



**Awards
2014**



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Annual Report Council Performance 2013/14



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1. Introduction – meeting our objectives

Welcome to Cherwell District Council's annual performance report for 2013/14. This document looks back over the year and reviews the Council's strategic objectives and performance against them. It also highlights areas of achievement in terms of the Council's key services and looks forward to the challenges we face in the future. This report sits alongside our Five Year business Strategy and annual business plan plus the detailed financial and performance reports which set out our long term priorities, medium term financial strategy and details of our achievements.

During 2013/14 the Council has focused on protecting frontline services, working in partnership with South Northamptonshire Council. We have taken a pro-active, direct approach to dealing with the current challenges facing local government by tackling issues head on – developing efficient working models, focusing on increasing the Councils' capacity for innovation, agility and the need to be fit for the future. We are carving out a space for Cherwell District to stay at the forefront of implementing new ways of delivering services that maintain quality and standards at the front line. We are truly transforming and the benefits are real. They can be evidenced through the on-going financial savings that we are making, and our ability to avoid increasing council tax levels for the fifth year in succession.

Looking forward we continue to face many opportunities and challenges. We have developed a new relationship with a third partner, Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) and will show that working across three counties and three regions is also possible. Our commitment to transforming public services was recognised by the Government in October 2013 through the award of a £367,000 grant to be used for the further development of innovative working practices and associated efficiencies and we are continuing to build upon that. We are now seen as an exemplar in innovation and transformation, and in doing so, we are proud to be raising the national profile of our District.

To achieve our Five Year Business Strategy we recognise that a strong local economy is essential for a strong local community. This remains our overriding priority. We will continue to promote economic growth; building thriving communities through a strong, sustainable, and dynamic local economy offering our communities more stable, high quality and high value jobs, with increased opportunities for all, and more affordable homes for local people.

We hope you find this annual report useful, and if you have any feedback or would like to discuss the business plan in more detail please get in touch using the contact details on page 29.

