

# ODIHAM PARISH COUNCIL



## Annual Report



**April 2025**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report summarises the Council's activities and achievements covering the civic year May 2024 to May 2025.

The Report is a summary of the full presentation presented to the Annual Parish Assembly on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and will be published online after the meeting. Paper copies are available on request.

# 2. THE COUNCIL

All 10 councillors positions remain filled and there were no changes during the 2024-25 civic year. There is just over 2 years remaining in the civic term which runs from May 2023 to May 2027 and councillors will hold position until May 2027 unless resignation or other circumstances dictate otherwise.

There was one change to staff appointments and changes to contracted hours. The staff structure remains as 3 employees and weekly hours have increased from 72.5 to 77 hours per week.

# 3. GOVERNANCE

As a result of at least two thirds of councillors being elected in May 2023 and due to the Clerk holding the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), OPC was able to formally declare The General Power of Competence at the May 2023 annual council meeting. This simplifies decision making and grants additional powers for OPC's activities.

The governance and committee structure was reviewed in May 2024 with no changes. OPC continues to hold 3 weekly Planning & Development Committee meetings on Zoom and submits agreed responses to Hart DC using the Clerk's delegated authority. Decisions are later ratified by the next available full Council meeting. Community Committee and traffic and transport related matters are currently considered by full Council.



Three new working groups were established; the Health & Safety working group, War Memorial working group and group to research a new 20mph scheme on King Street.

## 4. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTROLS

A schedule of OPC's policies and procedures was reviewed by Council throughout the year and all essential reviews completed.

Policy Name	Latest review	Essential/ Desirable/ Optional
<b>Governance</b>		
Code of Conduct	Sep-23	Essential
Publication Scheme	Sep-23	Essential
Standing Orders	Jan-25	Essential
Scheme of Delegation	Jan-25	Desirable
Business Continuity Plan	Feb-25	Desirable
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Dec-24	Advisable
Dignity at Work Policy	Dec-24	Advisable
Councillor Officer Protocol	Dec-24	Advisable
<b>Finance</b>		
Financial Regulations	Nov-24	Essential
Statement of Internal Controls	Nov-24	Desirable
Claiming expenses by Cllrs Policy	Nov-24	Optional
Report on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Hart Parish Councils		
Investment Policy	Nov-24	Essential
Reserves Policy	Nov-24	Optional
Grant Giving Policy	May-24	Essential
<b>Council Strategy</b>		
Strategic Plan/Business Plan	Mar-25	Desirable
Annual Action Plan	Mar-25	Desirable
Casual Vacancy and Co-option Policy	Sep-24	Optional
Complaints Procedure	Mar 25	Essential
<b>Data Protection</b>		
Data Protection Policy	Jul-23	Essential
Document Retention Policy	Aug'24	Desirable
Consent form for communication with OPC	Jul-23	Desirable
Privacy Notice – General	Jul-23	Essential
Privacy Notice - Staff, Cllrs and Role Holders	Jul-23	Essential
Subject Access Request Policy	Jul-23	Desirable
Cyber Security Policy	Jun-24	Desirable
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>		
Health & Safety Policy	Dec-24	Essential
Safeguarding Policy	Dec-23	Desirable
<b>Environment</b>		
Environment & Climate Change Policy	Sep-24	Desirable
Biodiversity Action Plan	Aug-22	Essential
<b>Managing assets</b>		
Memorial Bench Policy	Feb-23	Optional
Hiring OPC's land and equipment	Sep-24	Optional
Tree Policy	May-19	Optional
<b>Communication</b>		
Communication Strategy	Mar-24	Desirable
Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy	Apr-24	Desirable

Policy Name	Latest review	Essential/ Desirable/ Optional
<b>Staffing</b>		
Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements	Dec-23	Desirable
Training and Development Policy	Dec-23	Desirable
Staff Handbook	Oct-24	Optional
Sickness absence policy	Oct-23	Desirable
Flexible working policy	Oct-23	Desirable
Emergency dependants leave policy	Oct-23	Desirable
Lone working policy	Oct-23	Desirable
Pensions Discretionary Policy	Oct-24	Essential

During the year, the Council achieved the Quality Gold Award from the National Association of Local Councils, the highest award, which demonstrates the Council achieves excellence in governance, leadership and council development. This award is valid for 3 years.

