

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday 3 February 2026

A meeting of the above Committee will be held at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa on Tuesday 3 February 2026, at 6.00pm and available for the public to watch via the Warwick District Council [YouTube channel](#).

Councillor A Milton (Chair)
Councillor D Armstrong (Vice-Chair)

Councillor A Barton
Councillor A Day
Councillor K Dray
Councillor D Harrison
Councillor C Knight

Councillor P Kohler
Councillor M Luckhurst
Councillor J Payne
Councillor P Wightman

Emergency Procedure

At the commencement of the meeting, the emergency procedure for Town Hall will be announced.

Agenda

1. Apologies & Substitutes

- (a) to receive apologies for absence from any Councillor who is unable to attend; and
- (b) to receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, notice of which has been given to the Chief Executive, together with the name of the Councillor for whom they are acting.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare the existence and nature of interests in items on the agenda in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct.

Declarations should be disclosed during this item. However, the existence and nature of any interest that subsequently becomes apparent during the course of the meeting must be disclosed immediately. If the interest is not registered, Members must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

Members are also reminded of the need to declare predetermination on any matter.

If Members are unsure about whether or not they have an interest, or about its nature, they are strongly advised to seek advice from officers prior to the meeting.

3. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on:

- (a) 11 November 2025;

(Pages 1 to 5)

- (b) 25 November 2025; and **(Pages 1 to 10)**
- (c) 17 December 2025 **(Pages 1 to 2)**
4. **Work Programme, Forward Plan, & Comments from Cabinet**
To consider a report from Governance Services. **(Pages 1 to 9)**
5. **Quarter 3 Performance and Complaints Report**
To consider a report from Governance Services **(Pages 1 to 26)**
6. **Project Management Capacity & Capability**
To consider a report from the Strategic Director. **(Pages 1 to 9)**
7. **Cabinet Agenda – (Non-Confidential Items and Reports) – Thursday 5 February 2026**
To consider the non-confidential items on the Cabinet agenda which fall within the remit of this Committee. The only items to be considered are those which Committee Services have received notice of by 9.00am on the morning after Group meetings.
(Circulated separately)
8. **Public & Press**
To consider resolving that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
9. **Cabinet Agenda – (Confidential Items and Reports) – Thursday 5 February 2026**
To consider the confidential items on the Cabinet agenda which fall within the remit of this Committee. The only items to be considered are those which Committee Services have received notice of by 9.00am on the morning after Group meetings.
(Circulated separately)
(Not for publication)
10. **Confidential Appendix to Item 5 – Quarter 3 Performance and Complaints Report**
To consider the confidential appendix from Governance Services. **(Pages 1 to 3)**
(Not for publication)
11. **Confidential Appendix to Item 6 – Project Management Capacity & Capability**
To consider the confidential appendix from the Strategic Director. **(Pages 1 to 3)**
(Not for publication)

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For enquiries about specific reports, please contact the officers named in the reports. You can e-mail the members of the Committee at

standscommittee@warwickdc.gov.uk

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 November 2025 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Milton (Chair), Armstrong, Barton, Dray, Harrison, Knight, Kohler, Luckhurst, Payne, Redford, and P Wightman.

Also Present: Councillors Davison and Melrose.

Officers: Chris Elliott – Chief Executive, Darren Knight – Deputy Chief Executive, Graham Leach – Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, Dale Duffy – Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager, and Patricia Tuckwell – Civic and Committee Services Manager.

42. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- a) no apologies were received; and
- b) Councillor Redford substituted for Councillor Day.

43. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made

44. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 October 2025 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

45. **Budget Review Group Minutes**

The minutes of the Budget Review Group Minutes held on 15 October 2025 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

46. **Work Programme, Forward Plan, & Comments from Cabinet**

The Committee considered a report from Governance Services which informed Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the Committee's work programme for 2025-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and sought confirmation of approach of a number of areas in respect of that work plan.

Resolved that the work programme attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

47. **Quarter 2 Performance and complaints**

The Committee considered a briefing paper from Governance Services which set out the 2025/26 Quarter 2 (Q2) Performance Report for Warwick District Council against the measures/targets included within the adopted Service Area Plans (SAPs). The report also contained an overview of complaints received during Q2 of 2025/26.

The Performance report was a key tool in helping the Council demonstrate the services it was providing are performing. The performance report focused on the measures within the SAPs and if they were achieving the expected level of performance. The commentary provided by officers against those measures which were below the expected level enabled an understanding of the reasons for this and if there was a need for further investigation.

The Committee were reminded that for performance management this year those marked with a Target (T) highlighted either a regulatory or statutory target for the Council. These would be the primary focus for the Committee in ensuring that they were being achieved and where they were not, they were satisfied with the proposed actions for achieving them within a set period.

The report provided an overview of the measures within the approved SAPs for 2025/26 with a focus on those that were either in red or amber status. The status was defined within the specific measure on expected performance. The report also provided details of measures where the "Measure/Target trending down for at least two consecutive quarters".

Not all measures were reported on within the report, but all could be found, along with full SAPs on the WDC Business Intelligence Portal, the link to which had been circulated separately to all Councillors.

Also available, via the Business Intelligence Portal, were the major projects list, the significant risk register (which was reported to both Cabinet and Audit & Standards Committee), and procurement activity setting out current and upcoming procurement activity. The links to which had been circulated separately to all Councillors.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet had agreed to the development of two-year SAPs which would cover financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. This would ensure the Council could focus on delivering statutory services and key projects before forming part of a Unitary Authority in April 2028 as part of the Local Government Reorganisation programme.

The Complaints report contained analysis of complaint handling at Stage 1, Stage 2 of the Council's complaints process, and the current position of cases raised by tenants with the Housing Ombudsman. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) did not have a portal where officers could view their open cases. The Council's Link Officer received notification emails when complaints were raised with the LGSCO – one LGSCO case was raised in Q2, the decision was not to investigate but a recommendation was made that the Council should ensure compensation offered in a Stage 1 complaint was paid to the complainant. The Council complied with this recommendation on time.

Complaints could be refused for a variety of reasons and the Council's complaints databases had been developed to begin accurately recording these reasons.

The Housing Service Area received the highest proportion of Stage 1 complaints in Q2 (110 out of 130, 84%) and roughly half of these (54 out of 110, 49%) related to Repairs. A further quarter (26 out of 110, 23%) related to Housing Advice and Allocations. These trends continued through Stage 2 complaints with Housing receiving the highest percentage (22 out of 26, 84%)

of Stage 2 complaints. Repairs was still the most common cause for complaint (7 out of 22, 32%) followed by Asset Management (5 out of 22, 23%) and Housing Advice & Allocations (4 out of 22, 18%).

The Policy, Performance & Complaints Manager would begin monthly meetings with Housing's Business Support & Customer Engagement Manager and Customer Services Team Leader. These meetings would focus on reviewing Housing related Stage 2 complaints and any disparity between the investigations at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints process. Any learning points highlighted would be adopted to improve the Council's complaint handling.

In answer to Members questions, the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager, the Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive, and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership explained that:

- there was a complaint case that the Ombudsman had had open since July 2023 and had still not assigned an investigating officer;
- the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager would confirm with officers that the recommendations and actions of this historic case had been completed and would update Committee Members, by email in due course;
- WDC did not have a significant number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman;
- when the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigated a complaint they had conversations with officers throughout their investigation to ensure they understood the facts;
- the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman sent WDC the draft decision before the final decision for review, whereas the Housing Ombudsman just sent the final decision with little engagement;
- the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager would obtain the rationale for the red status on the '% appeal decisions in accordance with WDC decision' measure/target, and circulate the response with Committee Members;
- the draft performance report was shared with the senior leadership team to ask for the rationale for the measures that were highlighted red;
- the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were encouraged to invite the members of the Senior Leadership Team to future Committee meetings where the rationale for measures highlighted red had not been given;
- during quarter 2 there had been a significant drop in resources available, which had contributed to the poor performance to responding to stage 2 complaints;
- staff had now been trained in processing stage 2 complaints;
- during quarter 2 staff were receiving, on average, 10 stage 2 complaints per week;
- there would be a significant improvement in the performance to respond to stage 2 complaints in quarter 3;
- a meeting was held every Friday to discuss stage 2 complaints and how WDC were performing;
- it was hoped that the additional resources would be made permanent, which would inevitably impact on performance in quarter 4, whilst WDC recruited and trained for these posts;
- the quality of the stage 1 complaint investigations, in some areas, were poor, and this had contributed to the length of time to investigate the stage 2 complaint;

- some of the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager's time to investigate stage 2 complaints had been freed up to provide stage 1 complaint training to officers. This was important to improve the quality of stage 1 complaint investigation, which would subsequently result in fewer stage 2 complaints;
- part of the complaint process involved the investigating officer emailing the complainant listing what they considered the complaint to be and offering the complainant a telephone call to discuss further;
- if a telephone call with the complainant took place it was then followed up with another email confirming the points raised on the call;
- during the complaint process, if it became apparent that officers and service areas could implement change before the complaint was resolved, they would;
- as of 7 October 2025, there was only one stage 2 complaint that had not met the target to respond, which was a particularly complex case, involving many departments;
- there was full support from the Chief Executive and the Cabinet for the additional resources to manage complaints, to meet the increased demand;
- respective Heads of Service were responsible for reviewing and improving the performance targets and measures highlighted red;
- there was not a generic criterion for the red, amber, green (rag) rating for performance targets, there were individual tolerances set against each of the measure within the service area plans;
- the housing performance targets were a priority;
- there was a table missing from the report which set out the outstanding complaints highlighted red from the last report with progress made. This would be circulated to Committee Members in due course;
- previously not all complaints had been forwarded to the Complaints Team. This would be mitigated in future through use of a customer relationship management (CRM) system;
- details of the timeline for the CRM complaints roll out would be shared with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in February 2026, when quarter 3 performance was reported;
- the increase in housing complaints had ultimately increased the number of stage 2 complaints;
- the housing anti-social behaviour policy was being reviewed and would be going to Cabinet for approval; and
- the housing anti-social behaviour policy would run in parallel with the wider WDC anti-social behaviour policy, which would be going to Cabinet at the same time.

The Chair shared his concerns that the Policy, Performance and Complaints Manager was not being provided with the information necessary from the Senior Leadership Team in order to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a complete report.

The Chair also asked that the Head of Place, Arts, and Economy provide an update on the time taken to determine major planning applications at the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting. The target was 65 days; however, the time taken was currently 231 days. The Committee would like to know the causes for this.

Resolved that the report and appendices be noted.

48. **Cabinet Agenda Item 3 – Local Government Re-Organisation –
Wednesday 12 November 2025**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for the report.

The Committee recognised that this was a complex process and identified some key areas to focus its debate around: process; strategic authorities; strengthening the case for two unitary authorities; and democratic representation.

On the topic of process, Members wanted to be clear on what needed to happen before the submission taking place on 28 November, and that the key criteria were set out by the Government. Members noted the timelines and that these were tight but were satisfied that the proper process has been outlined by officers. The Committee particularly wanted to highlight the need to look at the staffing resources required for the investment and replanning of the work required.

In regard to strategic authorities, the Committee encouraged more work to happen quickly on the potential options, noting that there had not been a lot of progress to date in this area, and it did not want to run the risk of potentially running out of options. Members asked that steps should be taken to ensure the future of the West Midlands Investment Zone and received assurance on this front from the Chief Executive.

In terms of the unitarisation, the Committee supported the case for two unitary authorities, particularly recognising the two distinct areas that exist within Warwickshire. The Committee recommended to Cabinet to include some content around the 1974 reorganisation and also the difference in the housing market to do with that.

And finally, the Committee looked at democratic representation and asked Cabinet to recognise the need for a realistic assessment of what would be required of the new Councillors, ensuring this will be a sustainable option for the new Members.

The Committee was mindful of the concerns from some Parish/Town Councils that they would have services put upon them by a new unitary Council without funding from that Council to deliver the service. While this would not be the case, as the Parish/Town would need to agree to take on the service, there was a risk to the principle of LGR, of providing clear accountability for service delivery (of a single Council compared to two (which overlooks that there are three tiers in Warwick District at present)), if services were delivered by Parish/Town Councils, especially where some of those Councils may not chose to take the service on.

(The meeting ended at 8.10pm.)

CHAIR
3 February 2025

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 November 2025 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Milton (Chair), Armstrong, Barton, Day, Dray, Kennedy, Knight, Kohler, Luckhurst, Payne, and P Wightman.

Also Present: Councillors Boad, Chilvers, Davison, King, and Melrose.

Officers: Darren Knight – Deputy Chief Executive, Patricia Tuckwell– Civic and Committee Services Manager, Thomas Holness – Climate Change Projects and Delivery Officer, Graham Folkes-Skinner – Climate Change Team Leader, Gary Fisher – Development Manager, Andrew Cornfoot – Planning Policy & Major Sites Delivery Manager, Phil Clarke – Head of Place, Arts and Economy, Pam Chilvers – Bereavement Services Development Manager, Zoe Court – Head of Neighbourhood, and Steven Leathley – Strategic Finance Manager.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the importance of asking pre-scrutiny questions and the process around calling Cabinet items into scrutiny.

49. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- a) no apologies were received; and
- b) Councillor Kennedy substituted for Councillor Harrison.

50. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made

51. **Housing Five-Year Housing Land Supply**

The Committee considered a briefing paper from the Head of Place, Arts and Economy which provided Members with information relating to the Council's current situation in respect of its housing land supply. The Council did not currently have a five-year supply of housing land (5YHLS), and this was relevant because it impacted on how the Council should consider certain planning applications which would come before the Council. This matter also had workload, financial, and potentially reputational issues for the Council.

The briefing note explained what a five-year land supply was and why it was important; what factors impacted on a Council's land supply situation; Warwick District Council's current housing and land supply situation; and what it could do to address the lack of a five-year land supply in the future.

In terms of changes to improve performance, the most significant change that could assist the Council's housing land supply position was the adoption of the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP). Other reports were being prepared for Councillors' consideration on this matter. The first of these would be the revisions to the timetable for the South Warwickshire Local Plan which would be considered by the Joint Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 18 December 2025.

More immediately, another measure which would assist the determination of planning applications was a reduction in the time taken to receive comments from consultees. Officers would continue to work with other organisations and agencies, including Warwickshire County Council, to seek to expedite these technical responses.

A further change which would speed up decision making was to extend the current scheme of delegation to officers. The proposed national scheme of delegation was likely also to achieve this, but WDC could amend its scheme of delegation before the national scheme came into effect, if it so chose.

The Committee thanked officers for the comprehensive report.

The Head of Place, Arts and Economy introduced the report and reminded Members that should questions arise after the meeting, they could contact officers to receive advice on this matter.