**Councillor
Barry Wood**



Leader of Cherwell District
Council

**Councillor
Nicholas Turner**



Lead Member for Performance
and Customers

Sue Smith



Chief Executive

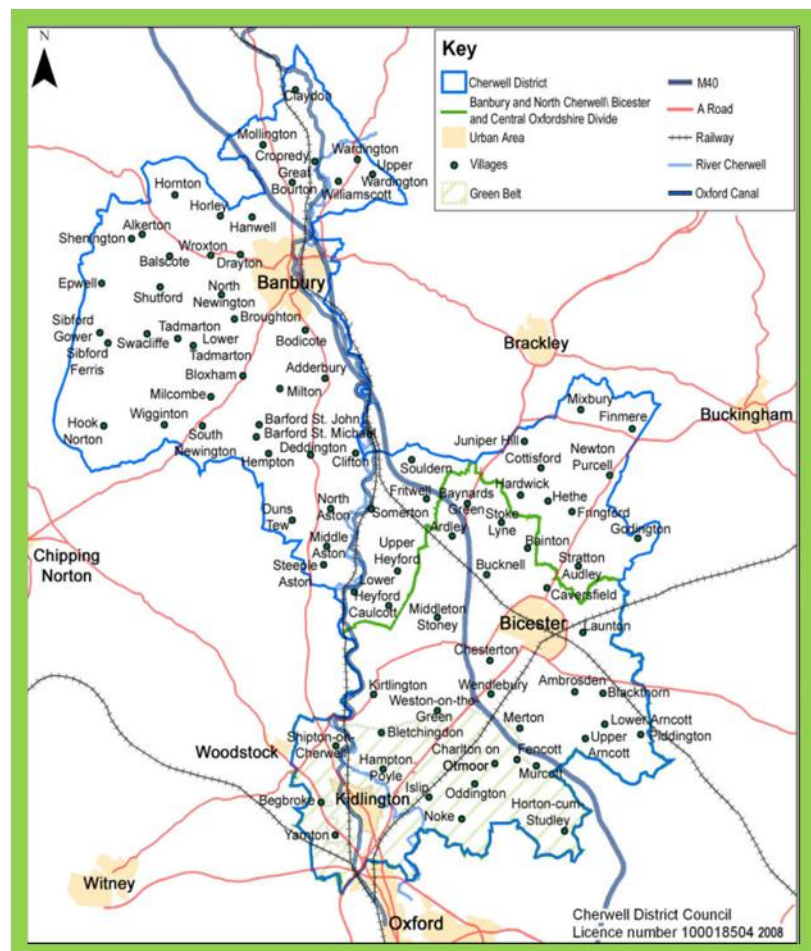
2. Cherwell – introducing the district

Cherwell District covers an area of 228 square miles in north Oxfordshire. Named after the River Cherwell which flows through it, the District is located between London and Birmingham, at the most northern point of the South East region, where it meets the West Midlands and East Midlands. Cherwell borders Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Aylesbury Vale, South Northamptonshire and Stratford on Avon Districts.

Approximately 141,868 people live in the District with over 60 per cent of the population living in the principal centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington; the remainder in more than 70 smaller settlements of between 50 and 3,500 people.

Cherwell offers a unique and successful combination of fine rural landscapes providing some of the most attractive and picturesque scenery in Oxfordshire with thriving commercial and industrial centres that bring prosperity and economic strength in a highly accessible and desirable location. The majority of the District (approx.85 per cent) is made up of attractive farmland with 14 per cent lying within the Oxford Green Belt, contributing to making Cherwell the thirteenth least densely populated District in the South East. The District also has a rich built heritage, with around 3,000 listed buildings and more than 50 conservation areas.

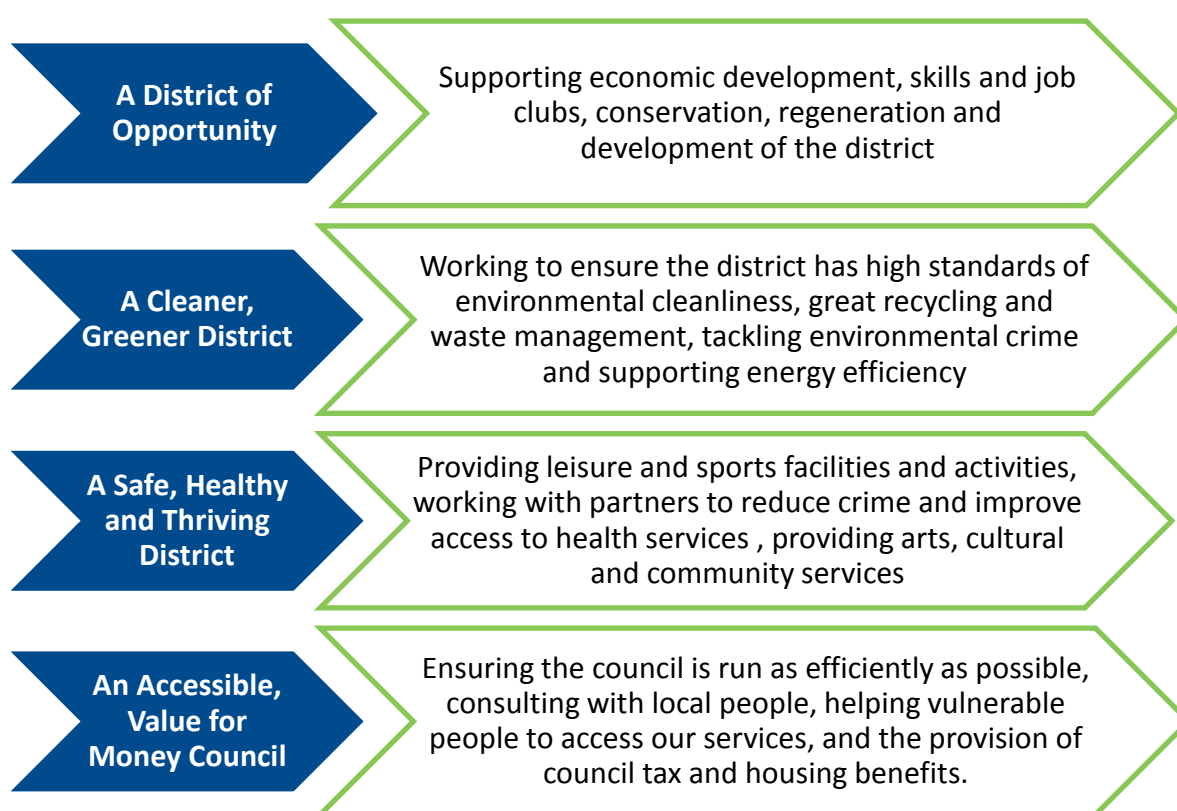
Cherwell District is centrally located and accessible, the M40 passes through the district and there are excellent rail connections. To drive, Banbury is around 75 miles from London and approximately an hour by train. Bicester is 60 miles from London and also just less than one hour by train. To Birmingham by road Banbury is around 50 miles and less than an hour by train. Bicester to Birmingham is approximately 65 miles and around an hour by train.



