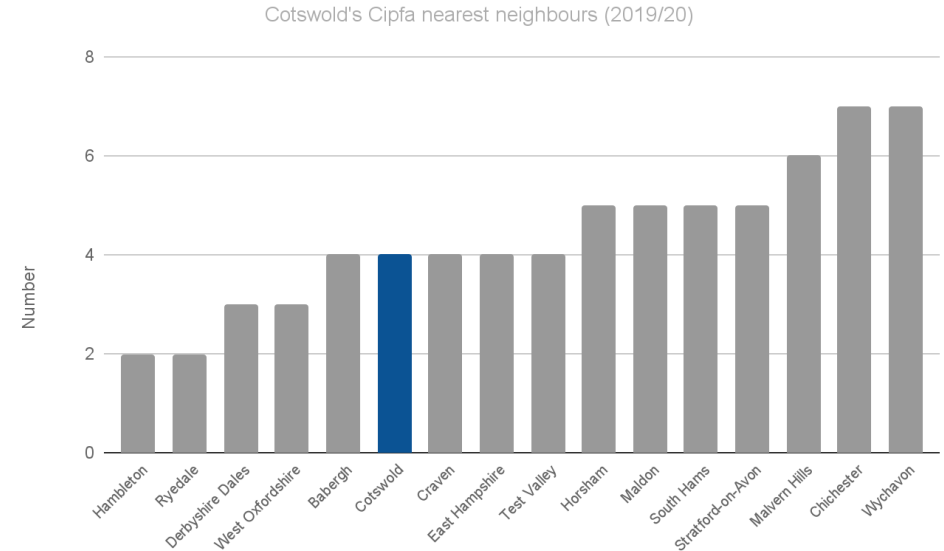
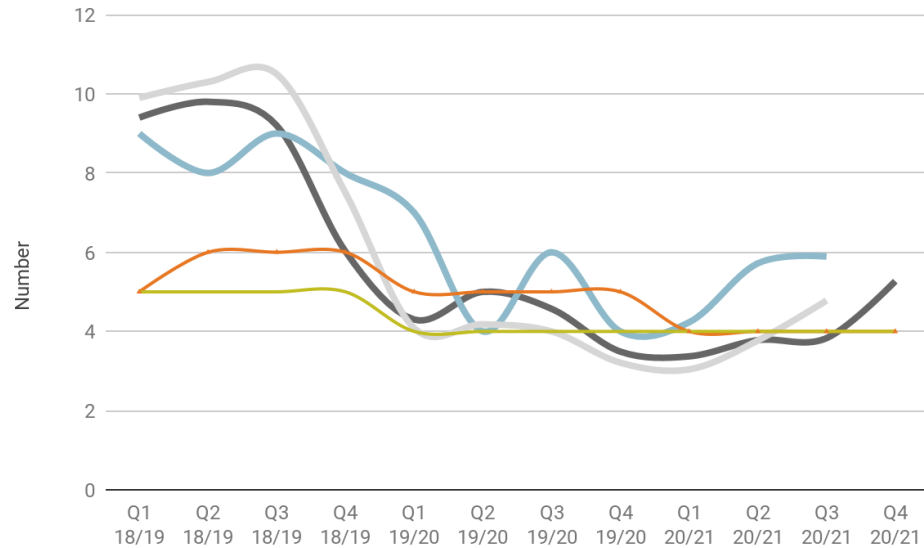
Furthermore, capacity has been reduced in the service as staff have taken time out to train Customer Services Advisors, while other officers have supported 'Track and Trace'. However, there are benefits of the new system including the ability to make online applications, and once the open portal is implemented later in the year, the back office system will be automatically updated.

Although performance was off target due to many external factors, assurances can be given that not one claimant suffered any financial loss or experienced any threat to their new or ongoing tenancy. If there was any threat to the claimant because of delays in administering their claim, the Council would have provided an emergency payment.

To manage workloads, the service has accessed support on demand from an external source.

Note: due to the significant reduction (over 70%) in new housing benefit claims since the implementation of Universal Credit in November 2017 in Cotswold District, this indicator has become obsolete. It is proposed that a new indicator to measure Council Tax Support processing times is introduced as the majority of Universal Credit claims will have an associated CTS claim

(Cumulative) Average number of days taken to process housing benefit change of circumstances



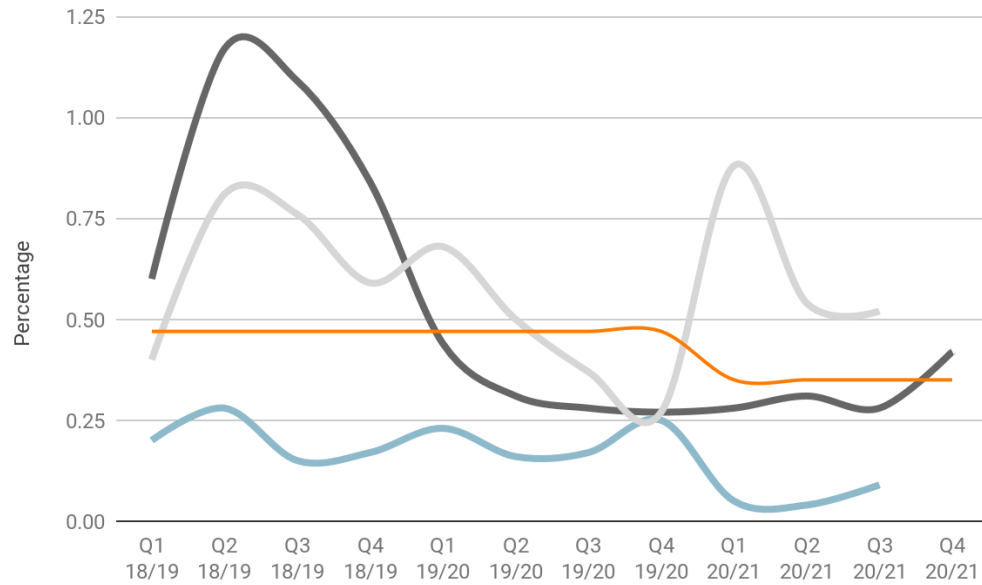
OBSERVATION:

At the end of Q4, performance has reduced slightly due to the backlog of applications created during the implementation of the new revenues and benefits system on 10 December; officers are still working through it. During Q4, a range of end of year activities are administered including the benefit uprating and rent increases which require system parameter changes and testing, has placed additional burdens on staff, although some of the change of circumstances such as rent increases are simple to process and can be applied in bulk which helps to reduce the average processing time.

Furthermore, capacity has been reduced in the service as staff have taken time out to train Customer Services Advisors, while other officers have supported 'Track and Trace'. However, there are benefits of the new system including the ability to make online applications, and once the open portal is implemented later in the year, the back office system will be automatically updated.

To manage workloads, the service has accessed support on demand from an external source.

(Cumulative) Percentage of housing benefit overpayment due to LA error/Admin delay



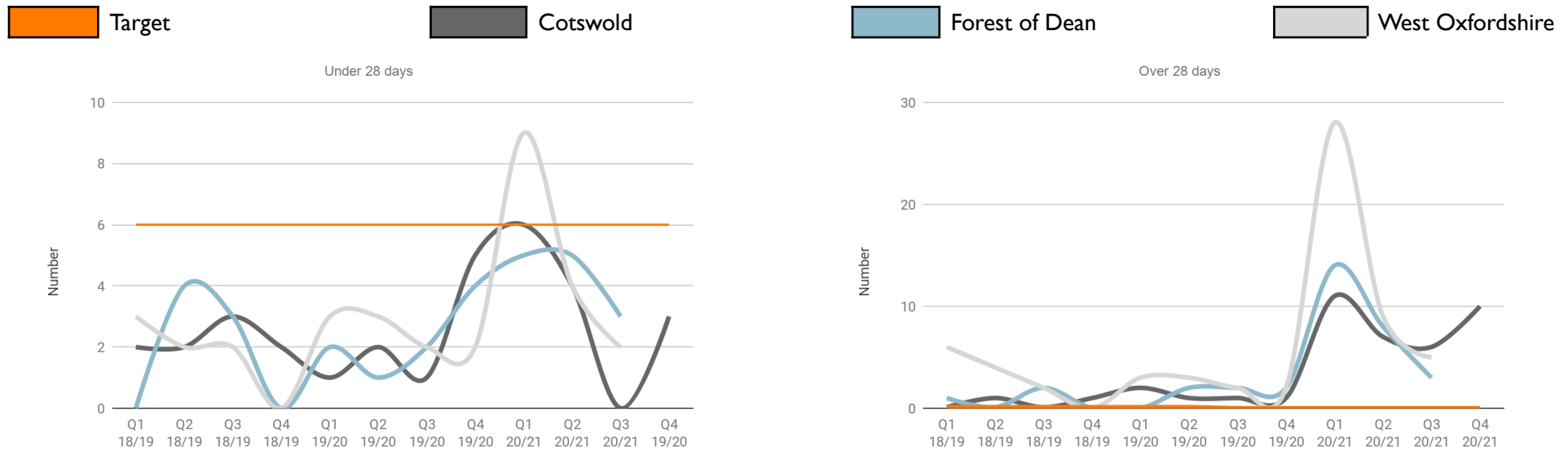
OBSERVATION:

There was a slight increase in the outturn at the end of Q4 which was mainly due to admin delay created by the implementation of the new revenues and benefits system in December and the backlog of applications.