In answer to questions from Members, the Head of Place, Arts and Economy, the Development Manager, and the Planning Policy and Major Sites Delivery Manager advised that:

- when the current Local Plan was adopted, the Council estimated 1,800 dwellings could be achieved at the King's Hill site during the life of the current Local Plan. Although planning permission had been granted, the site had not progressed, and this did take a significant proportion of the deficit. The Council was doing all it could to encourage the site to come forward, working with Warwickshire County Council, Coventry City Council, and the developer to overcome some of the technical issues, as well as Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England;
- the Council was unlikely to achieve its five-year land supply before the adoption of the new South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP);
- when the new Local Plan was examined by the Inspector, it would have to prove that it had a five-year supply of deliverable sites. The plan would not be found to be sound without this, and it was important to ensure sufficient supply was available for the life of the Plan;
- when considering Planning applications, due to the tilted balance and lack of five-year housing land supply, there were conditions which could be imposed which wouldn't otherwise. These were around restricting the life of an application and the delivery plan, to encourage the applicants to bring the scheme forward quicker;
- the tilted balance, which needed to be applied in considering planning applications whilst there was a lack of five-year housing land supply provision, meant that there were some scenarios where the principle of development would be considered acceptable when normally, this might not have been the case;
- a significant number of other local authorities found themselves in the same position;
- in terms of lessons learnt, one was the importance of having a range of sites of different sizes, some of which could come forward in a shorter timeframe;
- the Council was supporting sites in a number of ways, including through the provision of site delivery officers;

- in the summer, the Government had announced a technical consultation on the operation of Planning Committees, with elements around training, size, and the proposal to significantly extend the delegations to officers. Currently, each Council could set its own delegations, but the Government was proposing a national scheme instead. The Head of Place, Arts and Economy would circulate the consultation and this Council's submission to it;
- in terms of the Housing Delivery Test, this was an annual calculation from the Government to measure housing delivery, which was last published a year ago. Should the Council's score fall below 100% in future years, there would be consequences, one of which being that WDC would need to produce a Housing Delivery Action Plan;
- granted sites which had not come forward yet would count towards the Council's commitment;
- in relation questions raised by Councillor Boad, Chair of the Planning Committee, prior to the meeting, the Head of Place, Arts and Economy would circulate specific guidance from legal services on how to consider applications within the Green Belt in the current situation after the meeting;
- land could only be taken out of the Green Belt through the Local Plan setting process;
- further training would be provided to Members of the Planning Committee in light of recent applications which came forward for consideration;
- it was important that when applications were refused, Members needed to be comfortable with the strength of the reasons for refusal, so that the Council could defend its position in appeal cases, which, in turn, should also minimise costs to the Council;
- officers' working assumption was that the King's Hill site would be delivered, despite it taking longer than expected, and decisions around what sites were to be included in the SWLP had yet to be taken;
- a previous appeal by Cala Homes helped the Council identify that it did not have its five-year housing land supply and since then, the Planning Committee had been advised accordingly by officers; and
- in terms of the impact of the Local Government re-organisation, officers' expectation was that if and when this would happen, that a whole new authority would be the basis for new calculations.

In reference to Section 5.3 in the report and with residents in mind, Councillors Day and Milton were keen to ensure every effort was made to move applications forward speedily. Councillor Milton agreed to write to the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Place asking for the current delegations to officers to be reviewed, and for the provision in the national scheme to be brought forward quicker.

Resolved that

- (1) the briefing paper be noted;
- (2) the national consultation on the planning reform as well as the Council's response to it be circulated to Members by the Head of Place, Arts and Economy;
- (3) legal advice regarding the application of the tilted balance for applications in the Green Belt be

provided to all Councillors by the Head of Place, Arts and Economy. Members asked for the advice itself, alongside a short briefing for Members; and

- (4) the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to write to the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Place asking for the current delegations to officers to be reviewed, and for the provision in the national scheme to be brought forward quicker.

52. **Bereavement Services Performance Update**

The Committee considered a briefing paper from Neighbourhood Services which provided an update in regard to the underperformance of Bereavement Services in the 2024/2025 Quarter 3 budget report to Cabinet on 19 March 2025.

Bereavement services were part of the Neighbourhood Services Portfolio, managing Oakley Wood Crematorium, Oakley Wood natural woodland burial area, Royal Leamington Spa Cemetery, Warwick Cemetery, Kenilworth Cemetery, and Old Milverton Cemetery.

The service kept and maintained statutory burial and grave ownership registers and plans dating from 1859. Statutory cremation registers for Oakley Wood date from 1972. Records prior to 1993 were manual ledgers kept at Oakley Wood in fireproof safes.

The natural woodland burial area at Oakley Wood was opened in 2008. There were strict rules enforced to ensure burials had a minimal impact on the natural biodiversity of the ancient woodland. Only single burial was permitted; coffins had to be natural and biodegradable, for example, wicker or wool. There were no headstones. There were 480 graves plotted out in the woodland, however, there were only around 10 or so burials each year so this area was expected to last for more than 50 years based on the current demand.

Kenilworth was the only cemetery where the chapel was still in use. There were approximately 4,500 graves, but most were used. A new section had been plotted out with 350 graves, based on current demand this would last approximately 10 years. The cremated remains section had plenty of room.

Royal Leamington Spa cemetery had two disused chapels; they were currently being used for equipment storage. There are approximately 25,000 graves, most were used. There were two newer sections, one lawn section where headstones only could be erected on preinstalled concrete plinths, the other offering the opportunity to have a full traditional memorial with headstone and kerb surrounds. These newer sections were expected to last 10 – 12 years. The existing section for cremated remains was reviewed each year due to an adjacent badger sett. There was a large area in the newer part of the cemetery that was unsuitable for full burial, this could be used for cremated remains graves and would provide at least 50 years' worth of new ashes graves. There was additional land, designated for cemetery use, currently being used as allotments.

Warwick cemetery was approaching being full and did not have any room to expand. There were fewer than 150 new graves available for full body burial. Based on current demand they might last approximately five years. It would still be possible to re-open family graves. There was plenty of room for cremated remains graves.

Milverton cemetery was full, however, two tarmac paths had been removed and restored to turf. It would be possible to create additional cremated remains graves on those back-filled paths.

Cemetery fees and charges were increased by 200% for non-resident burials to mitigate the limited space being available for residents of Warwick District. The non-resident fee policy would be reviewed and programmed into the forward plan for a decision in early 2026. The Bereavement Services Team were a small team with 10 members of staff delivering burial and cremation services, they were based at Oakley Wood crematorium.

Service area measures were extended in 2024 to include percentage market share. This compared the number of burials undertaken to the number of deaths in Warwick District and the number of cremations taking place compared to the number of deaths in Warwickshire.

Generally deceased people requiring burial would be buried in the town or District where they lived, however, there might be requirements due to religious belief, desire for a less traditional burial than is offered in a municipal cemetery, or desire to be reunited in their hometown. For this reason, the market share calculations for burial were based on the Warwick District death registration.

The choice of cremation venue was influenced by several factors; priorities would differ for each individual funeral. For those having a funeral ceremony or wanting to attend the service of committal convenience of location was an important consideration, this might explain why many people who lived in Kenilworth might choose to be cremated at Canley crematorium in Coventry, and why many people who lived in Stratford-upon-Avon which was not in the District choose Oakley Wood. People were generally more geographically mobile. Being able to choose a convenient day and time for those travelling was often an important consideration. Where there was no ceremony, such as in the case of a direct cremation location became less important; price appeared to be one of the driving factors.

In recent years WDC had seen increased competition from new crematoria opening nearby.

The bereavement landscape was evolving, provisional figures for 2024 indicated that nationally 82.6% of people were cremated. The first British crematorium opened in Surrey in 1885, by the time of the Cremation Act 1902 there were eight crematoria, but cremation was not popular. In 1932 still only 1% of funerals were cremation, by 1947 this increased to 10%. Oakley Wood was built in 1971 and was the 207th crematorium by which time 52% of funerals were cremations. There were now 336 crematoria in the British Isles.

In 2014, a joint committee of Rugby BC and West Northamptonshire Council opened Rainsbrook Crematorium. They carried out 576 cremations in the first year; to end of 2024 they had carried out 10,234 cremations.

The Westerleigh Group, a private operator with over 40 crematoria nationally opened The Vale crematorium bordering Pershore and Evesham in December 2018. They carried out 43 cremations that year; to the end of 2024 they had carried out 8,982 cremations.

Comparison of cremation numbers (by calendar year) for Oakley Wood and neighbouring crematoria could be found at Appendix 1 to the report.

There was growing demand for "direct" cremation. The deceased was collected from the place where they passed away to a funeral directors mortuary facility, they were placed into a coffin and taken directly to the crematorium, there was no ceremony, and no mourners were present; the cremation took place and then cremated remains were returned to the family or scattered. National statistics indicate around 20% of cremations that took place in 2024 were direct cremations.

Pure Cremation, an external third party, were marketing direct cremations nationally, the deceased person was taken into their care from anywhere in the UK, cremated at one of the Pure Cremation crematoria and cremated remains returned to the family for private disposal as desired.

Corporately owned and cooperative funeral directors with branches in the District were offering fixed price direct cremation as a bundled package. The date, time, and venue were chosen by the funeral director.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) information for deaths registered by area of usual residence indicated that in 2024 there were 6,155 deaths for Warwickshire County, of which 1,354 resided in Warwick District. Additional ONS data was set out in Appendix 6 to the report.

As a discretionary service providing surplus to the Council's general fund, Bereavement Services were challenged to ensure income maximisation.

Fees & Charges were reviewed each year, with due regard to the targets issued by finance, in accordance with the Financial Strategy and Code of Financial Practice, specifically considering:- The level of prices the market could bear and including comparisons with neighbouring and other local authorities (examples of the benchmarking comparisons for 2025 could be found in Appendix 2 to the report).

Since 2020 the standard adult cremation fee at Oakley Wood had increased by 43.75%. The Bank of England inflation calculator, which used Consumer Price Index (CPI) data from the Office of National Statistics indicated the change in value over the same period is 27.8%. – Historical price data was set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) final report issued in 2020 found that the markets for funeral directors and crematoria were not functioning well. A legally binding Funeral Market Investigation order was introduced in 2021. Although they stated that the Covid-19 pandemic severely restricted the CMA's ability to design and calibrate all the remedies that it might otherwise have introduced under more normal circumstances, the 2025 annual outcomes report confirmed they were not considering further measures at this point in time.

In 2024 an external review of fees & charges was undertaken by Commercial Gov, who provided support and expertise to public sector organisations to help develop commercial growth. Their conclusion was that there was not a lot of wriggle room as the fees were already right near the top of benchmarking comparators both with other Councils and private sector competitors. There was only one possibility indicated, to increase the grant of Exclusive Right of Burial from 50 years to 60 years as a means of increasing the price, however, this was flagged by them as likely to have a negative reaction from the public and funeral directors. It was therefore not put forward as a recommendation for the fees and charges. Comparisons for this were set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

In February 2025 the South chapel at Oakley Wood developed a leaking roof, the chapel had to be closed for eight weeks, whilst repairs were carried out. This resulted in a loss of income estimated in the region of £72,000 to £84,000. Calculations for the impact of the closure were set out in Appendix 5 to the report.

Popularity for book of remembrance entries and other "on-site" cremation memorials was in decline. This might be partly attributed to the increasing numbers of cremated remains that were removed from the crematorium for private disposal rather than being scattered in the woodland gardens of remembrance, coupled with lack of aggressive marketing for memorial options.

Live streaming and visual tributes were introduced into the North and South chapels at Oakley Wood in 2023 following the installation of fibre broadband, this provision continued to grow in popularity.

Bereavement Services were working with internal colleagues in the Marketing and Media team to improve existing promotional and marketing literature.

The Marketing and Media team were also assisting with redesigning the web pages. An initial proposal to develop a completely stand-alone website was considered; however, improvement packages for the existing Warwick District Council website had recently been agreed. These improvements would modernise the whole website themes, providing more design options.

The new web pages would then be migrated to the new themes and would have the illusion of being a separate website. It was anticipated the web pages would be live in quarter 2 of 2026. The designs of the new web pages would aid customers who were seeking information and would offer memorials and other items in a more attractive setting.

The advantages of using the same website platform were lower initial costs and avoiding additional fees for hosting or ongoing maintenance. It would be easier to update and ensure high accessibility standards were maintained.

Further developments and opportunities being considered were set out in the Confidential Appendix 7 to this report.

In answer to Members questions, the Bereavement Services Development Manager, the Deputy Chief Executive, and the Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that:

- it was difficult to give a factual answer to the reason why Dignity Crematorium in Nuneaton maintained market share when they were one of the most expensive, given they were a private operator;
- WDC crematorium staff did not have a similar relationship with Dignity Crematorium that they did with other local authority crematoriums;
- it was difficult to forecast an annual income prediction before the end of quarter 3;
- the crematorium did not operate at 100% capacity;
- the crematorium was serviced quarterly;
- the south crematorium roof had been fixed, however, there were issues with the north crematorium roof;
- the motivation for the 'Friends of Oakley Woods' was the wider woodland not the crematorium itself or bereavement services;
- crematorium staff worked closely with staff from the Council's green spaces department;
- the high level of service provided at Oakley Wood Crematorium had been recognised nationally;
- staff would consider how WDC would prioritise any planned investment into the crematorium;
- there was room for improvement with the crematorium services listed on the website;
- there were proposals to change the bereavement services themes on the website;
- once the changes to the website had been completed, staff would talk Committee Members through the changes;
- there had been an increase in demand for cremations without a ceremony following covid;
- there had been a change in attitudes toward funerals, following Covid and high-profile personalities requesting cremation without ceremony;
- there had not been a business case written as yet in relation to replacing the crematoria in five years, however, it was possible to repair the crematoria as opposed to replacing it. Closer to the end of the crematoria's life span, the Council would need to write a business case and consider fuel sources available; and
- there would be another crematorium open day, during 'Dying Matters' week, in May 2026. Committee Members were welcome to attend.

The Committee thanked the Bereavement Services Development Manager for the report and the Bereavement Services Team for the important work that they do.

The Chair suggested Cabinet and the Deputy Chief Executive, as part of the change programme, reflect on the investment opportunities needed to secure a wider market share, given the annual numbers of cremations at Dignity Crematorium, and the significant impact bereavement services had on income for WDC.

Resolved that the report and appendices, be noted.

53. **Work Programme, Forward Plan, & Comments from Cabinet**

The Committee considered a report from Governance Services which informed Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the Committee's work programme for 2025-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and sought confirmation of approach of a number of areas in respect of that work plan.

Cabinet item 24, Disposal of 1 Warwick Street had not been called in to Overview & Scrutiny, however, the Chair requested that this be added as an agenda item to the work programme and for this to be discussed in public session.

Project Management Capacity & Capability was listed on the work programme as an agenda item at Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 3 February 2026. The Chair asked that this report incorporated a lessons learned exercise in relation to Cabinet item 22, Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project.