3. Our Approach to Performance

Our long term vision for the District is ambitious. Working with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors we are aiming to build a district with a diverse economy. We are working to secure opportunities for all, and to help grow vibrant, thriving communities connected by a sense of pride, place and purpose.

To help deliver this vision the Council has four strategic priorities. These priorities shape the work we do, our services, plans and major projects. They are outlined below and form the basis of our performance objectives as set out in our Business Plan:

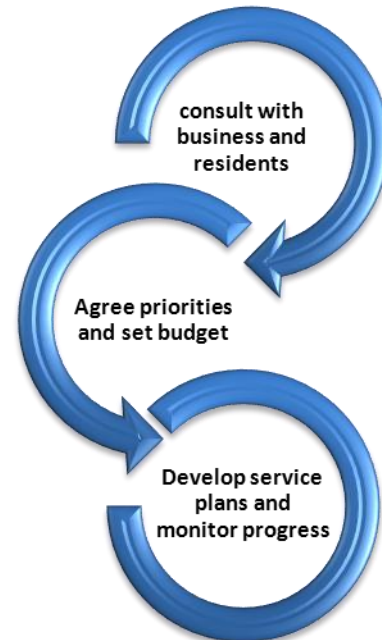


As well as our strategic priorities we set out a number of performance pledges and review our progress in terms of customer feedback, resources, delivery of services, major programmes and projects. This forms our performance scorecard which is reported quarterly.

A focus on delivery

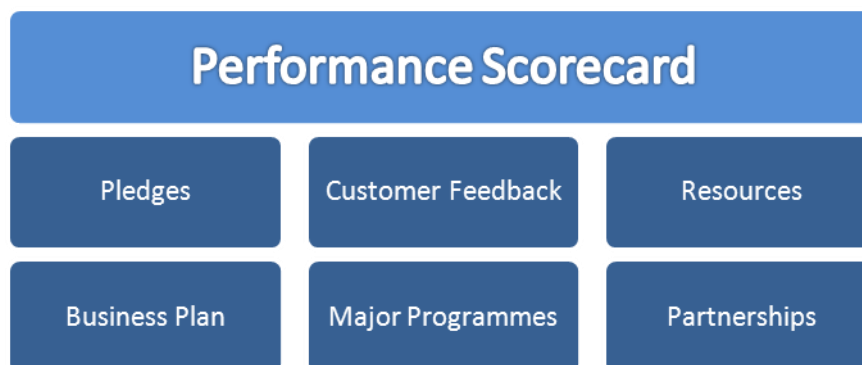
Performance, accountability and transparency

- As part of our annual business planning process we follow a clear cycle. We consult with businesses and residents to understand local priorities, we work with our partners to agree priorities and objectives and set a budget to deliver them. Finally our services develop plans to ensure we meet our commitments and we report upon our progress.
- During operational service planning every staff member has a performance appraisal and is set targets and objectives to ensure they are working to meet the Council's priorities.



Reporting our performance

- Every quarter we review our performance. The table below outlines our performance scorecard. As with any business we report on a number of measures which reflect the council's priorities and core activities. These include the performance pledges, customer feedback and resources. We also review our business plan targets, the performance of key council services, major programmes and projects and our work with commercial and voluntary sector partners.
- This approach helps to ensure we monitor the performance of our whole organisation. Where we identify issues we report actions to be taken to the Executive.
- Details about our performance and expenditure are published on a quarterly basis.



4. Priorities and Performance 2013/14

2013/14 has seen the Council deliver against its strategic priorities whilst continuing to reduce its base budget, maintain performance in priority service areas and work towards major projects. This section of the annual report covers performance in five main areas:

→ Our performance pledges

These are a set of 'pledges' publicly highlighted in the council tax leaflet which was sent to every household in Cherwell. These promises reflect local priorities, are grounded within our strategic objectives and reflect the results of our corporate consultation programme.