The service continues to involve a number of staff in quality assurance. Due to the high volume of change of circumstances, a sampling approach is taken, and areas which have high error rates such as calculation of earnings, are targeted

Housing Support

(Snapshot) Number of households living in emergency accommodation for under 28 days & over 28 days



OBSERVATION:

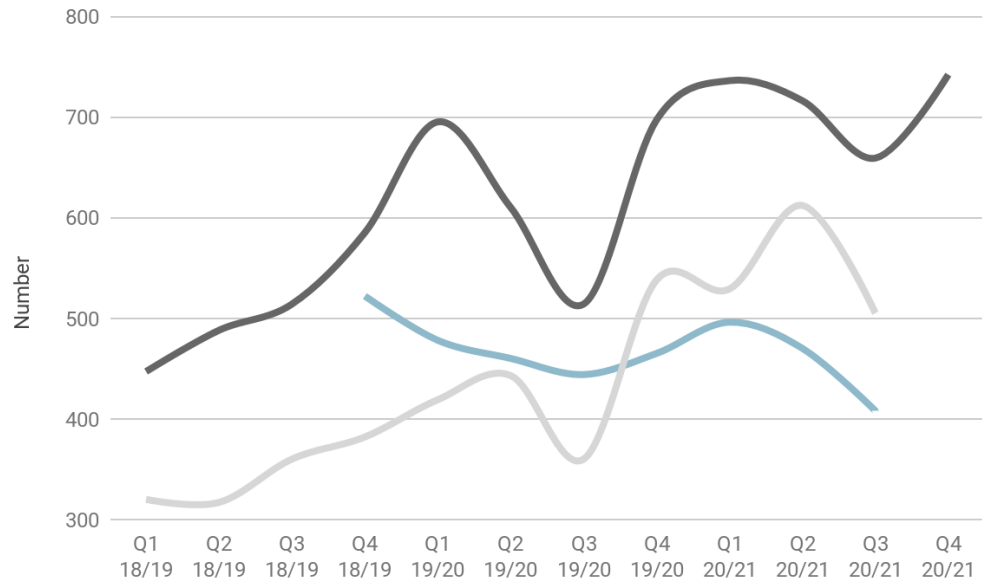
At the beginning of the first lockdown, councils were required to place all clients who are rough sleeping or at risk of imminent homelessness regardless of priority need who have approached the Council, into emergency accommodation, which resulted in a spike in numbers.

The number of households living in emergency accommodation started to decrease as exit plans were created to move households into more secure tenancies including private rented, housing association, and supported accommodation. In addition, some households and rough sleepers chose to leave emergency accommodation.

In Q4, the number of homelessness presentations started to increase again as the nation entered the third lockdown, and as a result of the cold weather. The majority of the households in emergency accommodation over 28 days tend to be single people affected by the pandemic (rather than in priority need) who are difficult to move on due to the lack of one bedroom accommodation. The six Gloucestershire district councils are working together to the same standards; and hostels are helping to move people on creating greater fluidity and throughput

(Snapshot) Number of Long Term Empty properties (six months and over)

Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

Overall, the number of long term empty properties in the District is increasing which is likely to be due to a number of factors.

Initially, there was a pause in house moves which is likely to have contributed to the increase. In addition, no site visits to inspect properties were being undertaken by the LTE officer due to Covid-19.

The LTE post is responsible for monitoring properties and working with landlords to support them to bring their properties back into use. This post became vacant in September but has recently been recruited to. The new post will concentrate on those properties where the Council might be able to influence or take action, rather than on those properties that are being well maintained.

Bromford is undertaking an intensive redevelopment of their older properties so some properties are awaiting demolition, while other properties such as retirement properties remain vacant.

Planning and Strategic Housing

(Cumulative) Percentage of major planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within 13 weeks or an agreed timeframe

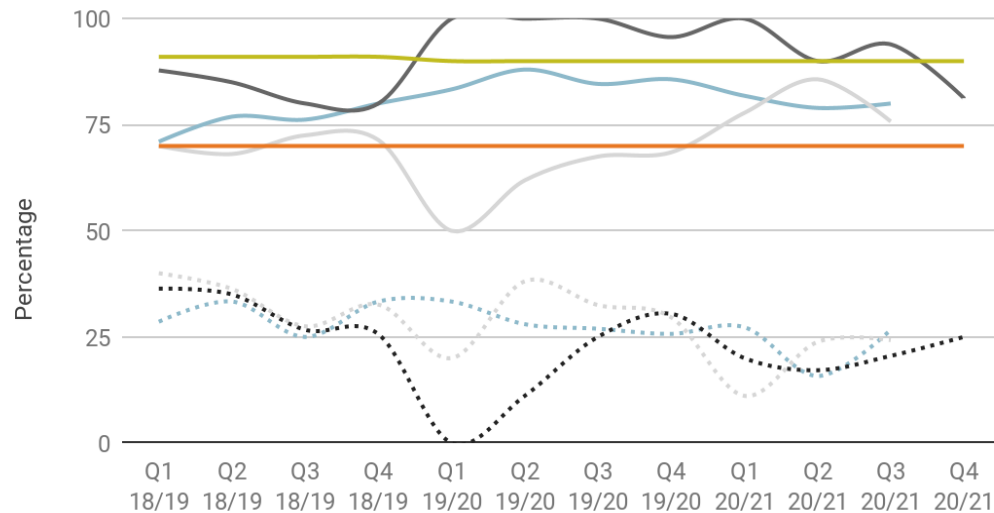


% of all application completed within 13 weeks

----- Cotswold

----- Forest of Dean

----- West Oxfordshire



Note

The charts for the planning performance measures have been separated to demonstrate the number of applications that are completed within the set time frames and the number that are completed as a result of an agreed extension of time.

Extensions of times are often a result of consultees requesting changes to the scheme or because the consultee response is essential but has not been received within the timetable. They are also used where officers are working proactively with applicants to improve schemes and make developments acceptable

OBSERVATION:

Nine major applications were determined in the quarter, and 31 for the year, compared with 23 for the previous year.

The service has reported that the number of applications received over the summer and then throughout the rest of the year has been a record nationally and that this trend is reflected locally. The increasing numbers coming through combined with reduced efficiency in the planning process as a result of Covid-19 has created a backlog. The service has been carrying a number of vacancies for some time, which inevitably increases the workload of the team and results in increased application determination times. The Service is however, in the final phases of recruitment and plans to have all vacant posts filled by August 2021.

The Planning team has found home working and the restrictions imposed by Covid-19 has created additional burdens as not all aspects of this statutory process can be or are best achieved electronically. In addition, home working has reduced communication between officers, and therefore there is less support for officers which is affecting morale. Validating planning applications for accuracy has proved particularly problematic as a home based exercise as details of the application have to be cross checked against a number of plans and maps which can be achieved much easier using paper versions in the office. A new validation process was implemented over the Christmas/New Year at all three partner Council sites which should help to improve performance generally. Other tasks that are achieved more easily in the office include redacting and printing documents e.g. site notices.

The restrictions imposed by Covid-19 have resulted in additional preparation time required for committee meetings, and site visits which need to be unaccompanied and pre-arranged, often with a follow up online meeting or phone call.

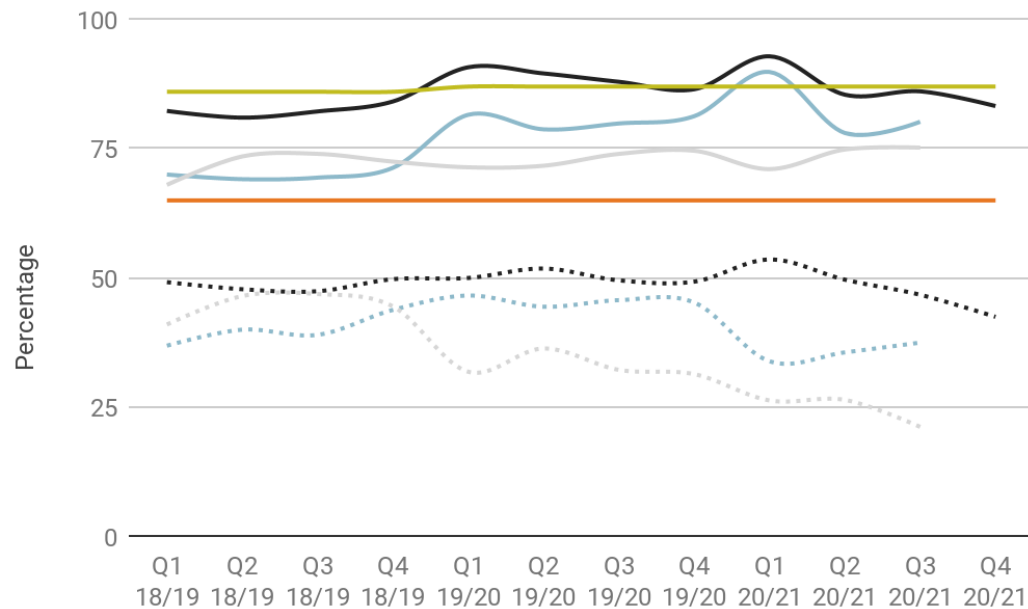
Some consultees such as the County and the Environment Agency are struggling to meet response target dates which is also impacting on determination times

(Cumulative) Percentage of minor planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within 8 weeks or an agreed timescale



% of all applications completed within 8 weeks



OBSERVATION:

97 minor applications were determined in the quarter, and 361 for the year compared to 422 for previous year.