Resolved that the work programme attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

54. **Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 27 November 2025**

The Committee considered the following non-confidential items which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet:

Item 12 – Q2 Budget Update 2025/26

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked officers for the report and emphasised the importance of the Homelessness Strategy, given the impact of that line of work onto the Council's finances.

Item 9 – Subsidy Control

(The Committee entered confidential session, at 7.48pm, during this item, excluding the public and press from the meeting. Public session was resumed, at 8.14pm, to conclude final comment for Cabinet.)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee spent time discussing the current situation with the proposed tenant and asked officers to deliver the scheme quickly and legally with all parties concerned, recognising that this is an important part of the creative quarter vision.

Item 15 - Low-Cost Loan Scheme for Private Domestic Retrofit

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognised why the scheme was coming forward and the outcomes it is trying to achieve. However, Members had significant concerns about the lack of a full business case being submitted, sensitivity allowance and calculation of climate benefits trying to be achieved. Whilst comfortable for the work to continue to go ahead on the scheme, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends that a further, appropriately detailed report should be brought forward to Cabinet before any commitment to finance the scheme is made.

Cabinet is required to vote on this item because it is a recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

55. **Public & Press**

The public and press were not excluded from the meeting again, as the Committee did not need to consider the confidential items on the agenda.

56. **Cabinet Agenda (Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 27 November 2025**

There were no confidential items considered.

57. **Confidential Appendix to Minute Number 52 – Bereavement Services Update**

The confidential appendix was not considered.

(The meeting ended at 8.37pm.)

CHAIR
3 February 2025

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 December 2025 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa, at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillors Milton (Chair), Armstrong, Barton, Day, Dray, Harrison, Knight, Kohler, Luckhurst, Payne, and P Wightman.

Also Present: Councillors Falp, Davison, King, Sinnott.

Officers: Darren Knight – Deputy Chief Executive, Sophie Barbalau Principal Committee Services Officer, Zoe Court – Head of Neighbourhood Services, Phil Clarke – Head of Place, Arts and Economy, and Stephen Stray – South Warwickshire Local Plan Team Leader.

58. **Apologies and Substitutes**

There were no apologies for absence or substitutes.

59. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

60. **Joint Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 18 December 2025**

The Committee considered the following non-confidential item, which would be discussed at the meeting of the Joint Cabinet:

Item – 5 - Warwickshire Local Plan – Revised Timetable

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee highlighted the significant risk that the Local Plan presented to both Warwick District and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils. They requested that officers look at creative ways (including the use of AI) to mitigate potential delays to timescales whilst maintaining quality and placed emphasis on the importance of 'active travel'. The Committee encouraged the political leadership of the Councils to be active in lobbying government ministers for flexibility to ensure that this process can be successfully delivered.

61. **Work Programme, Forward Plan, & Comments from Cabinet**

The Committee considered a report from Governance Services which informed Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the Committee's work programme for 2025-2026, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, and sought confirmation of approach of a number of areas in respect of that work plan.

Resolved that the work programme attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

62. **Cabinet Agenda (Non-Confidential items and reports) – Thursday 18 December 2025**

The Committee considered the following non-confidential item, which would be discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet:

Item 5 – Sports & Leisure Team Resources and Grants

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee explored the concerns that Members had regarding changes to the scheme and encouraged officers to bring a report back to the Committee in 12 months' time to provide updated figures on funding delivered within the District.

63. **Public & Press**

The public and press were not excluded from the meeting as the Committee did not need to consider the confidential appendix that was listed on the agenda.

64. **Confidential Appendix to item 3 – South Warwickshire Local Plan _ Revised Timetable**

The confidential appendix was not considered.

(The meeting ended at 7.26pm.)

CHAIR
3 February 2025

Overview & Scrutiny Committee
3 February 2026

Title: Work Programme, Forward Plan & Comments from Cabinet
Lead Officer: Graham Leach, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer
Portfolio Holder: Not applicable
Public report
Wards of the District directly affected: Not applicable

Summary

This report informs Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the Committee's work programme for 2025-2026 (Appendix 1) and seeks confirmation of approach of a number of areas in respect of that work plan.

Recommendations

- (1) That Members consider the work programme (Appendix 1), the themes the Committee intends to scrutinise this year and agree changes to its Work Programme appropriately.
 - (2) That the Committee:
 - identifies any Cabinet items on the [Forward Plan](#) on which it wishes to have an input before the Cabinet makes its decision; and
 - nominates a Member to investigate that future decision and report back to the Committee.
-

1 Background/Information & Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 The five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are: holding to account; performance management; policy review; policy development; and external scrutiny.
- 1.2 Two of the five main roles of overview and scrutiny in local government are to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions and to feed into policy development.
- 1.3 The pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions falls within the role of 'holding to account'. To feed into the pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions, the Committee needs to examine the Council's Forward Plan and identify items which it would like to have an impact upon.
- 1.4 The Council's Forward Plan is published 28 days before each Cabinet meeting and sets out the key decisions that are expected to be taken by the Cabinet in the next twelve months.

1.5 A key decision means a decision made in the exercise of an executive function by any person (including officers) or body which meets one or more of the following conditions:

- (1) The decision is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure or the making of savings in excess of £150,000. Excluded from this are all loans to banks or other financial institutions made in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy.

Officers' delegated powers to make the cabinet decisions are subject to the key decision/call-in regime where it is likely that the Council would incur expenditure or make savings above the threshold of £150,000.

In relation to letting contracts the key decision is the proposal to let a contract for a particular type of work. The subsequent decision to award the contract to a specific contractor will not be a key decision provided the value of the contract does not vary above the estimated amount by more than 10% for contracts with a value of up to £500,000 or 5% for contracts of over £500,000.

- (2) The decision is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in any two or more Wards.

In considering whether a decision is likely to be significant, a decision-maker will need to consider the strategic nature of the decision and whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the Council to a significant number of people living or working in the locality affected.

1.6 The Forward Plan is considered at each meeting and allows the Committee to look at future items and become involved in those Cabinet decisions to be taken if members so wish.

1.7 The Forward Plan also identifies non-key decisions to be taken by Cabinet in the next twelve months, and the Committee, if it wishes, may also pre-scrutinise these decisions.

1.8 There may also be policies identified on the Forward Plan, either as key or non-key decisions, which the Committee could pre-scrutinise and have an impact upon how these are formulated.

1.9 The Committee should be mindful that any work it wishes to undertake would need to be undertaken without the need to change the timescales as set out within the Forward Plan.

1.10 At each meeting, the Committee will consider its work programme and make amendments where necessary, and also make comments on specific Cabinet items, where notice has been given by 9am on the morning after Group meetings. The Committee will also receive a report detailing the response from the Cabinet, on the comments the Committee made on the Cabinet agenda in the previous cycle.

Agenda Item 4

- 1.11 The Committee will consider issues that have due significance with reference to the following criteria:
- The number of residents impacted and the significance of that impact.
 - The amount of spend involved.
 - It concerns a strategic priority of the Council or key project.
- 1.12 On the day of publication of the Cabinet agenda all Councillors are sent an e-mail asking them to contact Committee Services, by 9.00am on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to advise which Cabinet items they would like the Committee to consider.

Criteria for Items on the work plan	Scheduled Meeting dates
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Risk 2. High Value 3. Major Project 4. Decreasing Performance 5. Statutory/Constitution requirement 	<p>03/02/2026 24/02/2026 (NC) 17/03/2026 28/04/2026</p> <p>*NC = No Cabinet meeting</p>

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Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Project Management Capacity & Capability	David Elkington – Strategic Director	03/02/2026	O&S 2 September 2025		the Strategic Director would be invited to a future O&S Committee meeting to discuss strengthening project management capacity and capability, particularly around capital project delivery. At O&S 25/11/25 the Chair asked for this report to incorporate a lessons learned, to date, exercise in relation to the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project.
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Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

<p>Future High Streets Fund update – if everything is on track, the Committee will accept a short report to this effect following liaison with the O&S Chair.</p>	<p>Martin O’Neill Councillor Billiald</p>	<p>03/02/2026 - Short update to be provided via email before the meeting</p>	<p>O&S February 2023</p>	<p>Every 3 months until further notice</p>	<p>1, 2, and 3</p>
<p>Quarter 3 Performance Report</p>	<p>Dale Duffy / Graham Leach</p>	<p>03/02/2026</p>			<p>To also update Committee on the timeline to incorporate complaints into the CRM system.</p>
<p>Procurement Act 2023 To consider a report from Finance 12 months on.</p>	<p>Andrew Rollins / Steven Leathley</p>	<p>24/02/2026</p>	<p>Chair briefing on 03/02/25 to discuss Cabinet agenda 06/02/2025</p>		
<p>Annual Review of Milverton Homes and the Joint Venture</p>	<p>Kristian Melgaard</p>	<p>24/02/2026</p>	<p>O&S 14 October 2025</p>		
<p>Annual Review of Sherbourne Recycling</p>	<p>Darren Knight, MD from Sherbourne</p>	<p>24/02/2026</p>	<p>O&S 14 October 2025</p>		

Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Paddling Pool Update	Zoe Court	24/02/2026	An update on the investigation and learnings from the issues with the opening of the paddling pool at Victoria Park and also the issues at St Nics.		
Annual Communications Report	Graham Folkes-Skinner	24/02/2026	Standing annual item.		
O&S End of Term report.	Committee Services Officer	17/3/2026	Standing Annual Item, Constitution requirement	Annual report - last scheduled O&S meeting in the municipal year.	5
Commercial Strategy scoping paper – outlining what is to be covered in the commercial strategy and the process for developing it	Andrew Rollins	17/03/2026		This has been deferred five times.	
Summary of the role, responsibilities and performance of the SWCSP. Invite non-exec rep and the PH Safer Communities to O&S	Liz Young / Marianne Rolfe.	17/03/2026	This is a Statutory requirement	Annual report next due March 2027	5

Appendix 1 – Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Change Programme – Case for Change	Darren Knight; Councillor Melrose	17/03/2026	O&S 5 March 24 and 3 Sept 2024	A six-monthly update to ensure that the savings are coming through and the Committee can see their impact in the budget. Can we add more detail to the status column, so it is not just in progress or actioned. Can the report be more detailed next time.	
Performance Update from HEART To invite representatives from HEART – Jane Grant and Dawn Dawson.	Kristian Melgaard Marianne Rolfe	28/04/2026	O&S Feb 2025	With the Chair’s permission this rescheduled report (Nov 25) was deferred from February 2026.	
Biodiversity Action Programme annual report	Becky Davies, Councillor Roberts	June 2026		Annual report next due June 2026	
Disposal of 1 Warwick Street	Darren Knight	July 2026		To be discussed in public session.	

Scheduled Briefing Notes to All Councillors requested by the Committee

Title	Lead Officer	Update Due by (end of Month)
Members' Annual Feedback on Outside Appointments / Annual review of membership/participation of Outside Bodies (Includes a short synopsis on Champions)	Graham Leach (report collated by the Scrutiny Officer)	April every year
Children's and Adults' Safeguarding Champions: End of Term Report.	Marianne Rolfe/Jane Rostron	April every year

Title: Quarter 3 Performance and Complaints Report
 Officer: Dale Duffy – Policy, Performance & Complaints Manager –
dale.duffy@warwickdc.gov.uk
 Portfolio Holder: Ian Davison
 Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	23/01/2026	Ian Davison Jess Melrose
Finance		N/A
Legal Services		N/A
Chief Executive	21/01/2026	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		N/A
Head of Service(s)	21/01/2026	Graham Leach
Section 151 Officer	21/01/2026	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	21/01/2026	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		N/A
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	Yes, Appendix 2 By Virtue of Paragraph 3 because this report contains information relating to existing negotiations.	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

1. Summary Why Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for the report

- 1.1 The report explains why the 2025/26 Quarter 3 (Q3) performance data for Warwick District Council is not being presented to committee on this occasion.
- 1.2 The report recommends that performance & complaints data is reported to Overview & Scrutiny committee on a half-yearly basis for 2026/27.
- 1.3 The report also contains an overview of complaints received during Q3 of 2025/26.

2. What the service is being delivered

- 2.1 The **Performance report** is a key tool in helping the Council demonstrate the services it is providing are performing. At present the performance report focuses on the measures within the SAPs and if they are achieving the expected level of performance. The commentary provided by officers against those measures which are below the expected level enables an understanding of the reasons for this and if there is a need for further investigation.
- 2.2 Due to the absence of two key staff members of the Policy, Performance & Complaints team it has not been possible to collate the Quarter 3 performance data to accompany this report.
- 2.3 Table 1 below sets out the reporting timeline for the performance report for the remainder of the 2025/26 SAPs.

Table 1

Stage	Q4 report
End of Quarter	31 Mar
Deadline for Service Areas to provide the data	7 Apr 2026
Date for the draft Report to SLT	10 Apr 2026
Date SLT to provide commentary	13 Apr 2026
Date to be considered at SLT	16 Apr 2026
Date to be considered informally by Cabinet	TBC
Date report will be shared with all Councillors	TBC
Date report will be published online	TBC
Date to be considered by O&S Cttee (next available Cttee date)	TBC

- 2.4 Also available, via the Business Intelligence Portal, are the major projects list, the significant risk register (which is reported to both Cabinet and Audit & Standards Committee) and procurement activity setting out current and

upcoming procurement activity. The links to which have been circulated separately to all Councillors.

- 2.5 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and responsible Officers have begun the development of 2-year SAPs which will cover financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. This will ensure the Council can focus on delivering statutory services and key projects before forming part of a Unitary Authority in April 2028 as part of the Local Government Reorganisation programme. The SAPs are due to be considered and agreed by Cabinet at their meeting on 18 March 2026.
- 2.6 The **Complaints report** contains analysis of complaint handling at Stage 1, Stage 2 of the Council’s complaints process and the current position of cases raised by tenants with the Housing Ombudsman. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) do not have a portal where officers can view their open cases. The Council’s Link Officer receives notification emails when complaints are raised with the LGSCO – one email was received from the LGSCO in relation to a case in Q3. The decision was that the complainant had made a premature referral about a complaint that the Monitoring Officer (MO) and Chief Executive (CE) were in the process of handling. The LGSCO recommended that the MO and CE kept the complainant updated while the investigation is open. Negotiations for this case are ongoing.
- 2.7 Table 2 below sets out the volume of complaints received (including those refused or rejected) and upheld in the first three quarters of the 2025/26 financial year.

Table 2

	Stage 1	Upheld	Partially upheld	Stage 2	Upheld	Partially upheld
Q1	117	26	18	18	4	6
Q2	130	31	14	26	2	9
Q3	128	29	19	41	3	10

- 2.8 Sometimes the complaints process may not be the correct process to follow to efficiently resolve a request, in these cases complaints are refused. This is different from a complaint which is investigated and not upheld. Complaints can be refused for a variety of reasons and the Council’s complaints databases have been developed to begin accurately recording these reasons.
- 2.9 12 Stage 1 complaints were refused in Q3 for the following reasons:
- (3) Matters have previously been considered under the complaints process.
 - (3) An appeals procedure exists which applies to the matters of complaint
 - (1) There is a more appropriate individual or organisation to deal with a complaint such as a tribunal, ombudsman or court.
 - (4) A Service Request is appropriate.
 - (1) Key information not provided by complainant.
- 2.10 1 Stage 2 complaint was refused in Q3 for the following reason:
- (1) Policy and/or process has been followed and there is insufficient evidence to enable the finding of fault.
- 2.11 There have been no compensation awards of £5000 or more in Q3.