→ Delivering our business plan

The business plan highlights our key aims and objectives under our four strategic priorities; a district of opportunity, a cleaner, greener district, a safe, healthy and thriving district and an accessible, value for money council.

→ Major programmes

A suite of major programmes and projects helping to develop the economic, social and environmental sustainability for the district.

→ Customer feedback

Feedback from local residents and customers.

→ Working in partnership

Recognising that much of the work the Council undertakes is done in partnership with the voluntary and private sector this section highlights the projects and initiatives undertaken over the course of the last year.

Our Performance Pledges for 2013/14 – a review

Of the 19 performance pledges we made at the beginning of the year 16 have been met in full and three partially met. The table below provides a summary of our performance:

A District of Opportunity

Continue to support skills development, apprenticeships and job clubs in order to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training

→ **Achieved in Full** – jobs clubs were held throughout the year and have expanded to various districts with 1,290 attendees. We worked in partnership to deliver a series of events including providing support to groups facing redundancy and prisoners reaching their release date. The Council has continued its successful programme of apprenticeships and held an event to provide information on apprentice opportunities for young people.

Deliver 150 affordable homes in the District and support opportunities for self build and developing self build skills

→ **Achieved in Full** – 193 homes were delivered during 2013/14. Training courses under the Build Programmes for developing skills for self-build have commenced.

Complete the local plan as the foundation for economic growth in the district

→ **Achieved in Part** – the Local Plan has been submitted and will be examined in June 2014. Many of the development sites are already progressing through the planning system with town centre redevelopment and employment sites coming on stream.

Continue to strengthen the leisure and retail facilities in Banbury and Bicester Town Centres

→ **Achieved in Full** – Pioneer Square in Bicester opened in July 2013 as well as a new Sainsbury's supermarket and a Vue cinema. The Community Building is due to commence work in summer 2014 and will include the library facility. In addition the Council has secured a hotel provider. In Banbury, outline planning has been approved for Castle Quay 2 project which will get underway in 2014/15.

A Cleaner, Greener District

Maintain a household recycling rate of above 57%

→ **Achieved in Part** – this year we achieved a rate of 55%. Garden and food waste collections were down in the first half of the year but bin sales to encourage recycling were successful and there has been an increase in the last part of the year. The Council remains strongly committed to recycling and continues to work to promote

recycling and waste reduction.

A Cleaner, Greener District

Improve local residents' satisfaction with street and environmental cleanliness continuing our successful programme of neighbourhood litter blitzes

→ **Achieved in Full** – satisfaction ratings have risen from 69% to 70%.

Continue to reduce the Council's carbon footprint by further improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and vehicles

→ **Achieved in Part** – progress is being made to further improve energy performance and reduce emissions. However there have been some delays with the biomass boiler installation for Bicester Sports Centre. The leisure centres have continued to reduce their emissions and energy consumption.

Continue to give Cherwell residents the opportunity to take advantage of low cost insulation by working with partners to set up a Green Deal provider

→ **Achieved in Full** – Green Deal Together (GDT) has been authorised as a Green Deal Provider and approved for credit by the Green Deal Finance Company. As a result the company is now able to join the 44 other Green Deal Providers who can offer Green Deal finance. GDT is aiming to go 'live' in April 2014

Start work on site for the initial housing development at North West Bicester

→ **Achieved in Part** – Work on site is expected in April 2014 and a revised timetable for the housing development will follow.

A Safe, Healthy and Thriving District

Work with local police and licence holders to ensure our town centres remain safe and vibrant in the evenings

→ **Achieved in Part** – Thames Valley Police plan to prioritise prevention and mitigation of the night time economy violence in 2014/15

Continue working with our partners to provide support to the most vulnerable individuals and families in the District, building on the Brighter futures in Banbury Programme

→ **Achieved in Full** – Additional multi agency projects were funded in 2013/14. In November 2013 a successful partner engagement event was undertaken to instigate further activity and joint working.