The challenging work conditions coupled with reduced resources and higher volumes of applications coming through is beginning to impact on performance.

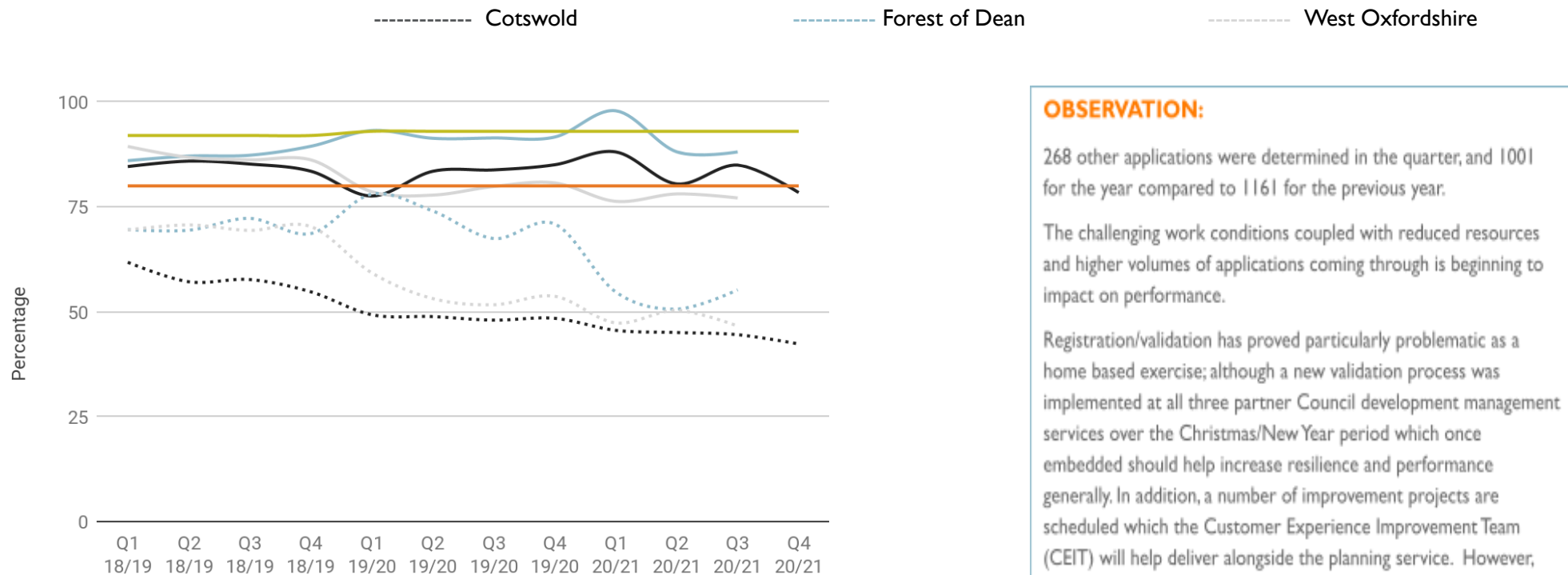
Registration/validation has proved particularly problematic as a home based exercise; although a new validation process was implemented at all three partner Council development management services over the Christmas/New Year period which once embedded should help increase resilience and performance generally. In addition, a number of improvement projects are scheduled which the Customer Experience Improvement Team (CEIT) will help deliver alongside the planning service. However, with such high workloads in the Planning service, the current focus for both the CEIT and the Planning teams is to clear the backlog of applications awaiting validation

(Cumulative) Percentage of other planning applications determined

% of all applications completed within 8 weeks or an agreed timescale



% of all applications completed within 8 weeks



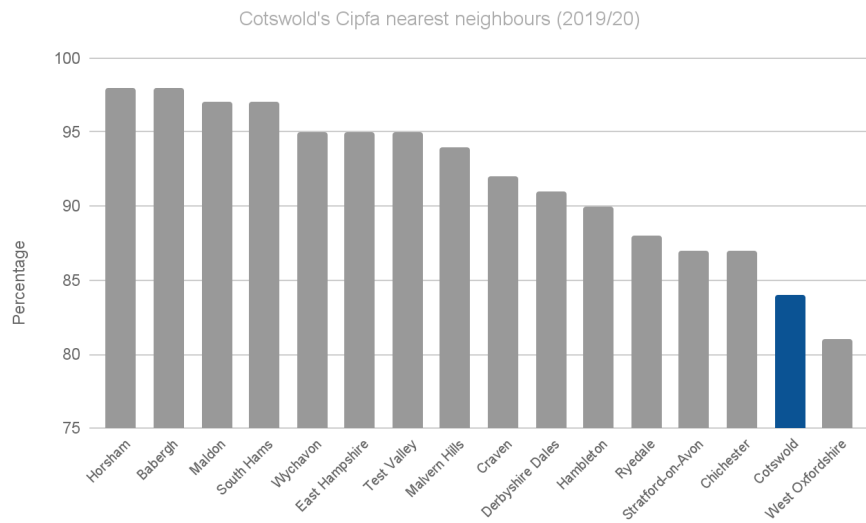
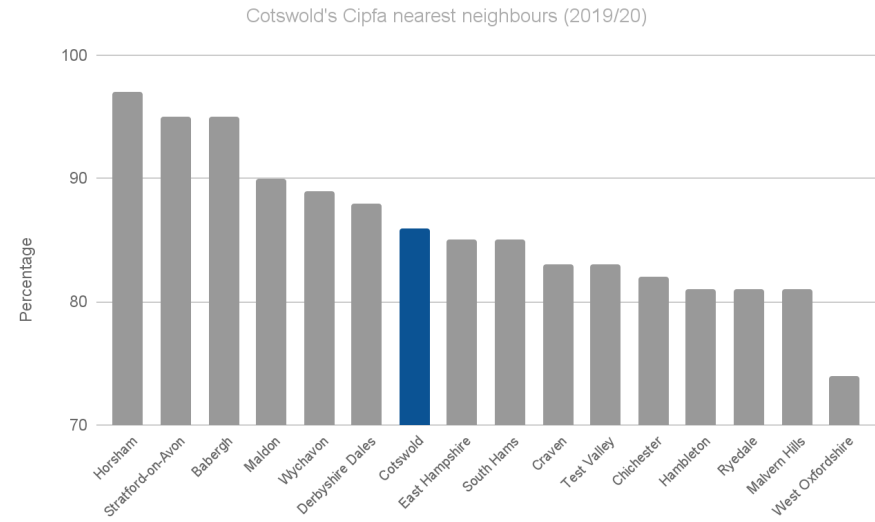
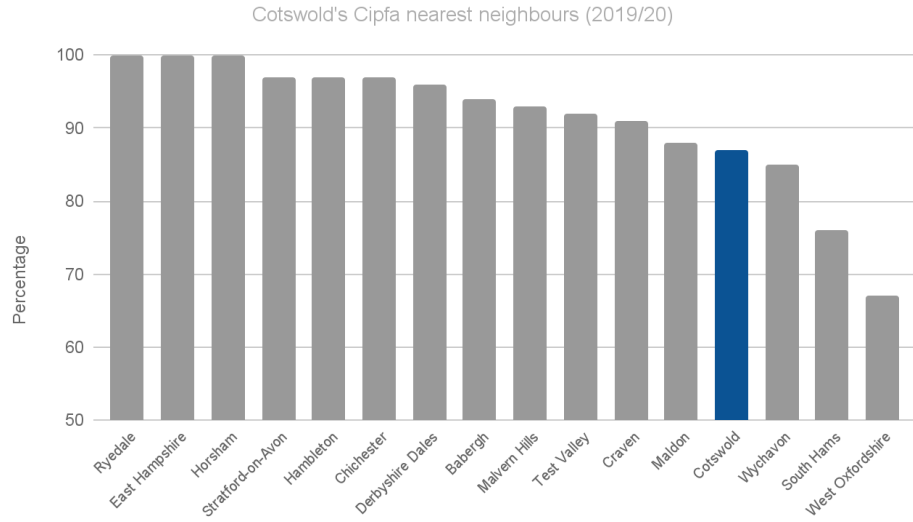
OBSERVATION:

268 other applications were determined in the quarter, and 1001 for the year compared to 1161 for the previous year.