- 2.12 The Housing Service Area received the highest proportion of Stage 1 complaints in Q3 (111 out of 128, 87%) and over half of these (63 out of 111, 57%) related to Repairs. Despite receiving a similar number of complaints in the current and previous quarters, there was a reduction in those relating to Housing Advice and Allocations (22 out of 111, 19%) this represents a 4% reduction.
- 2.13 These trends continue through Stage 2 complaints with Housing receiving the highest percentage (34 out of 41, 84%) of Stage 2 complaints. Place, Arts & Economy received a smaller number of Stage 1 complaints (6 out of 128, 4.6%) but saw an increase in the number of those where requests to escalate to Stage 2 were received (4 out of 6, 66%).
- 2.14 In Stage 2 Housing complaints, Repairs was still the most common cause for complaint (11 out of 34, 32%) followed by Landlord Operations (8 out of 34, 24%) and Housing Advice & Allocations (5 out of 34, 15%).
- 2.15 Officers recognise the importance of understanding the reasons why complainants make requests to escalate their complaints to Stage 2. The Policy, Performance and Complaints team currently has insufficient resource (one Officer left before Christmas, another is absent for health reasons) to carry out this work but it is anticipated that the data for complaints relating to Housing will be prepared in time to present to Housing Scrutiny Committee on 31 March 2026.
- 2.16 There are currently 10 Warwick District Council complaint cases open in the Housing Ombudsman's online portal. There is one evidence request in progress which is due to be completed by Tuesday 27 January 2026.
- 2.17 1 case has been closed in the Housing Ombudsman's online portal in Q3.

3. The key risks to the service and how they are being managed

- 3.1 The primary risks around performance monitoring reports are ensuring that the data provided in the service area plans report is accurate and provides commentary on the rationale for the level of performance. This helps the Council to identify at an early stage where performance is below the expected standard and investigate/challenge as appropriate.
- 3.2 A Corporate Governance audit is scheduled for completion by the end of February 2026, the purpose of the audit is: "To ensure that the calculations behind the current performance measures are sound and facilitate the production of high-quality data." The audit will review the performance measures in 8 out of the 9 SAPs. SAP Housing will be excluded due to the current scrutiny arrangements and amount of work underway to ensure the quality and reliability of the reporting data produced.
- 3.3 Another risk is the over-reliance on manual processes to collate the data from the SAPs into the report presented to Committee. This is highlighted by the absence of two key staff members of the Policy, Performance & Complaints team without whom the required resource has not been available to collate the Quarter 3 performance data to accompany this report.
- 3.4 Interim measures have been introduced to support with the increased demand, with two officers in Governance Services completing Stage 2 complaint investigations in addition to the Policy, Performance & Complaints Manager. However, the overall increase in demand on team has had led to some absence and during this period the Council receiving the first Complaints Handling

Failure Order (CHFO) of 2025/26 from the Housing Ombudsman for not replying to a request for information within a prescribed deadline.

- 3.5 The Service Review business case setting out a preferred option to provide permanent resource has been completed and adverts published to fill vacancies for new Policy, Performance & Complaints Officer posts. There is one permanent and one two-year fixed term/secondment position.
- 3.6 There appears to be a trend of misinformation appearing within some complaints the Council receives, this increases the amount of time Officers spend understanding the challenges the complainant is facing. Communications are also becoming more litigious and refer to different legislation that governs Council services.

4. What is working well and what is not working so well

- 4.1 The interim measures to provide support for Stage 2 complaint investigations have seen an improvement in response times. During quarter 1, the average response time for a Stage 2 complaint was 40.4 working days. The average response time reduced to 32.75 working days in quarter 2, despite an increase of complaints received during this period. The downward trend of improving response times continue in quarter 3, dropping to 22.4 working days for the 21 Stage 2 complaints responded to.
- 4.2 One of the Officers who was providing supplementary support left the Council before Christmas and there has been unprecedented demand for Stage 2 complaints since November 2025. It is likely that the Council will see an increase in Stage 2 response times and missed deadlines which may result in more escalations to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Service.

5. One Change to improve performance

- 5.1 The business case and project plan for implementing the complaints process into the Council's Customer Relationship Management system is to be approved by the project board with the first meeting scheduled for 30 January 2026 and by SLT on 5 February 2026. The project will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Change Board on 16 February 2026.
- 5.2 From November 2025 monthly meetings have taken place in Housing to review lessons learned, recommendations and actions from complaints reports. The meetings are attended by Service Area Managers, the Customer Services Team Leader and the Policy, Performance & Complaints Manager. Tasks are created in the Council's line of business system for Housing ActiveH and assigned to relevant officers to track and resolve.

Background papers:

Nil

Supporting documents:

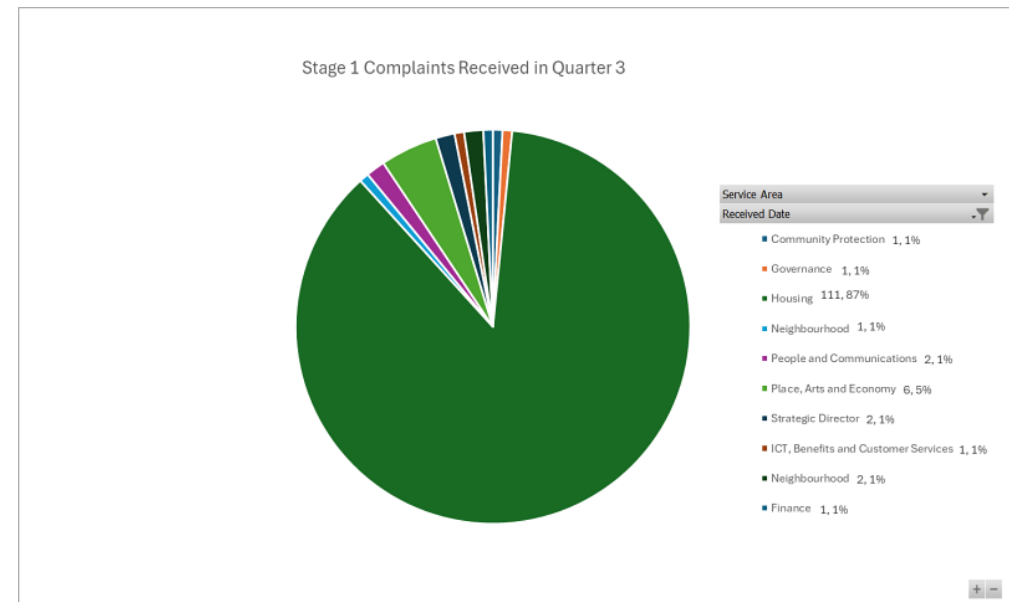
Item 03 - Appendix 1 - 2025-26 Quarter 3 Complaints Analysis.pptx

Item 03 - Appendix 2 - Confidential - Contractor complaints data 25-26.docx

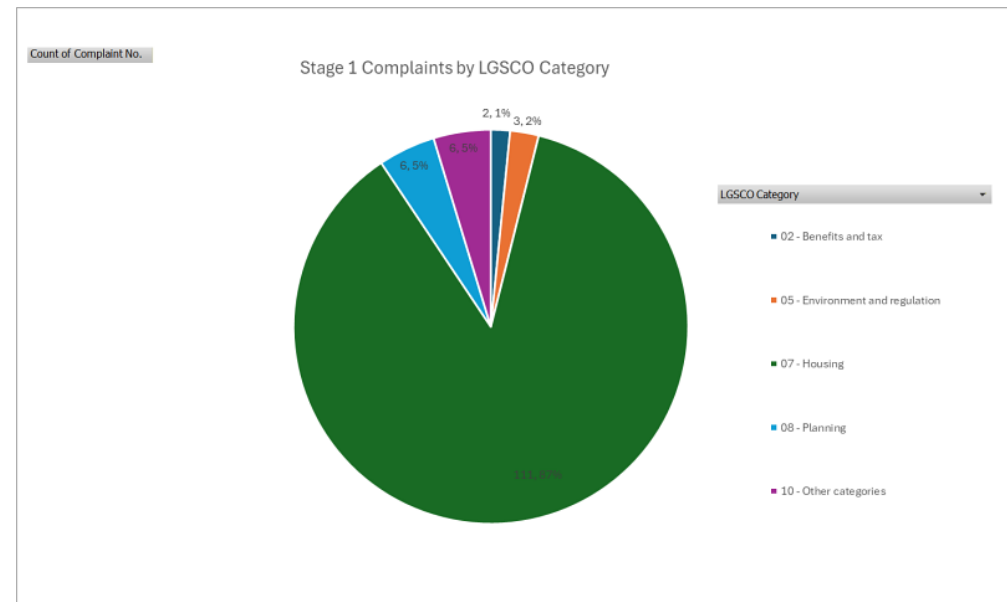
Quarterly Complaints Report

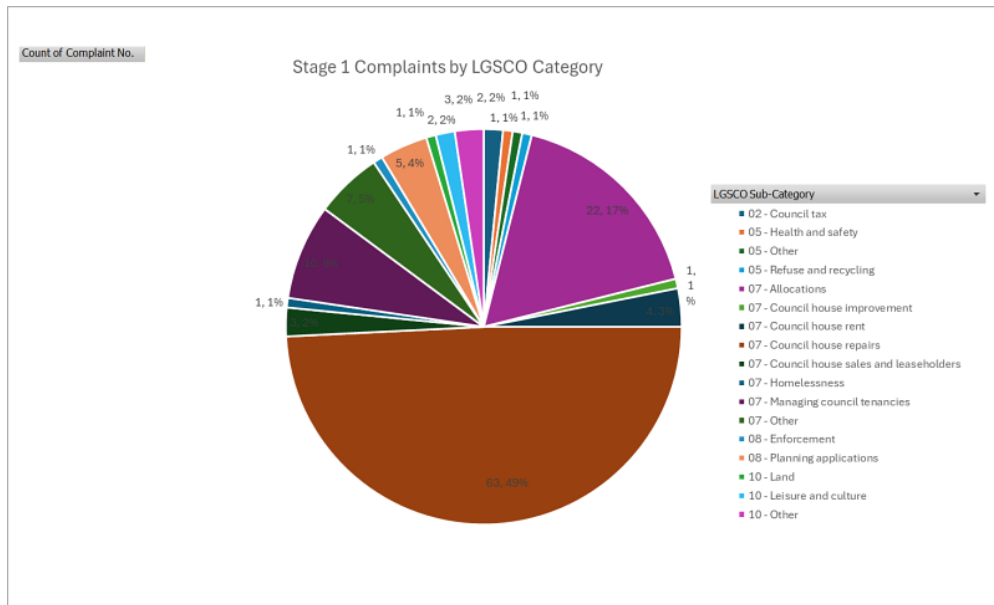
October 2025 – December 2025

Community Protection	1	1%
Governance	1	1%
Housing	111	87%
Neighbourhood	1	1%
People and Communications	2	1%
Place, Arts and Economy	6	5%
Strategic Director	2	1%
ICT, Benefits and Customer Services	1	1%
Neighbourhood	2	1%
Finance	1	1%
Grand Total	128	



02 - Benefits and tax	2	1%
05 - Environment and regulation	3	2%
07 - Housing	111	87%
08 - Planning	6	5%
10 - Other categories	6	5%
Grand Total	128	

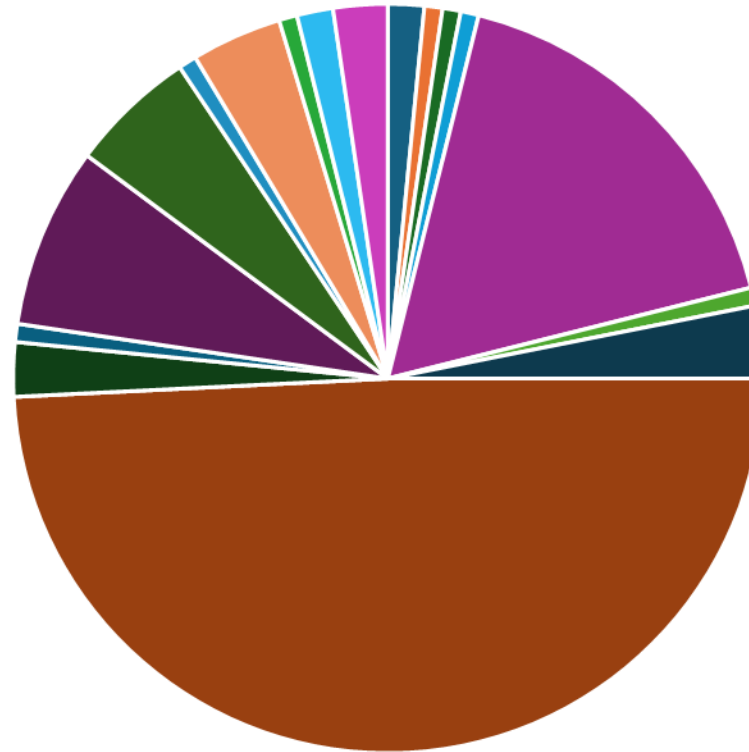




02 - Council tax	2
05 - Health and safety	1
05 - Other	1
05 - Refuse and recycling	1
07 - Allocations	22
07 - Council house improvement	1
07 - Council house rent	4
07 - Council house repairs	63
07 - Council house sales and leaseholders	3
07 - Homelessness	1
07 - Managing council tenancies	10
07 - Other	7
08 - Enforcement	1
08 - Planning applications	5
10 - Land	1
10 - Leisure and culture	2
10 - Other	3
Grand Total	128

Count of Complaint No.