A Safe, Healthy and Thriving District

Complete the layout of the sports pitches at the South West Bicester Sports Village and finalise plans for the Pavilion

- **Achieved in Full** – Work on the Bicester Community Building has delayed slightly the development of the pavilion plans but completion date of August 2015 is still on schedule. Playing pitches are completed and will be allowed to become established before they are brought into use in September 2015.

Support the upgrade of sports facilities across the district using the Olympic Legacy Fund

- **Achieved in Full** – Pitch improvements were completed at Stratfield Brake and carpet replaced on the synthetic pitch at Kidlington.

Support local community & Oxford University Hospital Trust to retain and develop health services at the Horton General Hospital

- **Achieved in Full** – Proposed longer term development of Horton services is based on retaining the core of existing services, increased outpatient appointments, increasing elective surgery and additional diagnostic services. Proposals are consistent with OCCG's five year outline commissioning strategy.

Support the local health sector in building a new community hospital in Bicester

- **Achieved in Full** – the new community hospital is under construction

An Accessible, Value for Money Council**Secure savings of at least £500,000 to help meet the medium term financial deficit**

- **Achieved in Full** – this target has been met in full and savings built into the medium term financial strategy. A council tax freeze is in place for the coming year and this represents the fifth year of a 0% council tax increase.

Improve level of customer satisfaction especially anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and car parking services

- **Achieved in Full** – all areas of focus have improved and reflected in higher satisfaction levels than in 2012

Continue to improve our website, the ease of accessing our services and giving feedback online

- **Achieved in Full** – progress continued on from last year in improving website and online access for customers and the assessment from SOCITM (professional body for IT management and digital services) resulted in the Council being given a 3 out of 4 star rating.

Delivering Our Business Plan

During 2013/14 we have focused on delivery of our strategic priorities, providing value for money and key projects and services that enhance the social, economic and environmental quality of the district. To summarise our performance we use a 'RAGG*' (Red, Amber, Green, Green*) system where green* refers to a target overly met, green for a target wholly met, amber to a target narrowly missed and red to a target missed by 10%.

A summary of our performance:

An overview of our performance by theme:

END OF YEAR 2013/14 Summary Outturn					
	Green *	Green	Amber	Red	Total no. of measures
Performance Pledges	1	15	3	0	19
Corporate Business Plan	9	53	5	6	73
Major Programmes	0	4	1	0	5
Corporate Equalities Plan	0	13	1	0	14
Significant Partnerships	0	17	0	0	17
% summary	8%	80%	8%	5%	128

Corporate Business Plan Achievement (by business plan priority):

Business Plan Performance 2013/2014	Green*	Green	Amber	Red	Total no. of measures
District of Opportunity	27%	50%	15%	8%	26
Cleaner Greener	0%	71%	0%	29%	7
Safe, Healthy & Thriving	10%	86%	0%	5%	21
Accessible Value for Money	0%	90%	5%	5%	19
Total (number activities/projects)	9	53	5	6	73

Performance Highlights include:

A District of Opportunity

Economic Development

- Our Job Clubs have continued across the district, with over 1290 job seeker visits. Of particular note was the Banbury Job Fair held at the end of February 2014 which attracted over 200 jobseekers and a dozen employers.
- Collaboration has been established with the Bullingdon Prison to assist inmates to prepare for their release.
- Apprenticeships – the council has its own programme of apprenticeships, with six new opportunities for young unemployed local people made available this year, and has worked with local business to support the establishment of new apprenticeship opportunities.
- Supporting local businesses and entrepreneurship, we have worked to provide a comprehensive set of services to support local business including:
 - ➔ Provided a total of 88 residents with detailed one to one business start-up advice through the Oxfordshire Business Enterprise Service
 - ➔ Active contribution to the development of both Local Enterprise Partnerships (South East Midlands and Oxfordshire)
 - ➔ Working with parish and town councils and business groups to agree specific actions on Town Centre Initiatives
 - ➔ Commenced a tourism development study to enable investment in this sector



Planning Services

- Processing of major planning applications is on target at year end with just over 83% of applications processed within 13 weeks.
- Significant progress was made on preparing the Local Plan for the district and the draft submission was formally submitted in January 2014 to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for public examination.
- The schedule of conservation appraisals continues and heritage advice is provided to ensure successful and high quality developments