The challenging work conditions coupled with reduced resources and higher volumes of applications coming through is beginning to impact on performance.

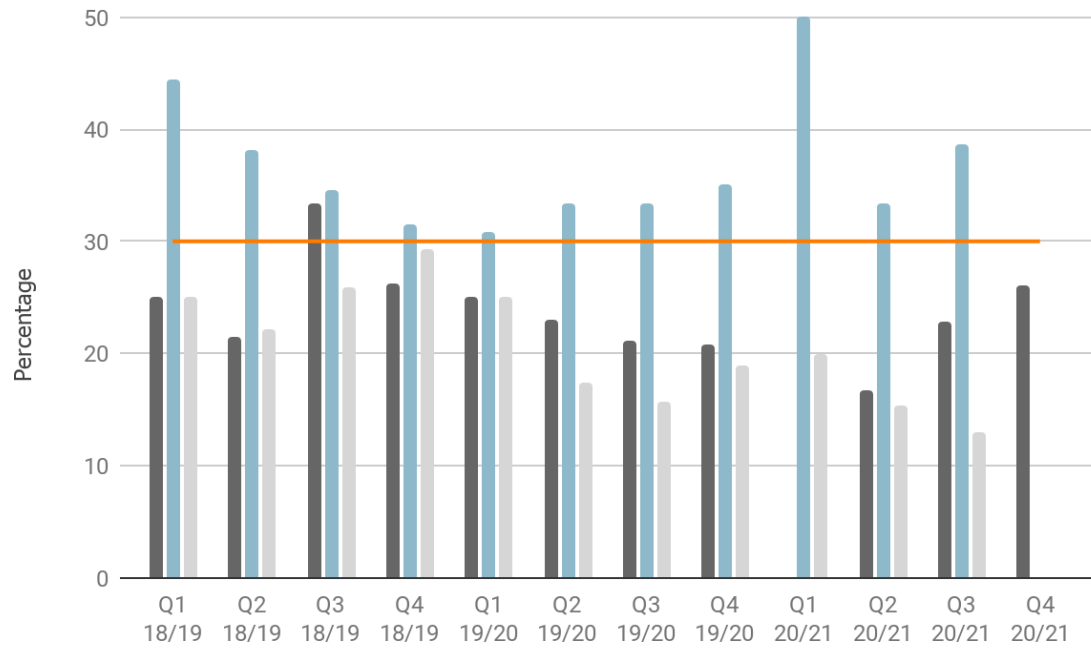
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Benchmarks against Cipfa nearest neighbours for % of planning application determined within agreed timescales



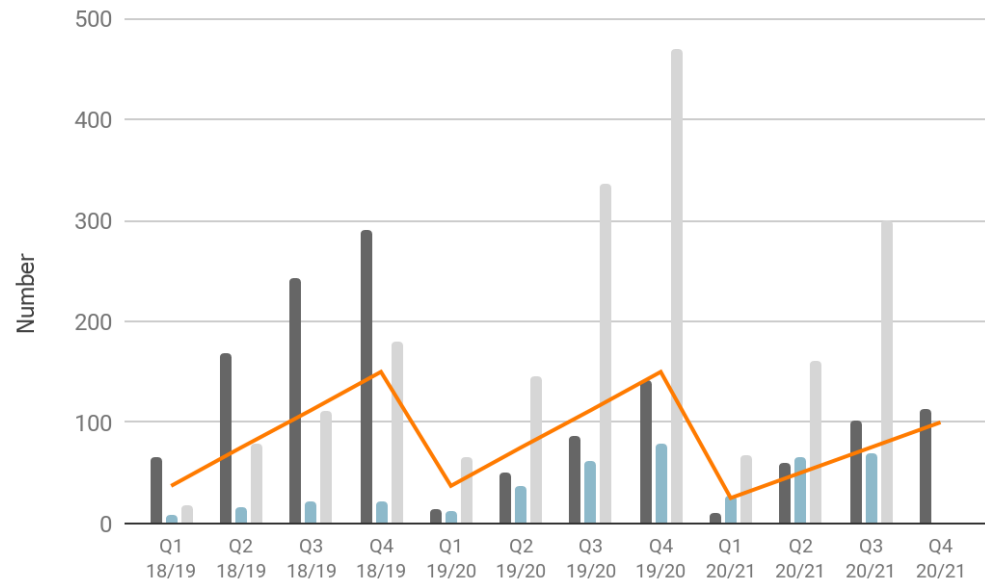
(Cumulative) Percentage of planning appeals allowed

Target
 Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:
 Five out of 15 planning appeals were allowed in Q4, and 13 out of 50 for the year

(Cumulative) Number of affordable homes delivered



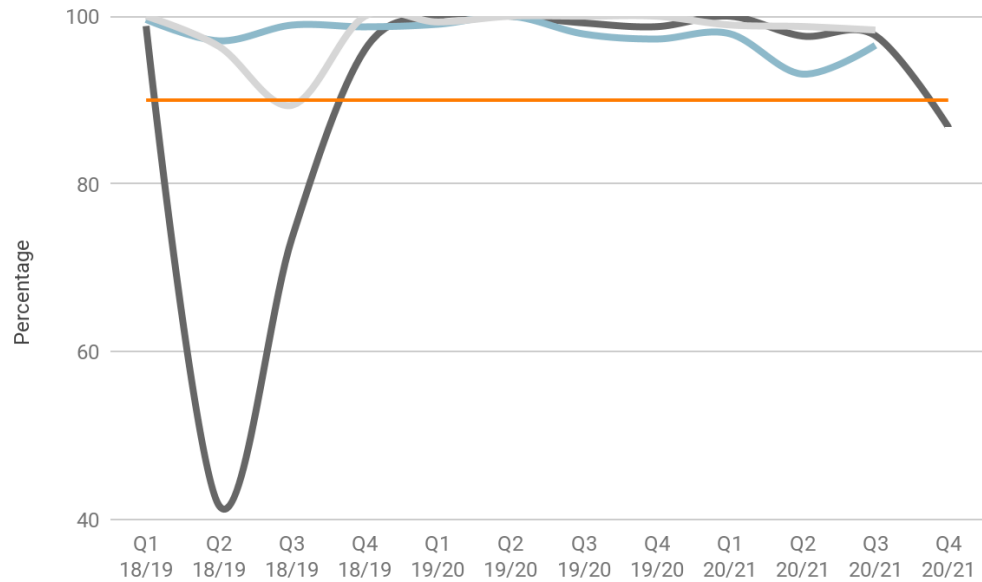
OBSERVATION:

Due to the first national lockdown, no affordable homes were delivered in April and May 2020.

Thirteen affordable homes were delivered in Q4 comprising three social rented homes in Moreton in Marsh, six shared ownership homes in South Cerney and four affordable rented homes in Blockley; totalling 114 affordable homes for the year.

As with many sectors, the construction industry has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic which has delayed work on site as well as the start of new schemes. The majority of schemes due to complete in 2021/22 were expected to start on site in 2020, but are now only beginning to come forward so are most likely to complete in 2022/23. Although the sites currently in the construction stage are expected to deliver their planned units, it is likely that there will be a shortfall in delivery in 2021/22 against the annual target of 100 homes

Percentage of land charge searches dispatched within 10 working days



OBSERVATION:

The service processed 409 official land charge searches in Q4; 355 searches were dispatched within 10 working days. Performance was slightly lower than previous quarters due to reduced resources in the service, while the the number of official land charge searches received has continued to increase, which is most likely to be due to the 'stamp duty holiday' and Brexit.

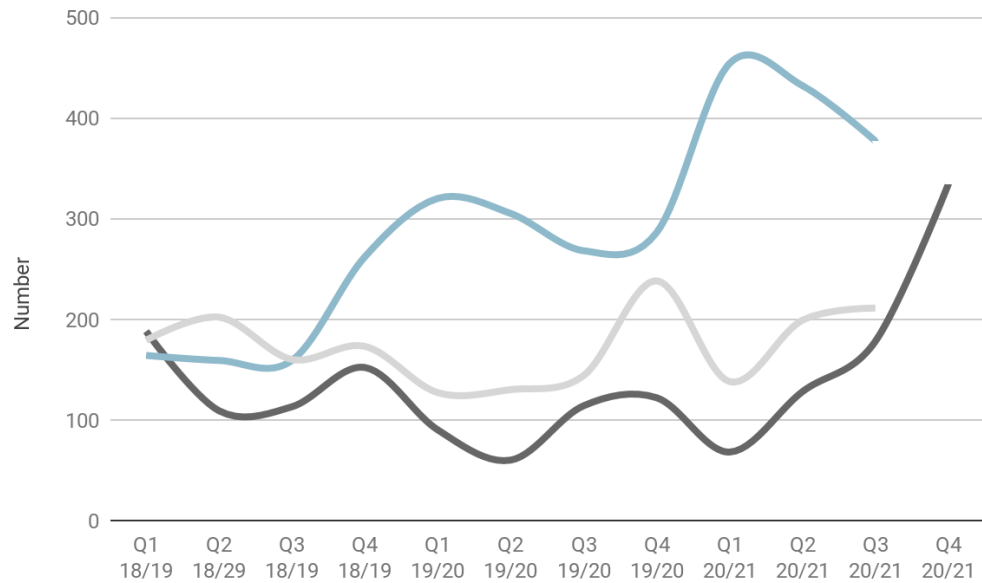
The service processed over 40% more land charge searches in the quarter compared to a year ago; and over the course of the year, it processed nearly 95% of land charge searches within 10 working days,

There was a dip in performance in 2018-19 as the planning element of the search had to be done manually while awaiting an upgrade to the Uniform system

Environmental and Regulatory

Number of fly tips collected

Cotswold Forest of Dean West Oxfordshire



OBSERVATION:

Due to Covid-19, increases in fly tips have been reported nationally, and numbers over the last nine months suggest that this increase is being reflected locally. Recycling centres were closed in the first lockdown but have since been operating a booking system.