Stage 1 Complaints by LGSCO Sub-Category

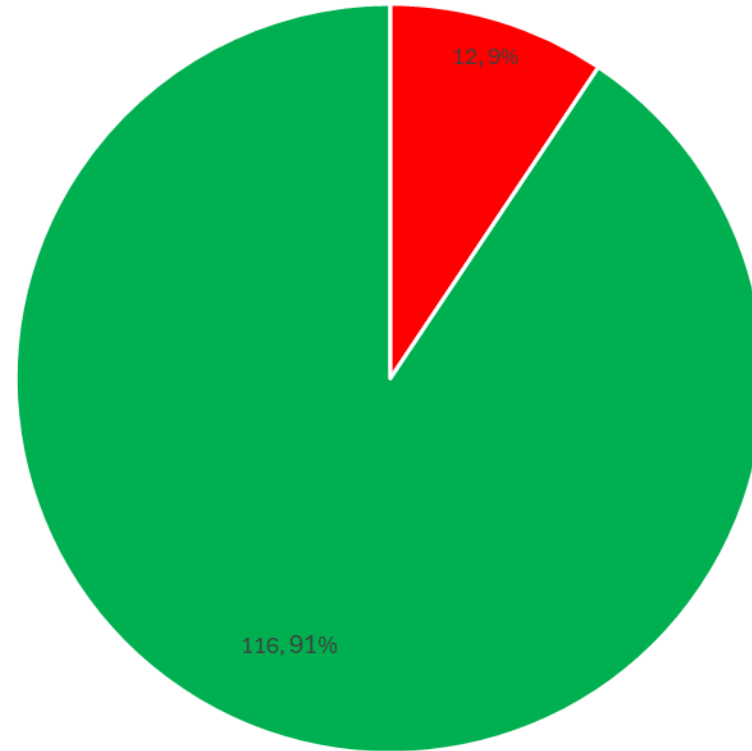


LGSCO Sub-Category

- 02 - Council tax 2, 2.2%
- 05 - Health and safety 1, 1.1%
- 05 - Other 1, 1.1%
- 05 - Refuse and recycling 1, 1.1%
- 07 - Allocations 22, 17%
- 07 - Council house improvement 1, 1.1%
- 07 - Council house rent 4, 3%
- 07 - Council house repairs 63, 49%
- 07 - Council house sales and leaseholders 3, 2%
- 07 - Homelessness 1, 1.1%
- 07 - Managing council tenancies 10, 8%
- 07 - Other 7, 5%
- 08 - Enforcement 1, 1.1%
- 08 - Planning applications 5, 4%
- 10 - Land 1, 1.1%
- 10 - Leisure and culture 2, 2.2%
- 10 - Other 3, 2.2%

Count of Complaint No.

Stage 1 Complaints acknowledged within 5 working days



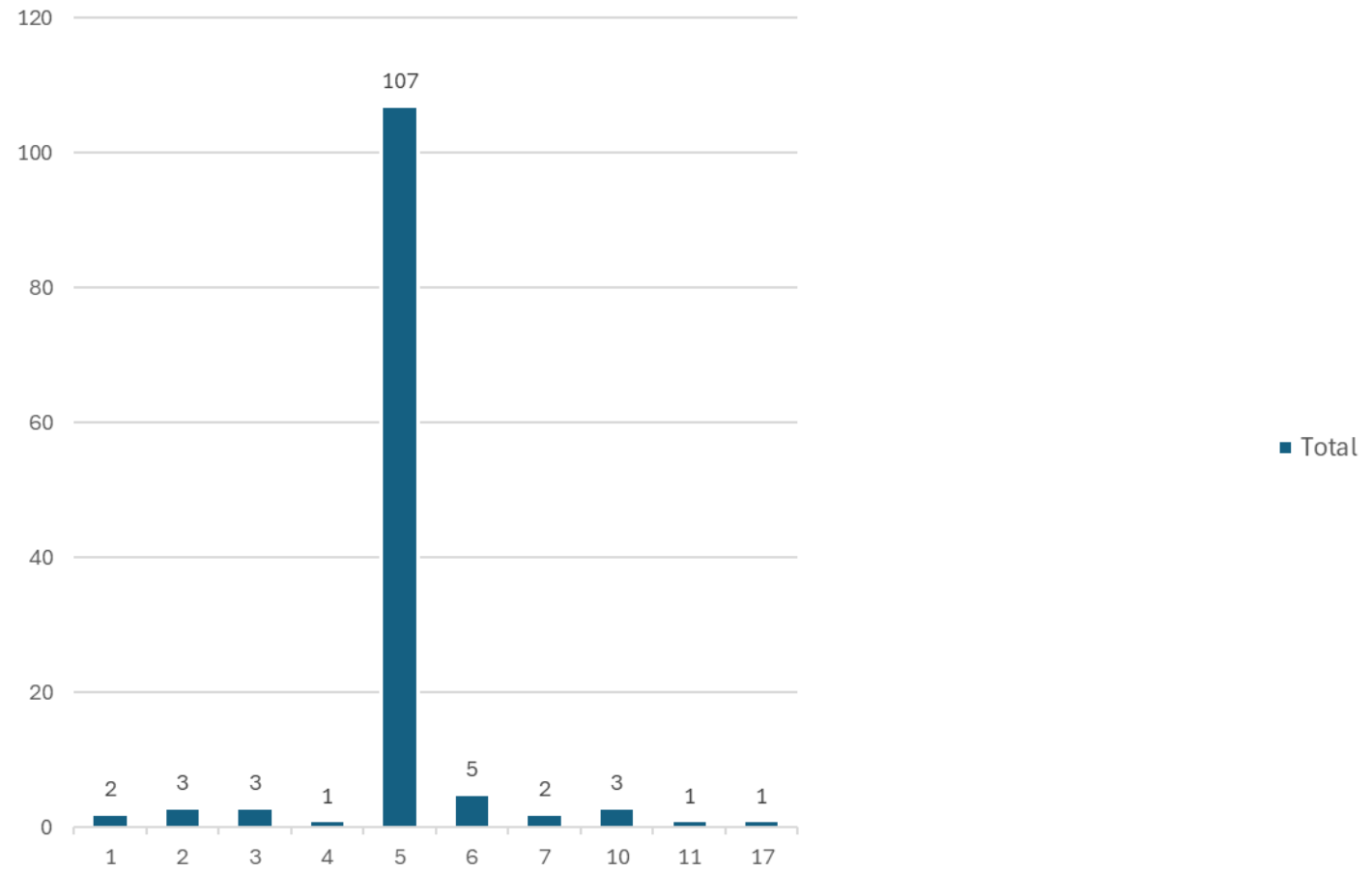
Acknowledged within timeframe? ▼

■ No

■ Yes

Count of Complaint No.

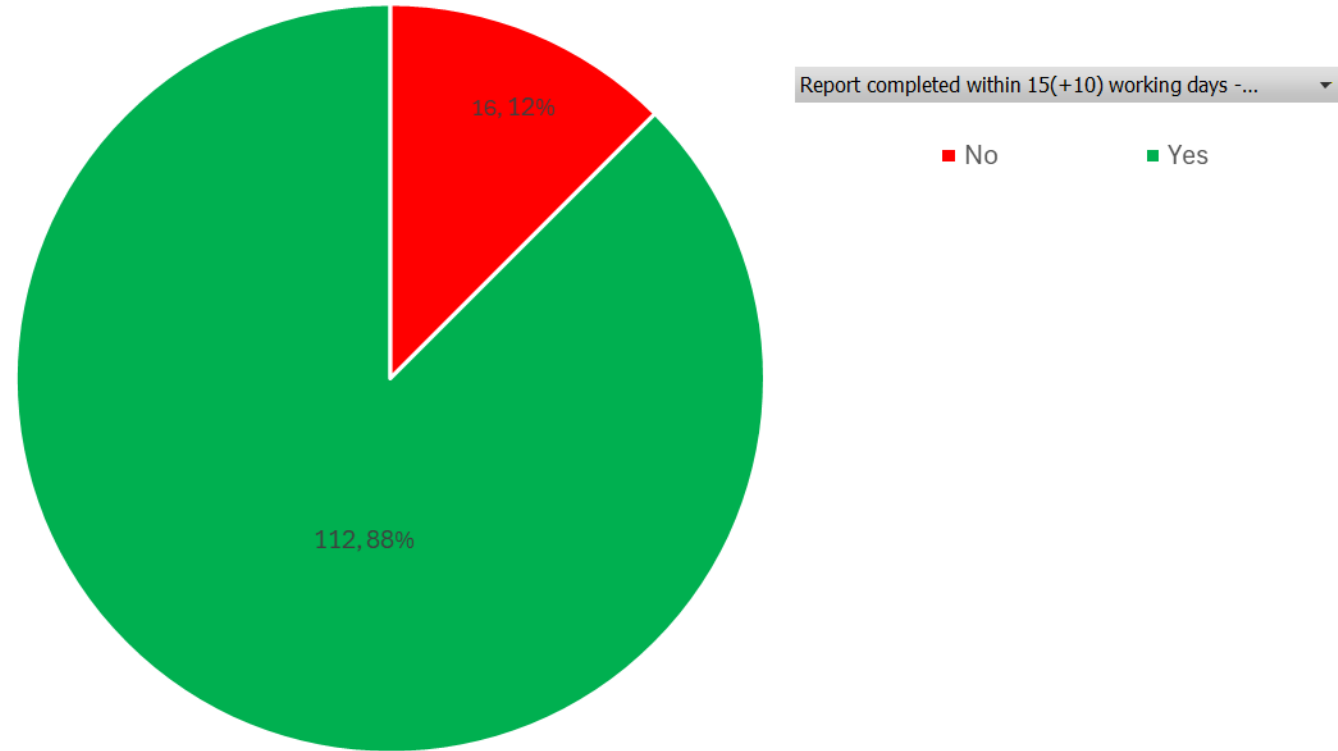
Days taken to acknowledge Stage 1 Complaints



Days taken to acknowledge ▾

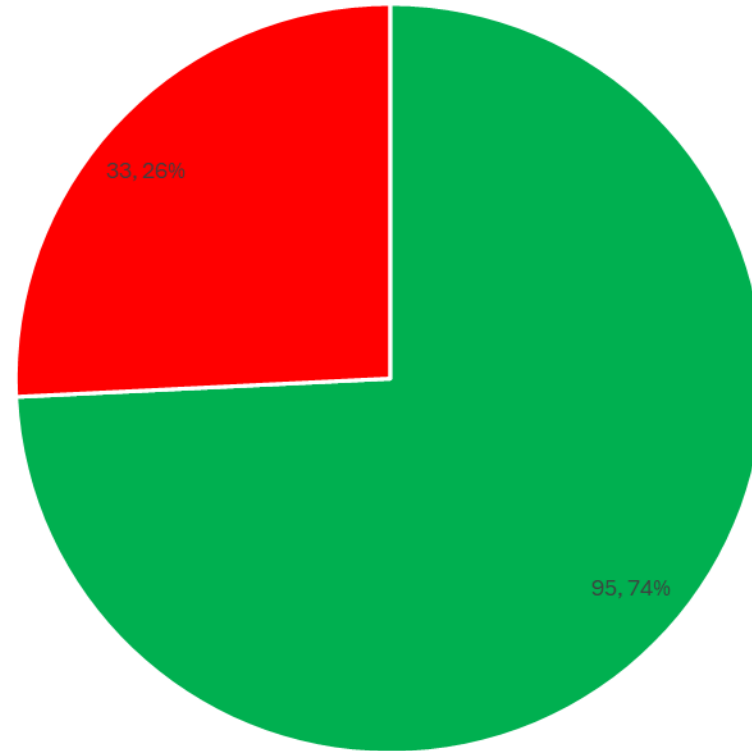
Count of Complaint No.

Stage 1 Complaints completed within timeframe (received to completion)



Count of Complaint No.

Stage 1 Complaints with agreed deadline extension



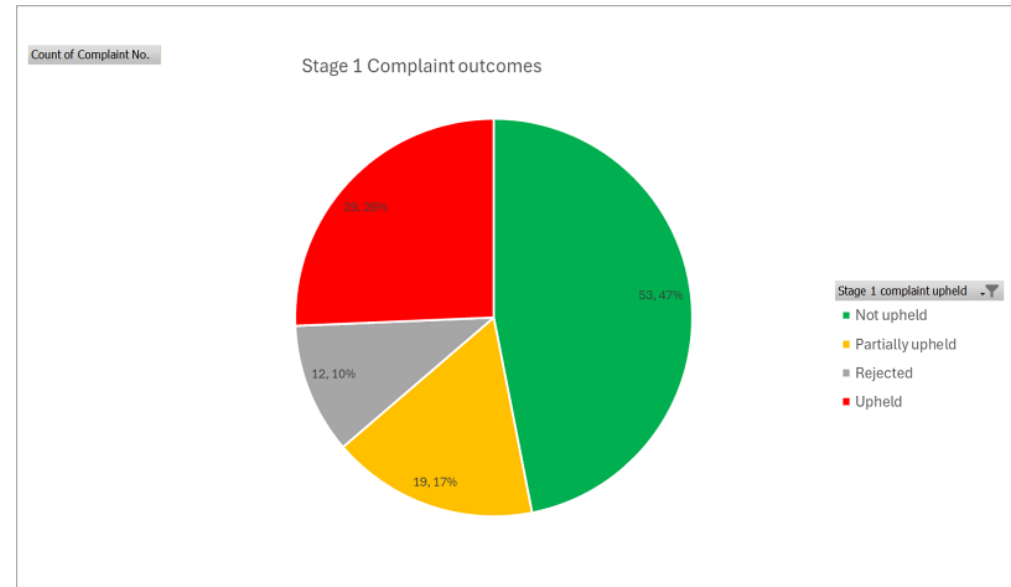
Extension agreed? ▾

■ No

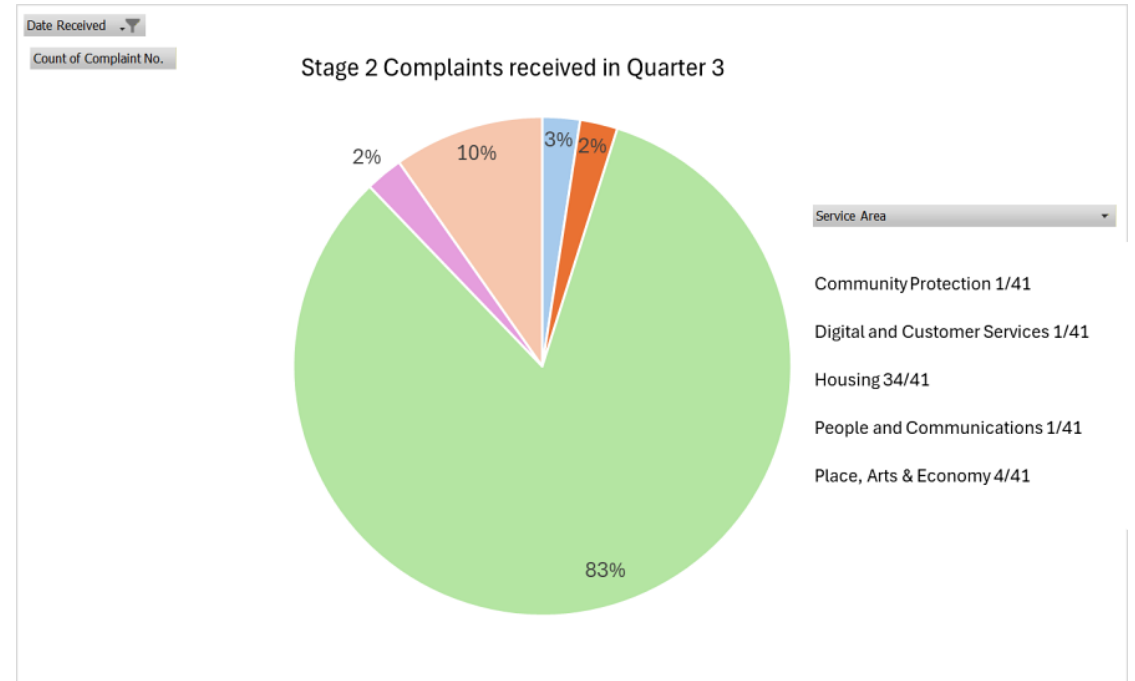
■ Yes

Not upheld	53	47%
Partially upheld	19	17%
Rejected	12	10%
Upheld	29	26%
Grand Total	113	