Regeneration and Housing

- The Master Plans for Banbury and Bicester have been progressed during the year with the successful opening of Pioneer Square in Bicester, planning permission for the Community Building has been submitted and outline planning has been approved for Castle Quay 2 project in Banbury.
- We have delivered 193 new affordable homes during 2013/14 of which 110 were affordable rented, 24 in shared ownership and 59 for help to buy.
- The use of temporary accommodation fell during the year and at year end we have 28 households in temporary housing. Throughout the year we have continued to deliver a prevention focussed service and deal with cases before they become homeless. The low numbers in temporary accommodation has also been supported by the increase in social housing across the district.
- Our work to support the development of affordable housing and skills for unemployed young people through our innovative 'Build!' programme continues. Purchasers in Newton Close, Bicester recently completed a 10 week skills training course which proved very successful and further courses are planned for the coming year. This training programmes is also extended to assist people who are taking on new affordable rented housing apartments in Banbury and Bicester.



A Cleaner, Greener District

Protecting the environmental quality of the district

We now recycle around 55% of our waste. During December and January blue recycling and brown food/garden waste bins were sold at reduced cost to encourage more recycling. 1156 blue and 327 brown bins were purchased by residents. The benefits of recycling are a reduction in landfill costs, reduced carbon dioxide and an income to the council from sale of recycled content.

- However, we are committed to improving recycling and have excellent customer satisfaction ratings for our service: (data taken from our annual satisfaction survey 2013)

% satisfied with waste collection services	82%
% satisfied with recycling collections	83%
% satisfied with recycling centres	90%

- As well as our routine street cleansing, work to reduce fly tipping and our zero tolerance approach to environmental crime such as littering we also work to improve things at a neighbourhood level. This year we have continued our programme of targeted neighbourhood litter blitzes across the district to ensure our streets and neighbourhoods are clean and will continue this programme next year.



A Safe, Healthy and Thriving District

Supporting local communities

- Activities for older people – we have a service level agreement with Age UK that has provided 46 active lifestyle sessions for older people per month throughout 2013/14 and a series of Health Walks have been established across the District. Over 25 older people's groups have been given support and advice to keep providing a local service for older people.
- Activities for younger people – we have worked in partnership with the Early Intervention Hubs to deliver open access opportunities for young people in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. A weekly Rural Youth Hub was established and new web pages created for the Youth Website to make access and engagement with young people much stronger. Sport England funding was secured in partnership with Sanctuary Housing to develop opportunities for young people in the Brighter Futures wards at £15,000 per year over 5 years. A Talent Revival project commenced providing vulnerable individuals in their early 20's access to music technology and gain a qualification. We have supported the Oxfordshire Youth Arts Partnership Trust to provide a range of participatory arts opportunities for young people in Bicester at both The Courtyard and The Studio.
- Advisory services – our partnership with the Citizen's Advice Bureau continues to offer advisory services for all residents including debt and employment to housing and finances.

Community Safety

- Our already low crime figures continue to show improvement and our work with local communities helps to ensure that people feel safe in their homes and communities:

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	2013/14	2012/13	
Anti-Social Behaviour (total recorded)	2054	2351	-297
Criminal Damage	925	1082	-157
Burglary(Dwelling)	236	178	+58
All Crime	7286	7664	-378

Community Safety	2013/14	2012/13	
% of residents who feel safe at home after dark	93%	95%	-2%
% of residents who feel safe in town centres after dark	59%	59%	+/- 0%
% of residents who feel safe in their local communities after dark	75%	77%	-2%

The Council works closely in partnership with Thames Valley Police which includes burglary action plans and police forums. Cherwell District Council provides a physical patrol presence, mainly through wardens although the key focus is on prevention. A jointly funded post provides crime prevention advice/literature at road shows as well as support to victims of burglary, including literature, and due to restricted funding, a limited number of locks, chains, door cameras and locking letterboxes.

Leisure, Community and Health Services

- Leisure centres visits stand at over 1.6 million for the year, an increase again on the previous year.
- The Banbury Museum successfully transferred to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1/11/13. The museum has been able to attract several grants since independence.
- The Council has worked with local partners to support and encourage the development of improved health services in Bicester and the new community hospital is under construction. Working with Oxfordshire Care Commissioning there are long term proposals for the Horton General Hospital in Banbury.