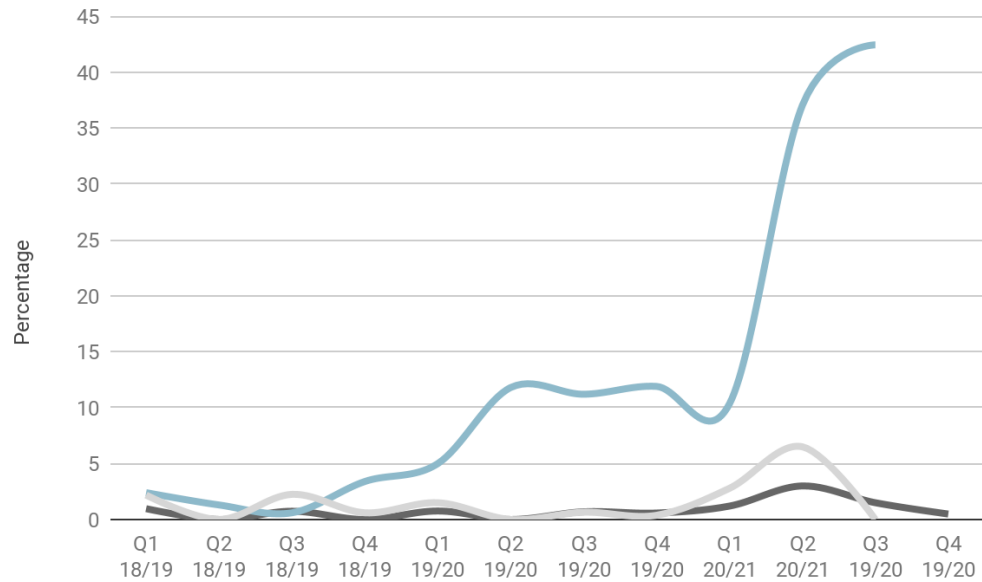
The Enviro-crime programme has been running for around 18 months, and is designed to tackle a range of enviro-crime including fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling.

Furthermore, the fly tipping service for Cotswold and West has been redesigned based on customer and user need with the introduction of new on-line forms and web pages. The new process was introduced in October 2020 and will make it easier and quicker for residents to report flytips. It will also reduce duplication and therefore create a more efficient and responsive service.

Forest of Dean appears to collect a higher number of fly tips than Cotswold and West as it counts fly tips at recycling sites

Percentage of fly tips that result in an enforcement action taking place (defined as a warning letter, fixed penalty notice, simple caution or prosecution)

Cotswold
 Forest of Dean
 West Oxfordshire



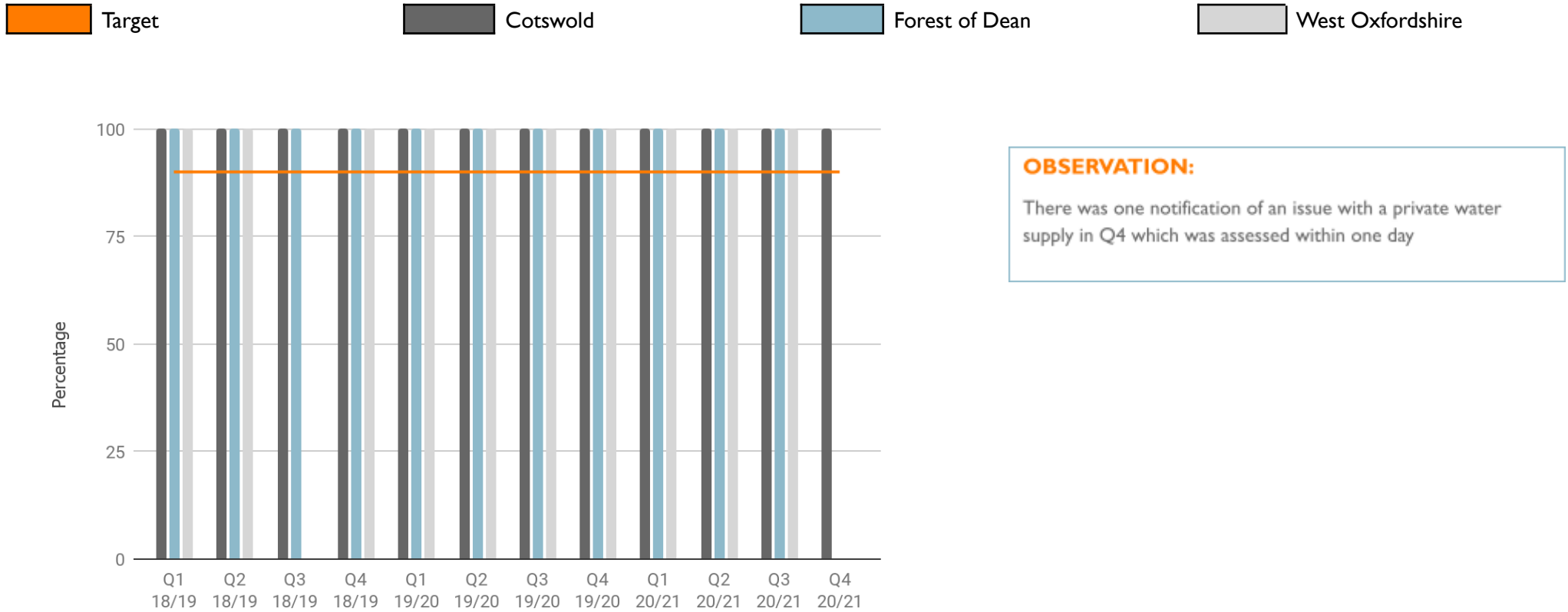
OBSERVATION:

There were 412 notifications of fly tips in Q4 up from 265 in the previous quarter; two warning letters were served. The Council will always take enforcement action if fly tipping is witnessed.

The fly tipping service was re-designed for Cotswold and West. A 'support service triage' was set up to free up specialist officer time to deal with the fly tips that can be investigated further. In Q4, just 34 fly tips were referred to ERS specialists for further investigation. The change in service will require time to 'bed in', and it is likely that the referral criteria will need to be broadened to ensure that a sufficient number of referrals come through for investigation.

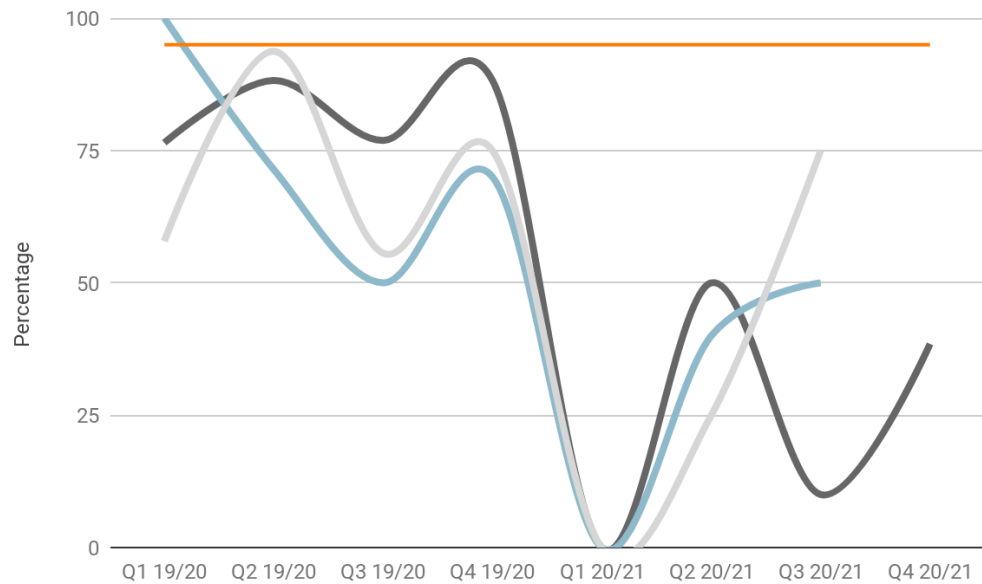
Cotswold and West operate a small multidisciplinary team. One new officer will commence in Q1 to add further capacity to the team. In contrast, at Forest of Dean, there is a dedicated Community Warden team.