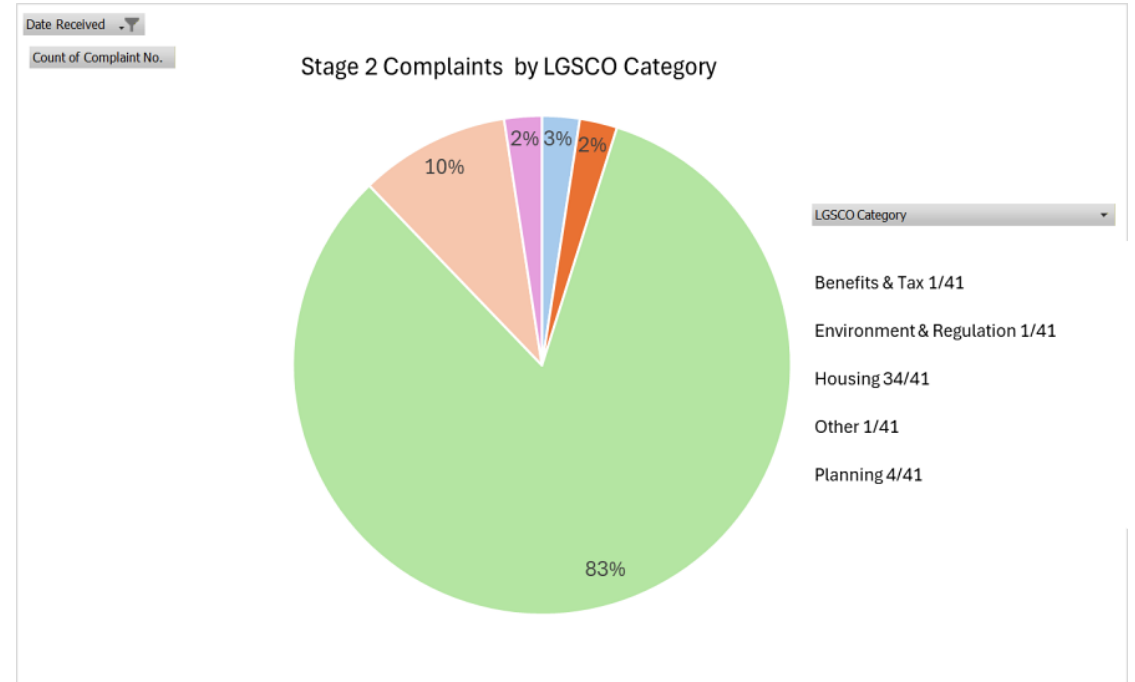
N.B. 15 of the 128 Stage 1 complaints received in Q3 are due for response on/after the date this report was produced (12 January 2026)



Community Protection	1	2%
Digital and Customer Services	1	2%
Housing	34	83%
People & Communications	1	2%
Place, Arts & Economy	4	10%
Grand Total	41	

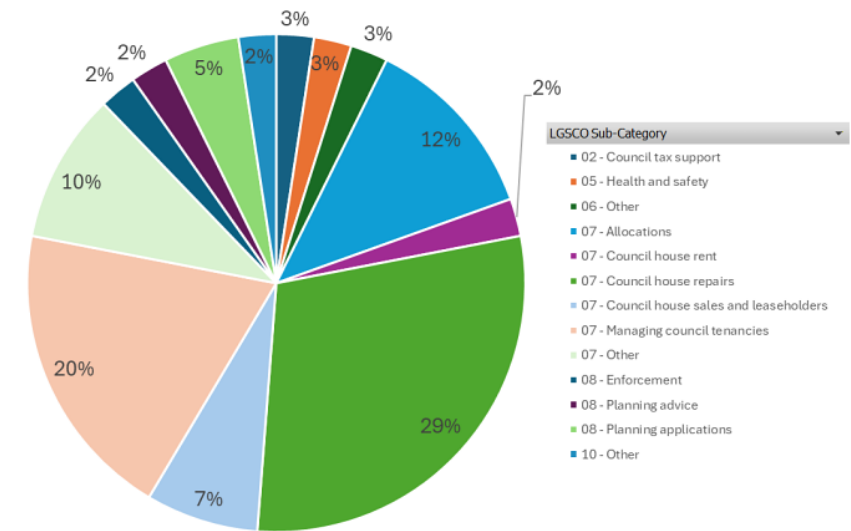


02 - Benefits and tax	1	2%
05 - Environment and regulation	1	2%
07 - Housing	34	83%
08 - Planning	4	10%
10 - Other categories	1	2%
Grand Total	41	

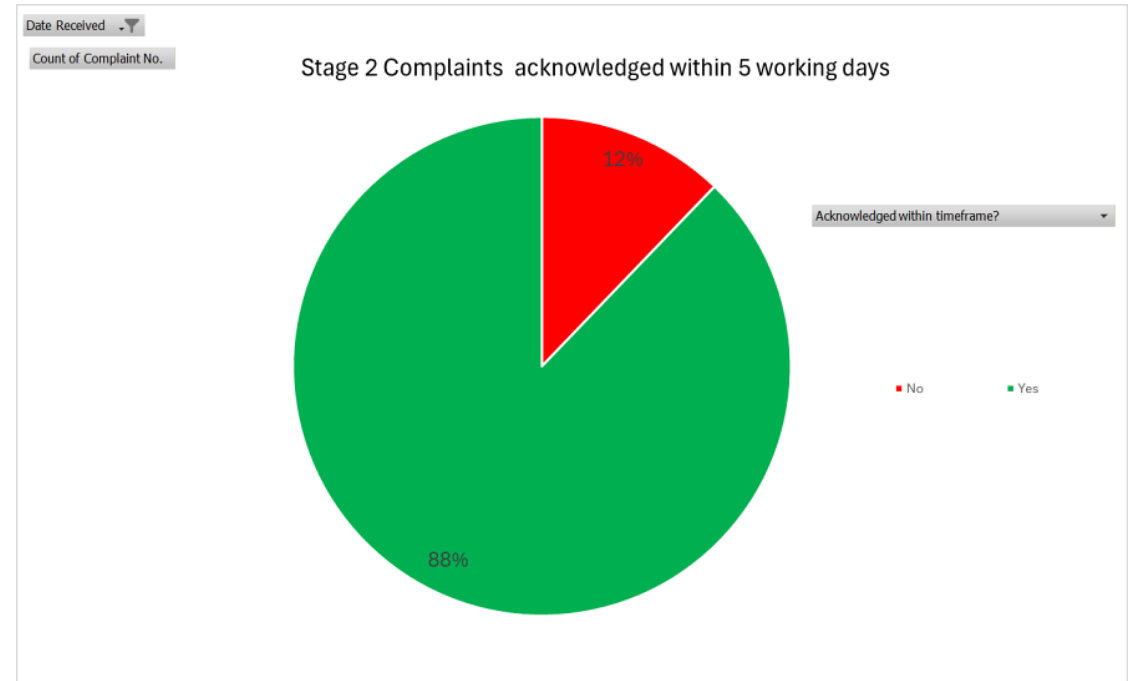


02 - Council tax support	1	2.4%
05 - Health and safety	1	2.4%
06 - Other	1	2.4%
07 - Allocations	5	12.2%
07 - Council house rent	1	2.4%
07 - Council house repairs	12	29.3%
07 - Council house sales and leaseholders	3	7.3%
07 - Managing council tenancies	8	19.5%
07 - Other	4	9.8%
08 - Enforcement	1	2.4%
08 - Planning advice	1	2.4%
08 - Planning applications	2	4.9%
10 - Other	1	2.4%
Grand Total	41	

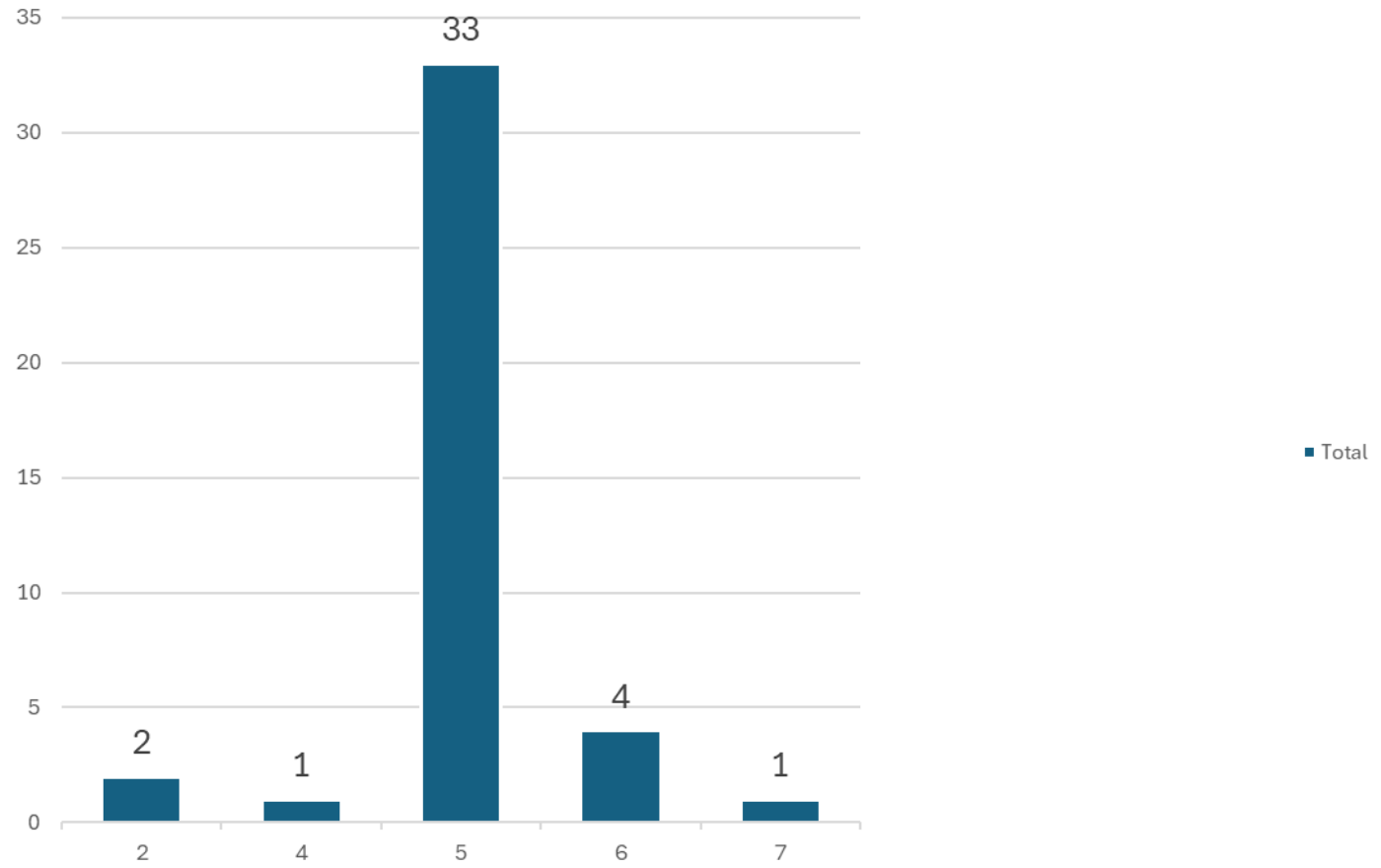
Stage 2 Complaints by LGSCO Sub-Category



No	5	12%
Yes	36	88%
Grand Total	41	



Days taken to acknowledge Stage 2 complaints

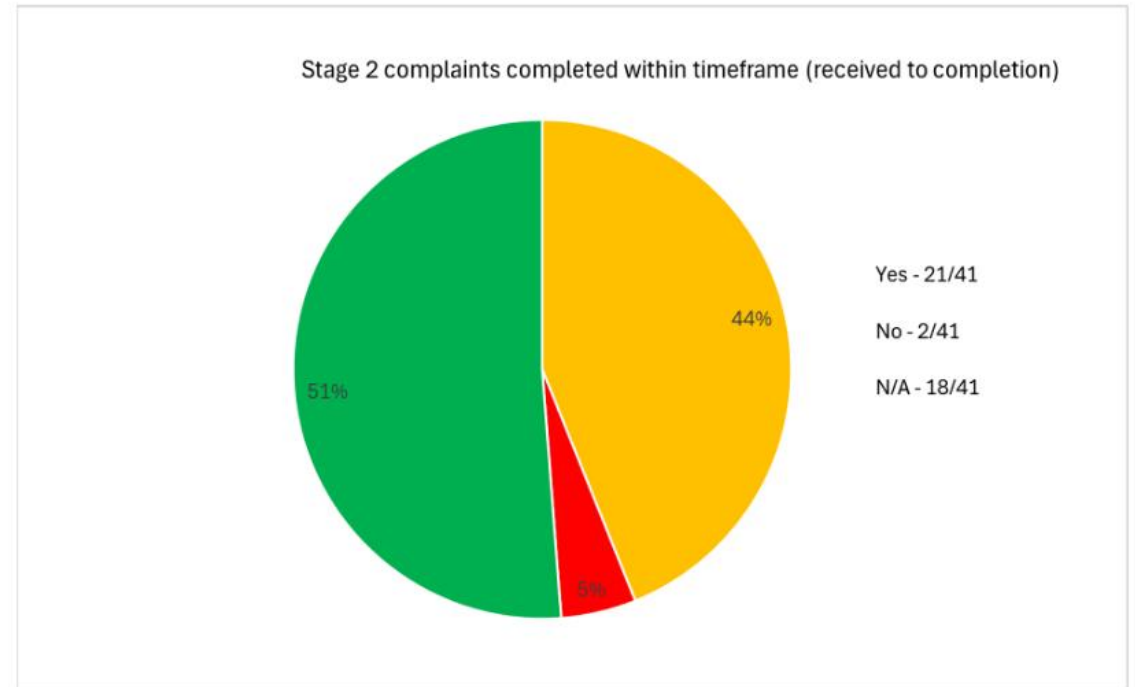


Days taken to acknowledge ▾

N/A	18	44%
No	2	5%
Yes	21	51%
Grand Total	41	

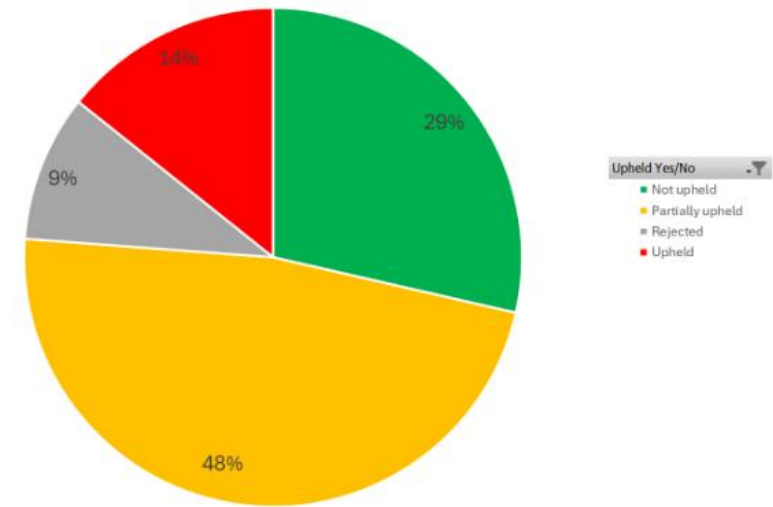
N.B. 18 of the 41 Stage 2 complaints received in Q3 are due for response on/after the date this report was produced (12 January 2026).