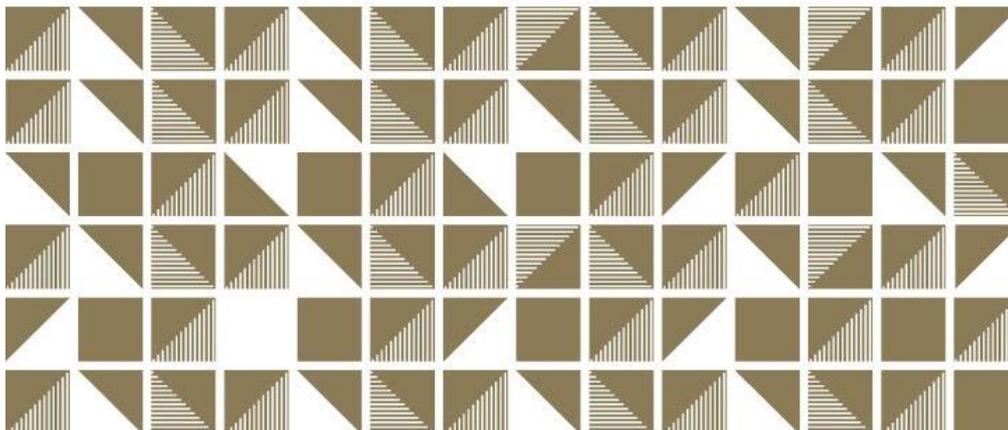


## Odiham Parish Council

*Keith Stewart*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 NALC Chair

09/2024  
 start date  
 09/2028  
 valid until

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.



## 5. FINANCE

All financial records were reported to the Finance Committee or full Council on a quarterly basis.

The annual internal and external audits were completed and a Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 was reported to full Council on 17<sup>th</sup> September and published on line, in accordance with legislation.

At the same meeting, the Do the Numbers Ltd was re-appointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and one interim audit was carried out November 2024. The annual internal audit is scheduled on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

**Odiham Parish Council**  
**BALANCE SHEET**  
31/03/2025

<i>(Last) Year Ended</i> 31 Mar 2024		<i>(Current) Year Ended</i> 31 Mar 2025
£		£
	<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
	Stocks and stores	
	Work in progress	
	Debtors (Net of provision for doubtful debts)	
	Prepayments	
8,316.38	VAT Recoverable	5,044.49
195,287.16	Temporary lendings (investments)	
	Cash in hand	209,572.41
203,603.54	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	214,616.90
	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
	Creditors	
<u>203,603.54</u>	<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>214,616.90</u>
	<b>Represented by:</b>	
134,126.92	General fund Balance	149,665.10
	<b>Reserves:</b>	
3,622.50	Capital	1,633.50
65,854.12	Earmarked	63,318.30
	Adjustments	
<u>203,603.54</u>		<u>214,616.90</u>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2025

**Odiham Parish Council**  
**Income & Expenditure Account**  
01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025

(Last) Year Ended  
31 Mar 2024

(Current) Year Ended  
31 Mar 2025

**Income**

1000 - General Account	231,982.29
2000 - Amenity Areas	38,936.68
3000 - Community	40.00
8000 - Projects	19,830.00
	<b>£290,788.97</b>

**Expense**

1000 - General Account	126,282.46
2000 - Amenity Areas	84,763.08
5000 - Traffic and Transport	9,291.69
3000 - Community	14,406.47
4000 - Planning	8,671.67
7000 - Earmarked Reserves	14,938.77
8000 - Projects	21,421.47
	<b>£279,775.61</b>