Percentage of high risk notifications (including food poisoning outbreaks, anti-social behaviour, contaminated private water supplies, workplace fatalities or multiple serious injuries) risk assessed within 1 working day



OBSERVATION:
 There was one notification of an issue with a private water supply in Q4 which was assessed within one day

Percentage of high risk food premises inspected within target timescales



OBSERVATION:

During the year, there have been three national lockdowns. During these periods, remote inspections have been conducted, and site inspections were undertaken when the Covid infection rates had reduced to a level when it was safe to go out.

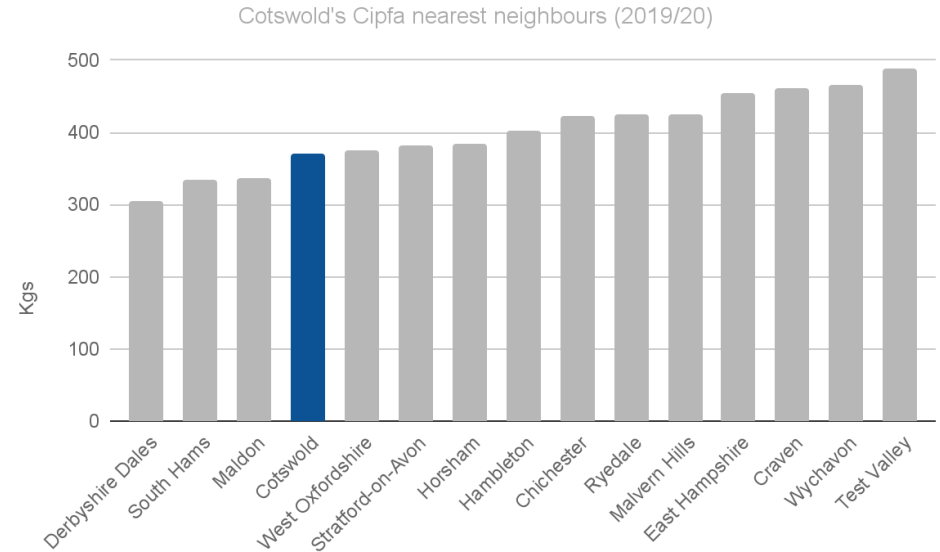
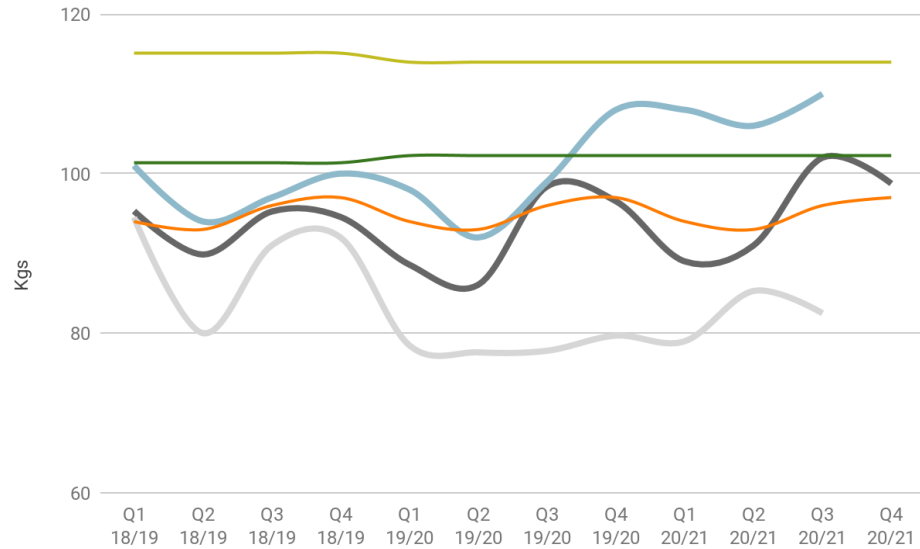
Thirteen high risk food inspections were due in Q4, and all 13 sites received a remote inspection.

Following a risk assessment on site visits, and staff consultation, some staff commenced site inspections at the beginning of March 2021 (with the use of PPE) as the infection rate in Gloucestershire had reduced significantly. Five site inspections were completed within the 28 day timescale, with the remaining outstanding site visits now completed excluding those premises which are still closed or Care establishments previously rated very good and not requiring a visit.

A backlog of other types of inspections including the inspection of new food businesses, has built up over the year, and the service is awaiting further guidance from the FSA in June on how to deal with the backlog.

All work deemed 'high priority' by the FSA has been undertaken and a site visit has taken place when required.

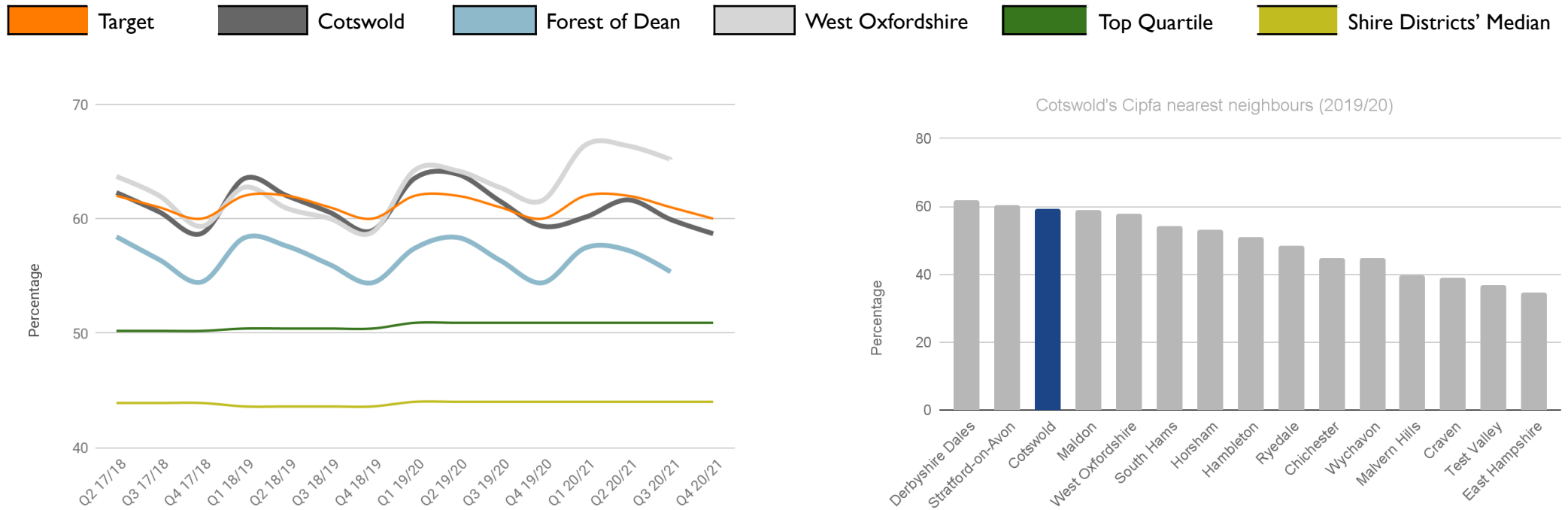
Residual household waste per household (kg)



OBSERVATION:

Overall, the amount of residual waste generated per household in the District is low compared to other Councils. Although the amount of residual waste generated between April 2020 and March 2021 increased by 3.5% compared to the previous year, the amount of dry recycling increased by over 16%; the increases are most likely to be due to the expansion of home working in response to multiple national lockdowns and tier restrictions, and the expansion of the dry recycling service a year ago may have helped to manage the increase in dry recycling materials

Cumulative) Percentage of household waste recycled



OBSERVATION:

The combined recycling rate for the period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021 was 58.69%, down just over half a percentage point on the previous year; the reduction was due to a much lower composting rate.

Overall, composting and food tonnage for the period was down by nearly 21% on the previous year. The garden waste service was suspended between 26 March 2020 and 12 May 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 and lack of resources to deliver the service. In addition, poorer weather conditions, in particular in August 2020 has also contributed to lower amounts of garden waste.

Conversely, dry recycling tonnage was over 16% higher than the previous year; and between December and February, the monthly dry recycling rate reached levels over 28%. The higher rate is likely to be due to Covid-19 restrictions and potentially the expansion of the dry recycling service.