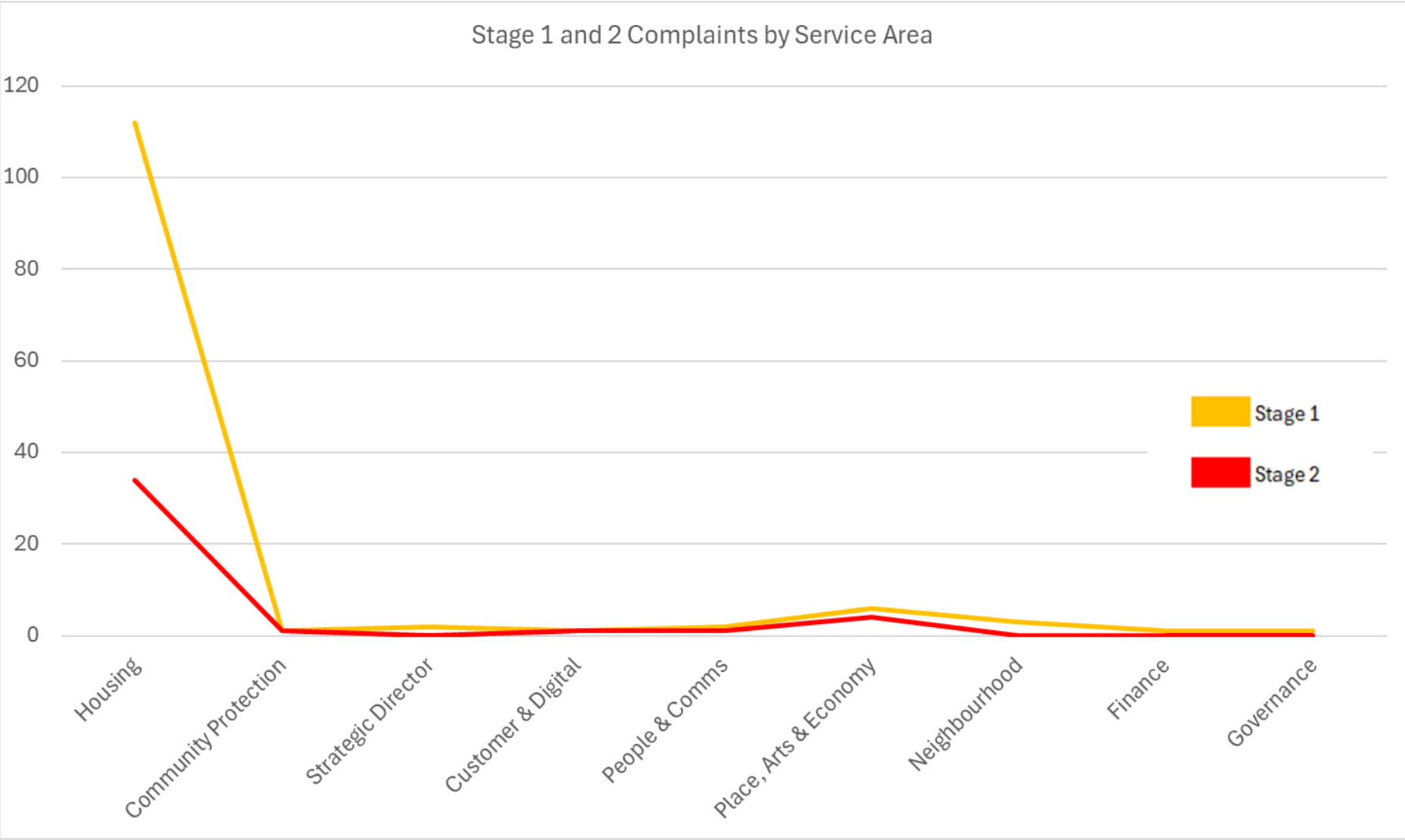
The remaining 2 have missed deadlines, the complainants are provided with weekly updates.



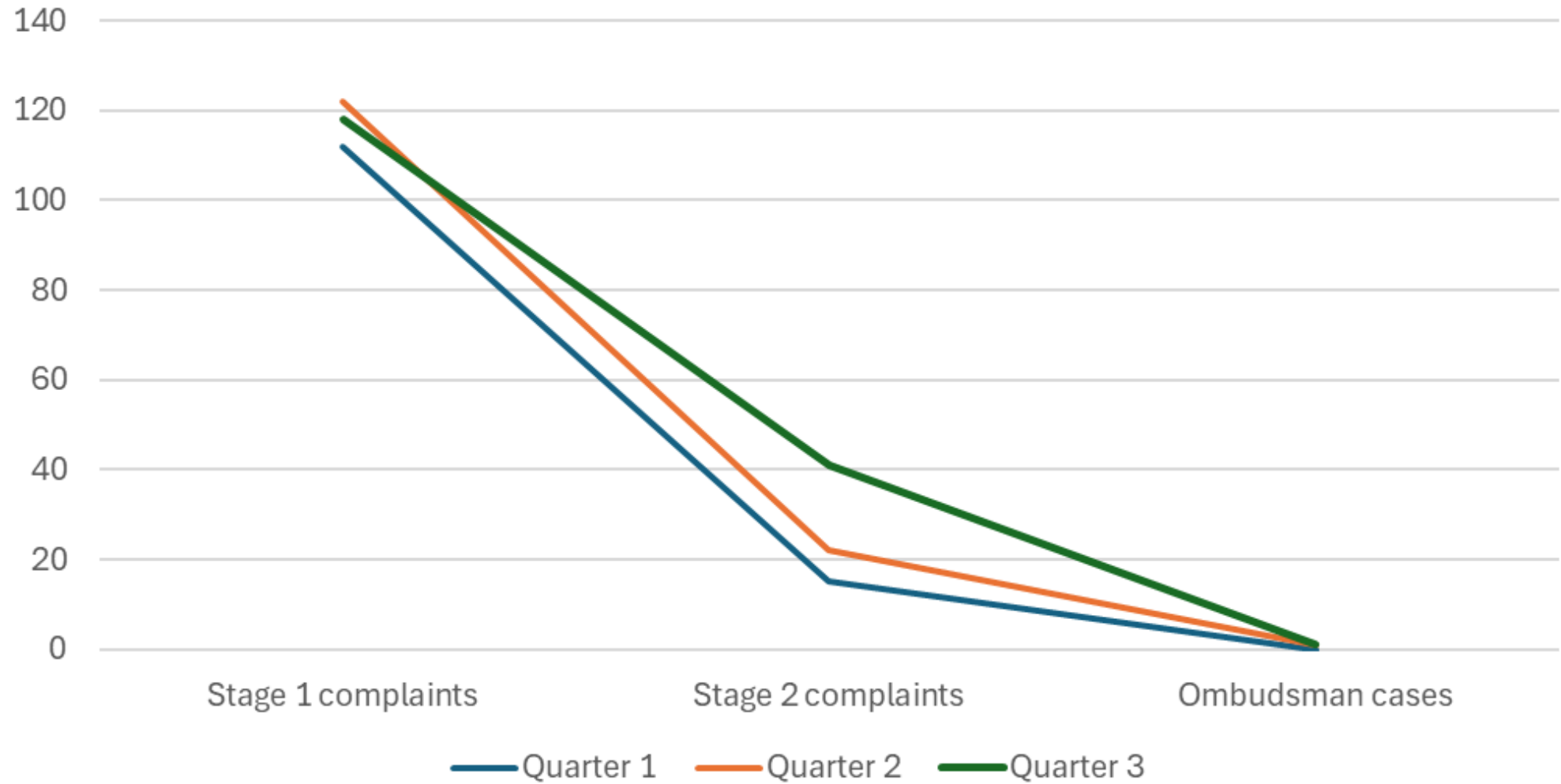
Not upheld	6	28.6%
Partially upheld	10	47.6%
Rejected	2	9.5%
Upheld	3	14.3%
Grand Total	21	

Stage 2 complaint outcomes

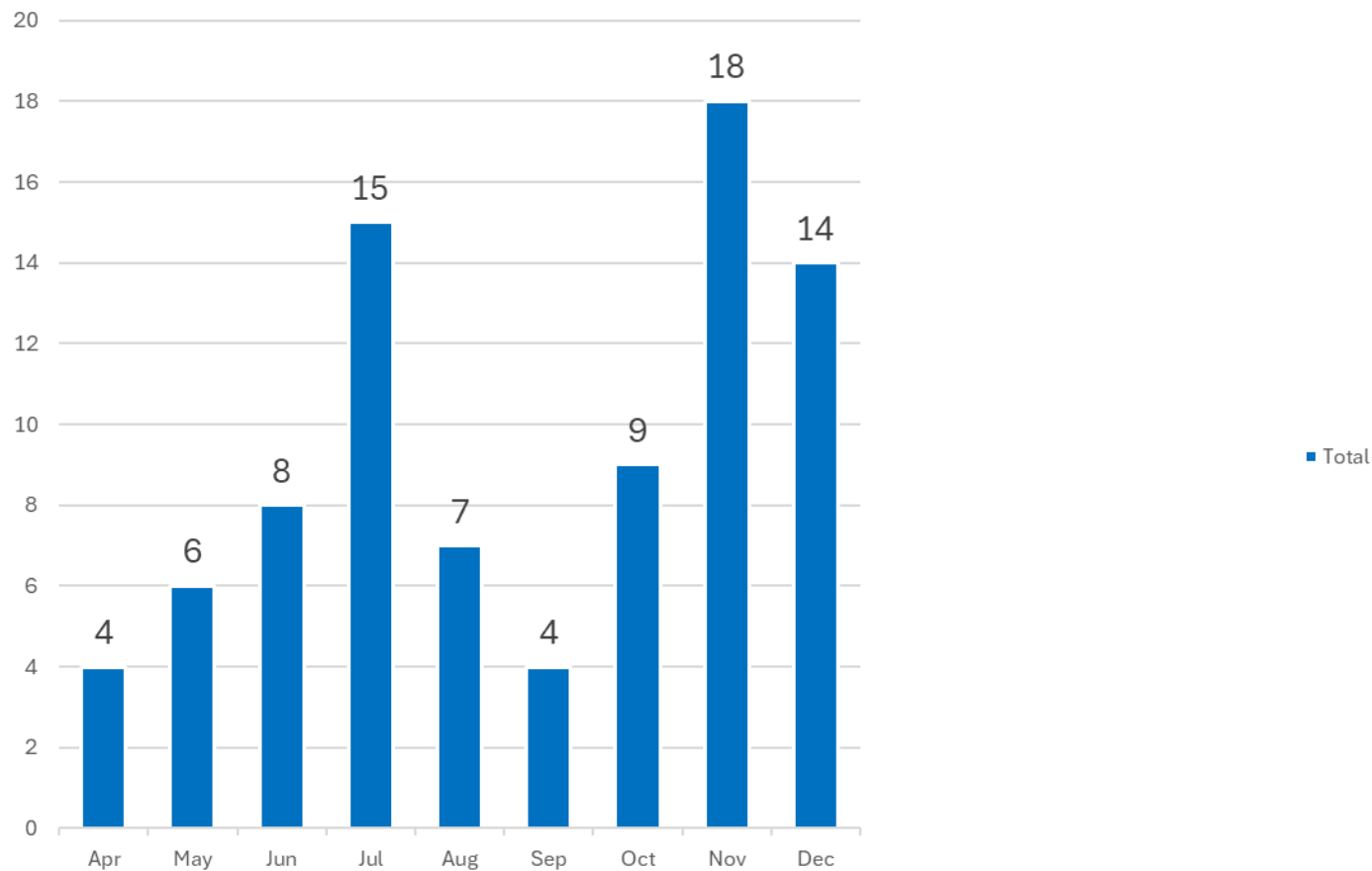




Complaints Per Quarter



Stage 2 complaints received per month (Q1-Q3 2025/26)



Months (Date Received) ▾

Open Housing Ombudsman Cases

Stage	Number of HO Cases
Within landlord's internal complaints procedure	3
Evidence gathering	2
Case Under assessment	2
Referral assessment	1
Awaiting investigation	2
Total	10

Agenda Item No 6
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
3 February 2026

Title: Project Management Capacity and Capability
 Lead Officer: David Elkington (david.elkington@warwickdc.gov.uk)
 Portfolio Holder: Chris King, Ian Davison
 Wards of the District directly affected: None

Approvals required	Date	Name
Heads of Service	26/01/2026	David Elkington (Project Management)
Finance		Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		
Chief Executive	26/01/2026	Chris Elliott
Deputy Chief Executive	26/01/2026	Daren Knight
Strategic Director	26/01/2026	David Elkington
Section 151 Officer		Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	26/01/2026	Graham Leach
Portfolio Holder	26/01/2026	Chris King (Pump Rooms) Ian Davison (Project Management)
Leadership Co-ordination Group		

Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	Yes, Appendix 1 by virtue of Paragraph 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); and by virtue of Paragraph 5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No
Accessibility Checked?	Yes

1. Reasons for the Report

- 1.1 At its 17th December 2025 meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update to review how the project management capacity of Warwick District Council (WDC) was being improved.
- 1.2 The committee also sought to review the current lessons learned regarding the Royal Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project.
- 1.3 This report seeks to address the requests made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding both project management capacity, and lessons learned from the Pump Rooms Roof project, so far.