**General Fund**

136,700.66	Balance at 01 Apr 2024	134,126.92
320,333.57	ADD Total Income	290,788.97
457,034.23		424,915.89
332,848.45	DEDUCT Total Expenditure	279,775.61
124,185.78		145,140.28
-9,941.14	DEDUCT Reserves Balance	-4,524.82
<b>£134,126.92</b>	Balance at 31 Mar 2025	<b>£149,665.10</b>

Reserves:

Capital Reserve Balance £1633.50  
Earmarked Reserve Balance £63318.30

	Budget	Funded by			Band D	
Year	Budget	Income	Precept	Reserves	Price per Band D Property	Increase
2023/24	£268,727	£56,653	£212,074 +0.79%	0	£90.13	+36p +0.41%
2024/25	£279,580 +4.03%	£55,321 -4.13%	£224,259 +5.74%	0	£93.92	+£3.79 +4.2%
2025/26	£301,506 +7.84%	£57,940 +4.73%	£243,566 8.61%	0	£101.78	+£7.86 +8.36%

## 6. PERFORMANCE AGAINST STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### I. Providing high quality community facilities

Project priority	By whom	Project outcome	Agreed action	By when	Reviewed by Council 18.03.25
<b>A - The Bridewell</b> To transform The Bridewell into a thriving community hub.	Led by the office and overseen by The Bridewell working group	To improve facilities for all and increase income to a level where income supports running costs.	i) Complete works to improve first floor space as a co-working hub (funded by Lottery grant). ii) Consider launch/open event for the co-working hub. iii) Improve marketing when works complete. iv) Research door entry and security systems to improve access for all building users whilst minimizing staff commitments. v) Progress future vision concept plans and seek pre-application advice. vi) Work towards obtaining fully costed schedule of works for future vision. vii) Submit full planning application.	Sept '24  Sep/Oct '24 Sep/Oct '24  Nov/Dec '24  Dec '24  Mar '25 Mar '25	Complete.  Complete.  Complete and ongoing.  Research in progress.  ) Note change in direction to ) be included on 25-26 Action ) Plan.
<b>B - The Firs</b> To improve accessibility and amenity value.	Amenities Committee	To improve accessibility and amenity value.	i) Arrange site visit with councillors and other interested community members. ii) Develop project proposal. iii) Secure funding to meet project costs.	Dec '24  Mar '25 Mar '25	Refer to 25-26 .
<b>C - Benches</b> To continuing improving bench provision and interpretation boards in the Parish.	Amenities Committee	To improve accessibility and amenity value.	i) Review condition of current benches and authorise works. ii) Review map of benches and consider further provision.	Aug & Nov '24 & Feb '25  Nov '25	Several repairs and maintenance carried out. Ongoing process.  Ongoing review required. Refer to 25-26.

<b>Project priority</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Project outcome</b>	<b>Agreed action</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Reviewed by Council 18.03.25</b>
<b>D - War memorial</b> To improve the condition and protect the heritage.	War memorial working group	To improve the condition and protect the heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Arrange site visit with councillors and other interested community members.</li> <li>ii) Develop project proposal.</li> <li>iii) Secure funding to meet project costs.</li> </ul>	Sep '24  Oct '24 Dec '24	Complete.  Complete. Funding application submitted.
<b>E - Future provision</b> Keeping all assets under review.	Amenities Committee	To ensure community assets are useful to the community and maintained in a safe condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Arrange structural surveys of properties and review before '25-'26 budget setting process.</li> <li>ii) Review asset portfolio before '25-'26 budget setting process and identify highest priority projects.</li> </ul>	Nov '24	Complete.  Complete.
<b>F - Play Equipment</b> To maintain a rolling programme of maintenance and future replacement.	Amenities Committee	To ensure community assets are attractive and safe for community use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Independent annual play inspections.</li> <li>ii) Complete actions from annual play inspections.</li> <li>iii) Consider removal of zip wire.</li> <li>iv) Identify highest priority repairs and replacements before '25-26 budget setting.</li> </ul>	Jun '24  Sep '24  Nov '24	Complete.  Complete. Complete.  Complete.