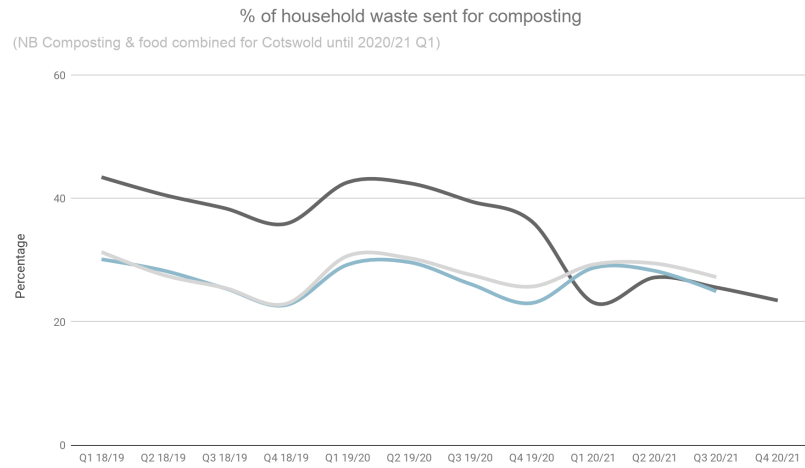
The dry recycling rate for the year was 25.83% (22.6% for the previous year), the re-use rate was 0.22%, and the composting and food rate was 32.64% (36.26% for previous year).

Notes:

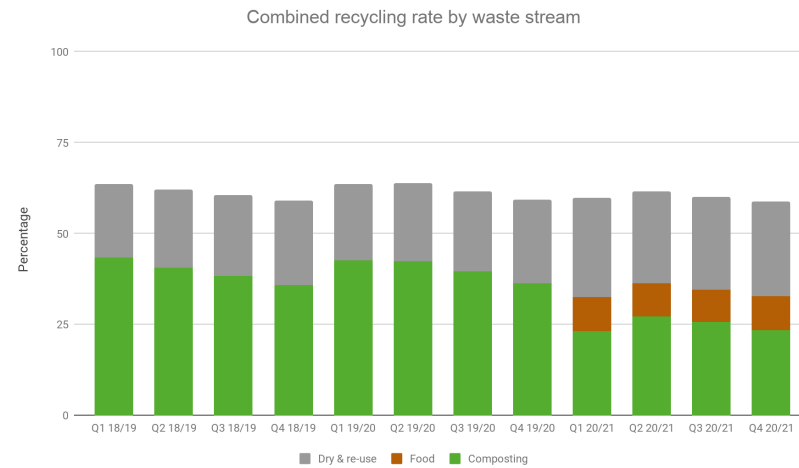
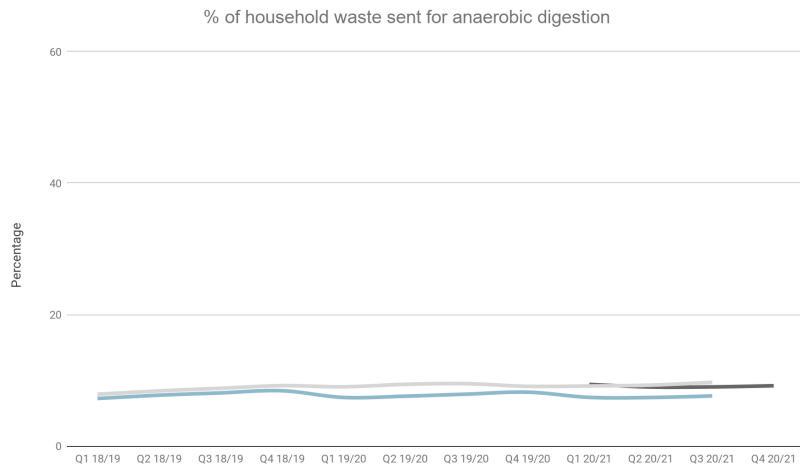
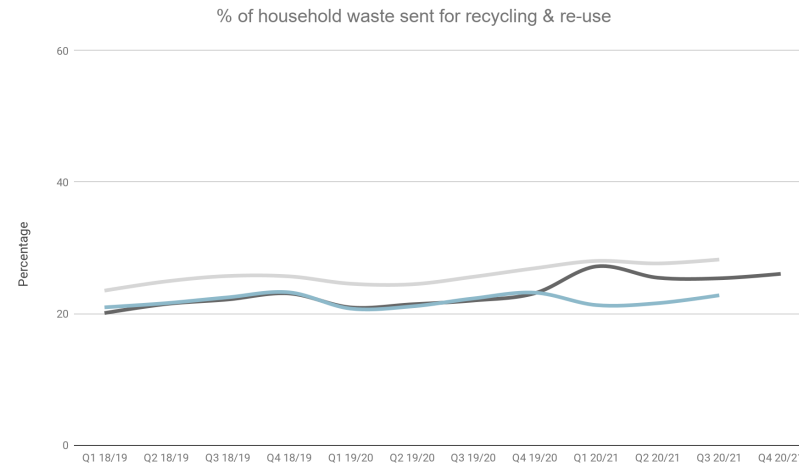
Composting and food waste was a single waste stream prior to 2020-21. The quarterly recycling targets are profiled to account for seasonal differences. The data is also presented cumulatively which will flatten out some of these differences

(Cumulative) Percentage of household waste recycled by waste stream

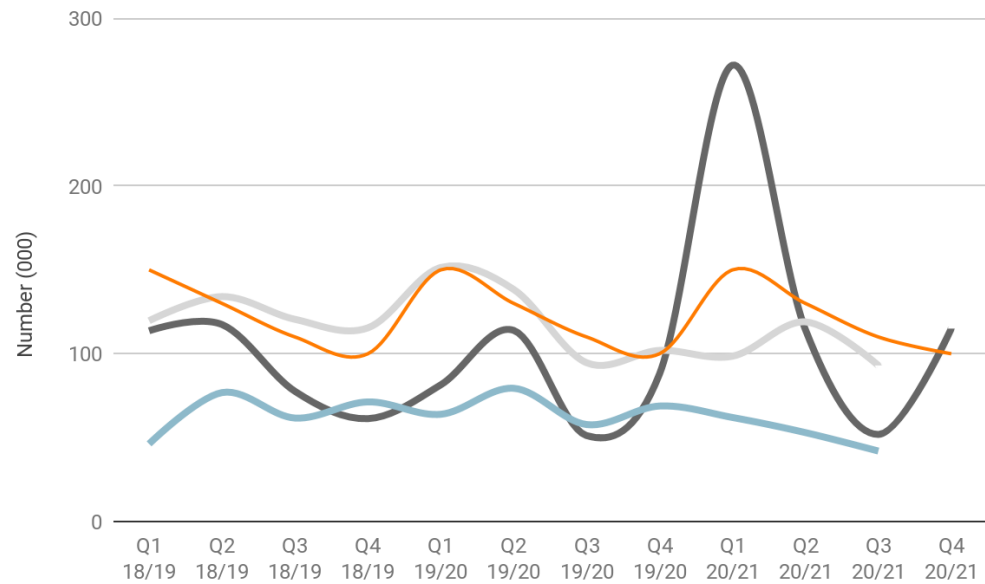
Cotswold
 Forest of Dean



West Oxfordshire



Number of missed bin per 100,000 scheduled collections



OBSERVATION:

As expected, the introduction of the new waste and recycling service on 18 March 2020 resulted in an increase in the number of missed collections in Q1 as residents and Ubico staff got used to the changes. Concurrently, there was an increase in the amount of waste being produced in particular dry recycling due to the large number of home-workers and others self-isolating or shielding, which in turn increased the number of missed collections and service failures.

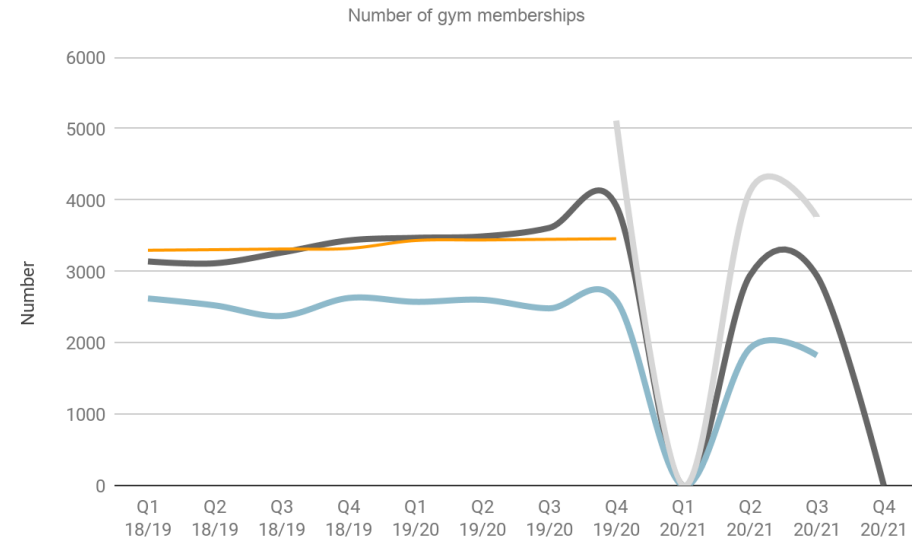
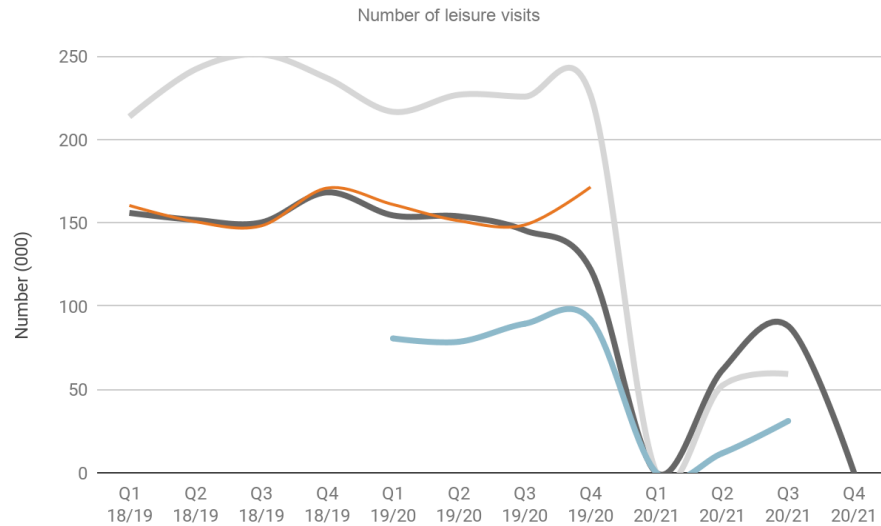
Mitigation work was completed to increase capacity on the collection vehicles and improve geographical knowledge of Ubico staff, which resulted in the numbers of missed collections returning to normal levels.