2. Project Management

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Over the years, WDC has delivered a significant number of very successful projects. Whether it's the construction of a new Leisure Centre or the planting of trees, WDC has remained committed to ambitious undertakings, that generate lasting positive outcomes for its communities, the local economy and the environment.
- 2.1.2 This positive commitment to delivering projects that support WDC's strategic priorities and the Council's vision for Warwick District is not just an internal observation. In 2023, this was recognised through the Council's LGA Corporate Peer Challenge which said:

"The Council's ambition and its commitment to the District as a key player is valued and it is clearly an important partner to those the peer team spoke to. Partners spoke very highly of the visible role which the Council has. This is an ambitious Council with a wide programme of projects which it should rightly be celebrated for." (LGA, 2023).

- 2.1.3 In the short period between the end of September 2025 and the start of January 2026, some of the projects successfully delivered by WDC included:

- [Refurbishment of the Mill Gardens Play Area](#)
- [Installation of Solar Panels at St. Nicholas Park Leisure Centre](#)
- [Completion of the Stoneleigh Arms Refurbishment](#)
- [Opening of Newbold Comyn Cycle Hub](#)
- [LED Lighting Upgrades at the Royal Spa Centre](#)

- 2.1.4 Alongside these public initiatives, there were also internal projects, such as:

- The roll out of Windows 11 to all corporate laptops
- Delivery of commercial awareness training
- Migration of waste service calls from Stratford District Council back in-house.
- Multiple Change Programme initiatives resulting in cashable efficiencies.

Overall, a review of Service Area Plans (SAP) for 2025/26 identified more than 250 major workstreams.

- 2.1.5 Historically, WDC's approach to Project Management has been a mixture of dedicated project resources with associated governance structures, and in-service arrangements for projects which are considered as smaller. This may be due to their lower risks, costs or limited-service coverage across one or two areas. In the round, this has worked relatively well for WDC; the formal governance structures established for larger projects have generally ensured that delivery is regularly monitored and progress is kept on track, whilst the in-service management of smaller projects has allowed for flexible and agile delivery.
- 2.1.6 However, this is not without its issues and whilst the 2023 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge praised WDC's ambition, it also highlighted that the scale and breadth of projects being implemented also saw a concurrent increase in the level of financial risk and discussed the importance of robust and effective governance (LGA, 2023). The need to provide capacity in this area and grow the corporate core, was further highlighted in the 2024 follow up review (LGA, 2024).
- 2.2 **Current Project Management Issues**
- 2.2.1 WDC's approach to project management over time, has led to very dispersed project management capacity. In 2023, the Transformation Team in Customer and Digital Services invited officers with responsibility for Project Management to join a Community of Practice and initially, the team were unsure how much traction this would gain. More than 50 staff members signed up to the community, ranging from those who picked up project management as part of their role informally, through to dedicated programme managers looking after portfolios collectively worth millions of pounds.
- 2.2.2 The group identified several issues with WDC's current project management approach, including:
- Inconsistent Project Management methods
 - Inconsistent documentation and templates
 - Limited access to tools
 - Access to training
 - Resourcing issues
 - Prioritisation issues
 - Coordination problems
- 2.2.3 Many of these issues are not uncommon and can be observed in any large organisation. Some however have been exacerbated by WDC's past project management approach, such as the dispersed nature of project management capacity facilitating inconsistency in project management methods and documentation. This is not unexpected, as with no centrally mandated standard or templates to work from, staff have (naturally) created their own approach. Some issues also reinforce themselves, such as where project prioritisation has resulted in resourcing issues that impact progress.
- 2.2.4 There are also macroenvironmental factors which can impact on WDC's project management capability. For example, Construction Design Management expertise is not readily available from a central point for WDC's project managers and as such, each must commission their own services.

This could lead to additional expense but also increases the risk that if something did go wrong during project delivery, there could be significant consequences.

2.2.5 Whilst most of WDC's projects are delivered successfully, these factors can collectively impact on capacity and outcomes. In rare cases they can lead to project failure.

2.2.6 To mitigate these issues, an improvement plan is currently underway.

3. Steps to Improve

3.1 Corporate Programme Team

3.1.1 Prior to the corporate restructuring in 2025 a decision was taken to allocate responsibility for corporate projects to the revised Strategic Director post. Within the new structure, a Corporate Programme Team (CPT) was agreed for inclusion, formed from across the organisation, bringing together programme and project managers, including the former Capital Projects Team, the Leisure Project Team and elements of the Economic Development Team.

3.1.2 This new, centralised corporate resource is intended to support major projects, as part of a wider portfolio of activities. The team would consist of project management experts, who would work directly with internal service areas to help deliver their ambitions, and with supporting services to ensure that resources and expertise were appropriately co-ordinated.

3.1.3 Progress towards building the CPT is now underway. Recruitment was recently completed to the Corporate Programme Manager post, a member of the Economic Development Team has moved into one of the Deputy Programme Manager roles, and recruitment will shortly be underway for the remaining vacant Project Manager and Project Support Officer positions.

3.1.4 It is anticipated that this recruitment will be completed by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, although some individuals may not physically have started work for WDC at that point (due to contractual notice periods and such).

3.1.5 Once complete, the CPT will provide a valuable resource to support project management across WDC and directly champion the work of the Community of Practice, to establish standards across the Council.

3.2 Establishing Standards

3.2.1 Shortly after the Project Management Community of Practice (PMCoP) was created, it was established that WDC lacked consistent templates and approaches to Project Management. The community proposed a workplan that would seek to develop these materials and collectively contribute towards training and the establishment of a "Warwick way". Unfortunately, at the time the group was unable to achieve this, but this work is now being reviewed and will be resourced.

3.2.2 Once recruitment to positions within the CPT is complete, resource will be allocated to support the work of the PMCoP. An initial priority will be to

establish a set of standard documents that will be used on all projects, and standard agile and waterfall project management approaches, together with consideration of change management practices too. Work will be undertaken to centralise existing project management documentation and establish a performance management framework that can offer assurance to WDC that project management is working effectively.

- 3.2.3 The PMCoP will continue to be a driving force behind improving project management standards and will shortly be supported by the resources required to make a real difference to the Council's project management approach.

3.3 **Access to Project Management Tools**

- 3.3.1 WDC currently has a mixture of project management tools in use, ranging from Excel spreadsheets through to online, cloud-based collaboration platforms.
- 3.3.2 The Council's Housing Team have pioneered the use of the Monday.com project management tool in their work to address the regulatory issued faced by WDC. The software has proven itself to be flexible and effective in ensuring that key stakeholders are kept informed of progress and where appropriate, their requirement to undertake associated tasks. The CPT will also shortly begin using Monday.com, to manage the corporate portfolio of projects.
- 3.3.3 Initially this will be undertaken on a trial basis for a period of six months. WDC will also need to engage with the Council's procurement team, should Monday.com be considered as a corporate application. At present, the value of the licences procured is relatively low and can be found within existing budgets, but this will need to be considered should the userbase be expanded. The team will also have to consider how performance dashboards within Monday.com can be shared securely, and how the system will integrate with other project management platforms.
- 3.3.4 Solving the issue of access to tools is relatively simple, and work toward this is already underway.

3.4 **Prioritisation and Coordination**

- 3.4.1 WDC's ICT team have recently launched a new Major Projects portal, which allows staff and members access to key information about ongoing projects within WDC. This tool was initially created to deal with the Major Projects list, but it's usage can be expanded to include a range of other activities, including different sized projects and the co-ordination of documentation.
- 3.4.2 For the 2026/27 Service Plan process, all items on the Major Projects list must be identified as a workstream within a Service Area Plan. Essentially, every major project should have an owner and someone responsible for driving it forward. This is a key aspect of improving how projects are prioritised as services will be able to see the full spectrum of demands upon their resource. There should be no opportunity for something to be a surprise.

3.4.3 Service Plan activities are also being co-ordinated, to ensure that where initiatives from one service or project require resources from or impact upon another service area, these are fully considered. For example, it is not realistic for a service area to say they are going to undertake a major software replacement, without ICT also having a corresponding item on their service plan. This has been attempted in previous years with some success, but significant, dedicated time is being set aside by SLT to ensure that it is fully successful for the group of two-year service plans which are currently in draft.

3.5 **Training**

3.5.1 Whilst some training has taken place regarding corporate responsibilities, such as those associated with health and safety and Construction Design Management requirements within building projects, a full training plan has not yet been completed.

3.5.2 Later in the year, the CPT will engage with Human Resources to create an appropriate training plan, drawing upon external training resources where this is appropriate and relevant. This will help to ensure that all appropriate officers have relevant project management experience and skills to support the Council's needs effectively.

4. **Lessons Learned – Pump Rooms Roof Replacement**

4.1 The project to replace the Pump Rooms Roof is still currently underway and as such, a complete lessons learned review cannot be undertaken. However, a review of the lessons learned to date is possible, and some observations are included below. Further lessons are also included in Confidential Appendix 1. These details are currently considered as confidential as they relate to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

4.2 **Member Involvement**

4.2.1 Throughout the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project, the Cabinet and Member interests at large have been represented by Cllr. Chris King. Whilst he is not the Portfolio Holder for Assets or the Arts service, his involvement in the project has been both beneficial and welcome, as his previous experience within the construction industry has facilitated meaningful and challenging engagement throughout.

4.2.2 Whilst the particular circumstances that led Cllr. King to be involved with this project may be unique, it has been a positive example of what Members can contribute to a project as part of its governance arrangements. The presence of a Cabinet member at contractor meetings has conveyed how seriously the Council takes the project, and how important a successful conclusion is. It has also positively impacted members of the project team, who have seen the interest being taken in the project, and the personal responsibility Cllr. King has taken in ensuring particular issues are addressed.

4.2.3 Whilst member involvement may not be possible or appropriate for all projects, when considering governance arrangements that include a Councillor as a board member, arrangements should be in place to ensure

they can attend project boards appropriately and that they are able to fulfil the responsibilities of a sponsorship role. Nominated Councillors may not necessarily need to be the most relevant portfolio holder, and in some instances, it may be more appropriate to select a member with an interest in the subject matter, or where they have external skills that may be relevant to the project overall.

4.3 **Resources**

- 4.3.1 The Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project was not fully resourced upon commencement. Attempts were made by the Arts Manager and Projects and Development Manager to run the project, but this was not appropriate as neither had the time or appropriate technical skills to do this role effectively. In addition, resources from the Asset Management team were limited and at several initial contractor meetings, no representation was present. Both of these issues were quickly addressed and resource was put in place to co-ordinate the project and ensure appropriate technical expertise was available from the perspective of WDC.
- 4.3.2 The roof replacement project is a significant and complex piece of work that requires appropriate technical resource. Whilst this was resolved quickly, not having this resource available at the start of the project is an example of the wider project issues identified earlier in this report. As such, we must ensure that WDC's ambition to deliver complex and challenging projects is always matched by appropriate capacity to deliver on our priorities and vision.
- 4.3.3 For the future, no project should be approved by Cabinet or any other body, without a full and appropriately signed off resourcing plan, that clearly defines who will be responsible for key project roles and that their availability has been agreed. Where resources do not exist, the cost of bringing in resource to support the project should be considered as part of the financial case, as if the Council can't afford to provide the resources which will make the project a success, it can't afford to do the actual project either.

4.4 **Financial Resource**

- 4.4.1 The Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project is a complex set of works and a significant financial risk. Undertaking major works on a heritage asset, whilst it remains open and without an extensive understanding of the full scope of works creates multiple variables that could impact on cost. Despite these potential complications, the budget for the project was established with very limited tolerance for variation.
- 4.4.2 The complexity of the project has led to cost overruns. These required reports to Cabinet to request additional funding, but the potential for additional costs should have been anticipated more comprehensively at the start of the project and included at that point. This would have improved transparency and given Councillors a much clearer idea of the potential implications far earlier in the project.
- 4.4.3 For future projects, WDC must ensure it makes every effort to include realistic costs for projects and that expenses are monitored throughout, to ensure any deviations can be quickly and adequately managed.

Improvements around upfront preparations will significantly assist in this area.

4.5 Next Steps

- 4.5.1 It should be noted that whilst the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project does have some significant lessons learned to date, the project overall has been well managed from WDC's side, and the resources in place have been responsive to changes and adapted accordingly.
- 4.5.2 The team at the Pump Rooms have been significantly impacted by this project, and the staff have continued to be committed to keeping the centre open, despite being faced with some very challenging circumstances and for this, they should be commended.
- 4.5.3 Requirements around capacity are being addressed through the development of the Corporate Programme Team and whilst this will not be complete in time for the finalisation of the Pump Rooms Roof Project, the lessons learned from this will help to inform how project management standards are developed and how staff are trained in the future, particularly around aspects such as CDM and building safety.
- 4.5.4 Upon completion of the Pump Rooms Roof Replacement project, a full review will be undertaken. The issues identified as part of this review, including positive aspects can be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if required, and will also be used to inform and improve future project delivery.

5. Key Risks

5.1 Project Management

- 5.2 Key risks faced by WDC through its current project management arrangements include:

- a) Resourcing

WDC has a lot of significant projects in place when the full scope of all service and major projects are considered. This level of throughput is challenging and can result in projects not being sufficiently resourced, or not being resourced with people who have the necessary expertise to fully deliver the desired outcomes. In most instances, this can lead to issues of delay or moderate additional costs, but in the most extreme of cases it can lead to project failure, significant additional costs or legal prosecution.

It is essential that WDC has a full understanding of the projects it is undertaking and continues to resource these with appropriately skilled staff, at appropriate volumes.

- b) Commissioning and Contractors

WDC has strong relationships with several suppliers who have worked with the Council through framework agreements for a number of years. It is essential however that WDC ensures these longstanding relationships do not create a risk of familiarity, where projects are allowed to proceed

with lower levels of supervision, or where the commissioning of contracts allows for greater flexibility that would not be accommodated otherwise.

WDC has seen projects where the use of incumbent contractors has led to an outcome that did not meet the full expectations of the Council. Whilst in each instance, steps have immediately been taken to correct this, continually monitoring the performance of contractors, through appropriate commissioning and effective contractual management is essential.

c) Overruns

Each of the previous two risks can contribute to both cost and time overruns that create additional demand on resources and have a knock-on effect with other activities. The completion of the Pump Rooms roof replacement is a recent example of this.

It is essential that WDC's projects, large or small, have appropriate governance mechanisms in place, to ensure that progress is challenged and difficulties addressed. Whether this is through the establishment of project boards for larger undertakings, or through project sponsors, each project should have a clear understanding of its objectives, a defined path to achieve them, and clear protocols for highlighting deviations. This is essential for WDC, to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations to achieve best value, and that it fulfils its organisational purpose, to deliver positive outcomes for its communities.

5.3 **Pump Rooms Roof Replacement Project Lessons Learned**

- 5.3.1 Key risks are not considered as part of this report regarding the lessons learned so far. Future risks for WDC to potentially consider will be discussed as part of the project close down and review process. If required, these can be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a future date.

Background Papers:

LGA, 2023, [Corporate Peer Challenge](#).

LGA, 2024, [Corporate Peer Challenge Review](#).