## 2. Supporting the Parish as a pleasant, safe and enjoyable place to live and work

Project priority	By whom	Project outcome	Agreed action	By when	Reviewed by Council 18.03.25
<b>A - Promoting community cohesion</b>	Full Council	Show regard to the valuable role community groups play in uniting the community.	i) Consider and award community Grants.	Jul '24 and Jan '25	Complete.
	Office and OPC rep		ii) Liaise with InOdiham and other event organisers before determining '25-'26 budget.	Oct '24	Complete.
	Full Council		iii) To resolve to make honorary award to RAF Odiham.	Sep '24	Complete.
	New working group		iv) To make plans for celebratory event in 2025.	Dec '24	In progress.
	All	To assume a leading role in civic events.	v) To deliver OPC's events: a. D-Day beacon lighting. b. Armed Forces flag raising c. Remembrance. d. Christmas tree lighting.	Jun '24 Jun '24 Nov '24 Dec '24	Complete. Complete. Complete. Complete.
Community Committee		vi) To agree OPC's '25 events before setting '25-'26 process.	Nov '24	Complete.	
	Partnership with HCC led by Cllr SB.	Keeping RoWs accessible.	vii) Continue leading and supporting conservation volunteers group. viii) Keeping RoWs accessible, through regular community volunteering events throughout the year. Have successfully applied for grants and completed projects, with a future plan of action in motion.	Ongoing	Complete and ongoing.  Complete and ongoing. Further grant application in progress.
	Led by Cllr SB.	To prepare for emergencies in the best	ix) Hold online briefing event for everyone listed in the local Emergency Plan. x) Submit final Emergency Plan to HDC.	Nov '24	Complete. Complete.
<b>B - Traffic and transport</b>	New working group	Speed reduction.	i) Set up 20mph working group and appoint members. ii) Develop project proposal scheme iii) Research funding.	Sep '24  Mar '25 Mar '25	Complete. Research to start April/May. Refer to 25-26.

Project priority	By whom	Project outcome	Agreed action	By when	Reviewed by Council 18.03.25
	Full Council	Speed reduction.	v) Agree proposal for spending village gateway S106 contribution on Alton Rd.	Mar '25	Not completed due to limited access during construction phase of adjacent development site. Refer to 25-26.
	Council	Safety.	vi) Lobby other authorities for infrastructure improvements: a. RAF Odiham/B3349 junction. b. Pedestrian crossing points Dunley's Hill & Hook Rd. c. Cycle/pedestrian route to M3 footbridge.	Ongoing, subject to opportunities	Ongoing.  No opportunity arisen. No opportunity arisen.
	Partnership project with HCC	To support residents in using public transport.	vii) New bus shelter on south carriageway on Alton Rd. viii) To continue lobbying HCC for shelters in the right places.	Sep '24  Ongoing	Complete.  No opportunity arisen
<b>C - Supporting the Village Centre</b>	Council	To support residents and the High St.	i) To lobby for a Parish wide review of parking. ii) To lobby Hart to keep parking charges to a minimum.	Ongoing, as opportunities arise	Requested. Some progress relating to The Bury. Hart District Council did not consult.
	Council	To support economic sustainability.	iii) Use High St WhatsApp group. iv) Respond to new opportunities & threats. v) Hold business forum meeting.	Ongoing, as opportunities arise. 'Jun '24	Ongoing. Ongoing.  Complete
	Amenities Committee	Economic sustainability & accessibility	vi) Maintaining King St public toilets. vii) Consider concept plans for accessible cubicle in King St.	Ongoing  'Sep 24	Ongoing. Plans drawn up. Community consultation was inconclusive which led to project being shelved.
<b>D - Planning matters</b>	Planning & Development Committee	To support local people in finding local homes.	i) Neighbourhood Plan review. ii) Respond to Government's NPPF consultation. iii) Seek to identify sites for housing development (eg rural exception sites for affordable homes). iv) Listen and respond to local opinion for large developments.	Dec '24  Sep '24  Ongoing as opportunities arise.	Complete. Referendum 25.03.25.  Complete. Enquiries carried out with no interest from landowner in progressing at current time. Ongoing in accordance with the policies in the NP. Ongoing.