During Q4, there were issues related to capacity due to positive Covid-19 cases, and others working within the same bubble having to self-isolate. Other crew members and agency staff had to complete rounds that they were unfamiliar with, resulting in a higher number of misses.

In-cab technology was implemented on 7 April which is expected to reduce the number of missed bins over time

Leisure

Number of visits to the three leisure centres & (Snapshot) Number of gym memberships



OBSERVATION:

During the 2020/21, there have been three national lockdowns; March to June 2020, November 2020, and January to March 2021 which resulted in the closure of the Council's leisure facilities.

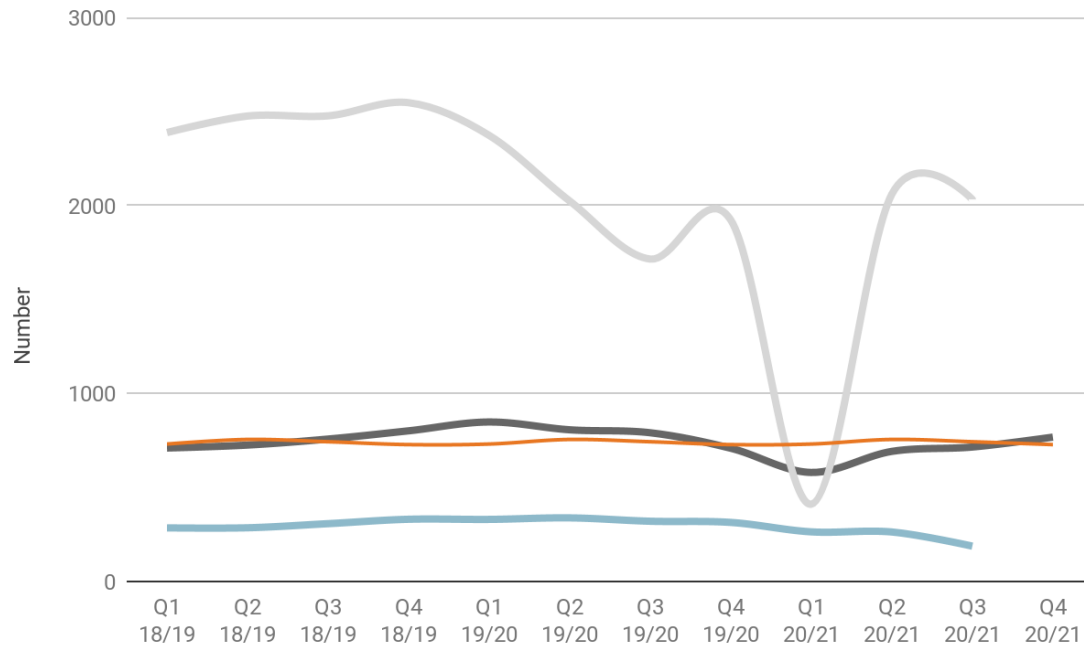
The Government set out the roadmap for 2021 for emerging out of the third lockdown which allowed leisure centres to re-open from 29 March (for outdoor activities with limited numbers and social distancing), followed by the return of indoor swimming and gym sessions from 12 April 2021. The current forecast is for a full return of all activities with no social restrictions from 21 June. The Council re-opened its three leisure facilities on 12 April and welcomed residents back safely.

During 2020/21, the Council has given financial support packages to leisure operators to ease cash flow issues. Some grant funding has also been available from the government to cover Council losses through waiving management fees. A further tranche of funding was made available through Sport England that was directly applied to covering costs that the leisure operators were experiencing in lockdown, and to support re-opening.

Note: Gym memberships were frozen during the first and third lockdowns. No targets were set for 2020-21

Parking

Total hours spent undertaking on and off-street parking enforcement visits



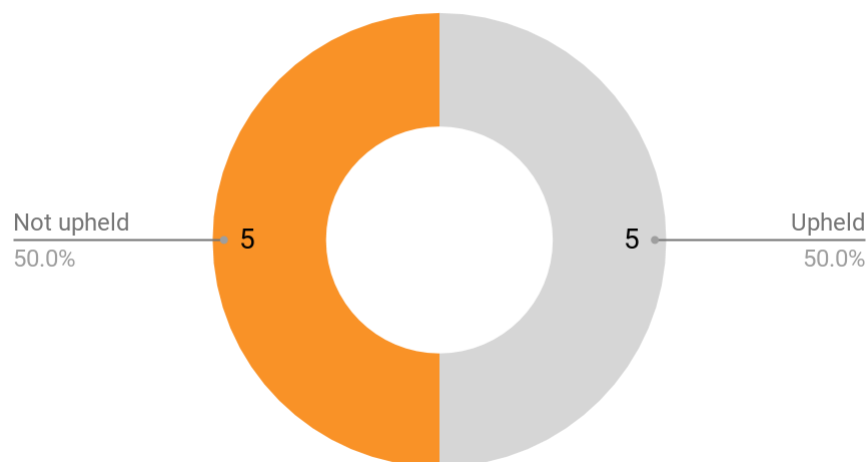
OBSERVATION:

Officers are undertaking their usual enforcement duties of regulating car parks, maintaining pay and display machines and replenishing tickets.

One part-time post (on contract) is being held vacant until usage levels increase

COMPLAINTS - ARE WE DOING THE 'DAY JOB' REALLY WELL FOR OUR COUNCILS?

Complaints decisions at Stage 2



OBSERVATION:

A new Customer Feedback Procedure went live on the 1st July 2020. The Corporate Responsibility team is managing all complaints allowing services to focus on delivery.

The new process has the following stages:

Stage 1: Acknowledgement and Assessment

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 3: Appeal

The complaints shown below only include upheld or partially upheld complaints

Service area	Description	Outcome/learning	Stage	Decision	Response time (days)
Revenues & Benefits	<p>Complainant unhappy with the Council Tax advice received, and the issuing of another Council Tax bill after the Council had been made aware that the house in question was under new ownership.</p> <p>The refund in Council Tax refund was not issued within 10 working days as stated in the communication with the complainant.</p>	<p>The investigation concluded that the Council had given the correct advice about the Council Tax query. However, the subsequent delay to proceedings due to the recent implementation of the new Revenues and Benefits system as well as the closure of offices over Christmas resulted in the issue of another Council Tax bill; an apology was offered.</p> <p>It was also acknowledged that there had been a delay in refunding the complainant due to the implementation of the new system; an apology was also offered. The refund has now been issued.</p>	II	Upheld	10
Development Management	Complainant unhappy with significant delay in obtaining a response to Freedom of Information (FOI) request.	It was found that the Council had failed to provide the required information within an acceptable time frame. The	II	Upheld	3

		<p>initial request was not processed by the Planning Technical and Enforcement Teams. It was acknowledged that this was an oversight due to home working. The Enforcement Officer provided the information when requested a second time, however it was further delayed due to advice being sought on data protection/confidentiality issues without any explanation given to the complainant. An apology was given and a payment of £75 was offered.</p> <p>To ensure there are no further occurrences, the Planning Technical Team has been advised of the correct procedure and monitoring controls</p>			
Revenues & Benefits	Complainant contacted the Council on several occasions to ask when they would receive Covid Business Grant payments, but received no response	An apology was offered for the lack of response, and payment was made to the complainant's account by the end of the following week	II	Upheld	11
Revenues & Benefits	Complainant had not received any acknowledgement of Council Tax support claim	There has been a significant increase in claims due to the pandemic which has resulted in a backlog of work and all applications have been taking significantly longer to process than normal. However, it was acknowledged that the amount of time that the complainant had been waiting was unacceptable	II	Upheld	9
Revenues & Benefits	Complainant unable to get a response from the Business Grant Team	An apology was offered; the complainant's case has been referred to the Business Manager for Operational Services for resolution	II	Upheld	2