## 3. Action against Climate Change to protect our environment and the planet

Project priority	By whom	Project outcome	Agreed action	By when	Reviewed by Council 18.03.25
<b>A - Controlling the Council's carbon footprint</b> To follow the Council's adopted Environment and Climate Change Policy in all decisions.	Cllrs AMc and DS  Cllr MT  Office  Office in consultation with Cllrs AMc and DS.	To reduce OPC's carbon footprint in support of OPC's Environment and Climate Action Plan.	i) Cllrs McFarlane and Sanger to attend Hart's Climate Action Group and report to Council. ii) Review energy efficient audits for council owned buildings and complete quick win actions. iii) Develop an action plan to reduce carbon emissions when carrying out Council activities. iv) Draw up new grounds maintenance specs to include contractors' working methods. v) Research other projects at <a href="https://www.hart.gov.uk/impact-hart">https://www.hart.gov.uk/impact-hart</a> before '25-'26 budget setting.	Ongoing  Dec '24  Dec '24  Nov '24  Nov '24	Ongoing  Small actions in progress. Watching brief for higher cost actions as funding opportunities arise. Carry forward to 25-26 due to retendering of grounds maintenance contracts.  Complete.  No specific projects identified. Refer to 25-26.
<b>B - Raising community awareness</b> To support OPC's Environment and Climate Change Policy	All. Lead councillors Clls AMc and DS	To raise awareness and encourage the community to make changes to slow climate change.	i) Continue supporting The Greening Campaign – confirm phase 2 actions complete and consider phase 3. ii) Hold allotment open day. iii) Include climate change articles in all newsletters. iv) Promote HCC's shoots along the routes project.	Dec '24  Aug '24 Apr, Jul and Oct '24 and Apr '25.	Ongoing. No specific projects identified. Refer to 25-26. Complete Complete and ongoing. Refer to 25-26.  Complete
<b>C - Biodiversity gain</b> To follow the Council's adopted Biodiversity Action Plan.	Amenities Committee  Planning Committee  “ “	To encourage biodiversity gain in support of OPC's Biodiversity Action Plan.	i) Annual review of OPC's Biodiversity Action Plan. ii) Support sustainable development and biodiversity net gain when considering planning applications. iii) Revised Neighbourhood Plan to include Natural Environment (Policy 12 12.vi, 3.112-114).	Oct '24  Ongoing  Dec '24	Not complete. Meetings with grounds contractors scheduled in the Spring. Refer to 25-26.  Ongoing through P&D Committee.  Included.

Project priority	By whom	Project outcome	Agreed action	By when	Reviewed by Council 18.03.25
<b>D - Biodiversity gain continued</b> Continued To follow the Council's adopted Biodiversity Action Plan.	Amenities Committee  Council	To encourage biodiversity gain in support of OPC's Biodiversity Action Plan.	i) Participate in wider HCC initiatives as opportunities arise eg <a href="https://www.hants.gov.uk/pollinator-pledge">Pollinator Pledge   Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)</a> ii) Consider allocation of '25-26 budget to repeat habitat checks.	Consider Oct as part of budget prep.  " "	Not complete. Refer to 25-26.  Budget available. Review to be considered.
<b>E - Supporting responsible and sustainable development</b>	Planning & Development Committee	To support OPC's Climate Change declaration.	i) To support developments for renewable energies. ii) To campaigning for national joined up policies.	Ongoing, as opportunities arise.	Ongoing.  Letters sent to former MP. Ongoing.
<b>F - Sustainable transport</b>	Council	To support OPC's Climate Change declaration.	i) Campaign for EVCPs. ii) Ongoing support for public transport provision.  ii) HDC's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Z7 – Odiham core walking zone and cycling route 200 – Hook to Odiham) <a href="#">Link</a> a. Support. b. Consider delivering own projects eg benches & planting on High St.	Ongoing, as opportunities arise.  Ongoing Oct '24	EVCPs installed in both Hart owned car parks. Consultation carried out and correspondence submitted without success.  Complete.  Refer to 25-26.

## 4. Aspiring for excellence in the sector

Project priority	By whom	Project outcome	Agreed action	By when	Reviewed by Council 18.03.25
<b>A - Providing value for money</b> Managing budgets to provide value for money whilst allowing improvements and growth to support the future community.	All	Supporting the community.	i) Budget workshop for all councillors which includes review of half year position. ii) Review of draft budget by the Finance Committee. iii) Agree annual budget. iv) Review new Financial Regs. v) Apply for external funding for projects.	07.10.24  Dec '24  Jan '25 Nov '24. Ongoing when opportunities arise.	Review complete.  Complete. Complete. Complete. Ongoing. Application submitted for war memorial and several applications for RoW improvements. Other enquiries sent. Applications for round 2 of the Shared Prosperity Fund were unsuccessful.
<b>B - Communication</b> Demonstrating transparency, community engagement and inclusivity through the development of plans based on community feedback and a comms strategy which strives to reach everyone in our community.	Comms strategy working group.	To aide community engagement which guides OPC's work.	i) 6 month review of new comms strategy. ii) Review options for collection of data through surveys (other than Survey Monkey). iii) Set up email subscription tool to support OPC's activities and comms. iv) Publish Summer, Autumn and Spring newsletters. v) Consult community on large project and spending opportunities.	Nov '24.  Dec '24  Dec '24 Jul & Oct '24 and Apr '25 Ongoing, as opportunities arise	Not complete. Refer to 25-26.  Enquiries in progress.  Enquiries in progress.  Complete Consultation carried out on reconfiguring King St toilets to provide accessible cubicle.

<b>Project priority</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Project outcome</b>	<b>Agreed action</b>	<b>By when</b>	<b>Reviewed by Council 18.03.25</b>
<b>C - People</b> Setting high standards to retain and attract the best people to represent the interests of residents.	Clerk and Staffing Committee	Continued professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Review of the Training Schedule by the Staffing Committee.</li> <li>ii) Annual staff appraisals.</li> <li>iii) Promote training opportunities for all.</li> <li>iv) Review and provide training budget before '25-26 budget setting.</li> </ul>	<p>Oct '24 Oct '24</p> <p>Ongoing Jan '25</p>	<p>Complete. Complete. Complete and ongoing.</p> <p>Complete.</p>
<b>D - Civility and respect</b> Conducting all activities with civility and respect.	Council	Demonstrating commitment to ongoing civility and respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Two year review of policies; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion,</li> <li>b. Dignity at Work,</li> <li>c. Councillor &amp; officer protocol.</li> </ul> </li> <li>ii) Follow related work in the sector.</li> </ul>	<p>Dec '24 Ongoing</p>	<p>Complete. Complete. Complete. Ongoing. Responded to Government consultation for improving standards in public life.</p>
<b>E - Supporting the sector</b> Respecting and supporting the work of NALC, HALC and other sector support organisations	Clerk Clerk/Chair  All	Supporting and promoting the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Joining Open University research program for collaborative working between parish/town councils and principal authorities.</li> <li>ii) Attending NALC AGM.</li> <li>iii) Responding to consultations and projects.</li> </ul>	<p>Jul, Aug &amp; Sep '24 19.10.24</p> <p>Ongoing, as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>Complete. Outcome of research unknown. Complete. Clerk/Deputy Clerk and Cllr Bell Ongoing. Following emerging plans on Devolution in Hampshire and local government reorganisation.</p>
Working towards accreditations & awards which confirm best practice and commitment to continued development.	Clerk, agreed by Council	Evidence of best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Complete outstanding actions for NALC Quality Gold award.</li> <li>ii) Submit nomination to the HALC annual awards.</li> <li>iii) Review criteria of silver Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition scheme.</li> </ul>	<p>Oct '24</p> <p>Sep '24</p> <p>Mar '25</p>	<p>Achieved.</p> <p>Complete. Unsuccessful.</p> <p>Office review concluding OPC is not a large enough employer.</p>