An Accessible, Value for Money Council

Benefits

- During 2013/14 our time to process new housing and council tax benefits was 15.9 days with our average time to process the previous year at 17.19 days. The average time to process changes in benefits claims is 4.17 days.

Improvement and Efficiency

- During 2013/14 we have secured savings of £500,000 through an innovative value for money programme and joint working with our neighbouring partner council of South Northamptonshire.
- Our drive to save costs through efficiencies, procurement and partnership working has enabled us to focus on protecting frontline services and ensuring we have been able to freeze council tax for the fifth year period 2010/11- 2014/15.
- During 2013/14 we were selected as finalists by the Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards for Collaborative Procurement and the LGC.....



Community Engagement

- Our Connecting Communities programme provides community information and access to local public services in accessible locations. We combine these with fun activities for families, young people and older people to encourage strong community relations and easy access to services. This year three events were held in Banbury and one in Bicester on the themes of Coming of Age, Creative Bicester engaging with people through art and a sport themed session. During these events feedback is gathered on local issues affecting residents which can be used to improve our service delivery. The Old Town Party in Banbury was supported for the third year and two major programmes of public art were delivered in Pioneer Square and at Kingsmere.
- The Council has continued to hold Faith and Disability Forums to ensure that a wide variety of community groups are able to help contribute to the development and improvement of local services.

• Major Programmes

The Council has a programme of major projects which support two key themes 'place' and 'organisational transformation'.

Place Programme

The **Place Programme** includes the on-going work to regenerate Bicester Town Centre and the long term development plans that underpin the Eco-Bicester Project. Brighter Futures in Banbury is a partnership programme that aims to tackle long term disadvantage in key wards within the town. It is an innovative programme that brings together public, private and voluntary sector agencies to help address a wide variety of issues including educational attainment, worklessness, activities and support for young people.

Place	Year end summary
Banbury Developments	This programme draws together a combination of projects to achieve a strengthened Banbury town centre through coordinating and phasing major regeneration projects. Significant improvement has been delivered at Orchard Way during the year and the demolition of Lincoln House has made way for new homes. Elsewhere in the town, outline planning has been approved for Castle Quay 2, a project which will get under way towards the end of 14/15.
Eco Town Bicester	Good progress has been made throughout the year. A well-attended public exhibition in Pioneer Square and extensive wider on-going engagement has fed into the project: feedback and key responses can be found on: www.nwbicester.co.uk . The public will have further opportunities to comment in late Spring 2014. Meanwhile, the exemplar development has started off-site, with a start onsite planned for early summer 2014
Bicester Town Centre	Pioneer Square was officially opened for business in July 2013.
Brighter Futures in Banbury (BFiB)	The BFiB Programme is concentrating on tackling those individuals and families in most need across the District. Additional multi agency projects funded for 2013/14. Successful November partners engagement event at Prodrive undertaken to instigate further activity and joint working.

Transformation Programme

The **Transformation Programme** aims to ensure that the Council establishes services that are lean, cost effective and fit for purpose as national budgets reduce. The projects seek to explore opportunities for collaborative working, streamlining back office processes, introducing commercial operating models/principles and protecting frontline services.

Transformation	Year end summary
ICT Shared Services	<p>At the beginning of the year the purpose of this project was to harmonise ICT services across Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Councils and deliver significant efficiencies, performance improvements and ensure compliance with external requirements (such as for the Public Service Network).</p> <p>Work on compliance is progressing well across the two Councils. However, with a recent decision of the three Councils (including Stratford on Avon District Council) to implement a three way shared ICT service, and to begin the process of harmonising our ICT business applications, the first system harmonisations to be proposed is a new financial management system, currently being scoped across the three councils.</p>
Service Transformation	<p>A number of projects are in place or under development to deliver this transformation through a new approach to organisational development, and changes to the practical aspects of service delivery (print, post, scanning, a move to electronic document management, and a drive to implement more online services). Projects are controlled through individual project boards reporting through a Programme Board.</p> <p>The receipt this year of the DCLG Transformation Challenge award of £367,000 has resulted in the establishment of a three-way joint working group comprising of elected members from each of the three Councils, which has begun to review the service delivery methods of all our services, to identify opportunities to cut costs and generate income.</p>

Customer Feedback

Customer feedback is an important part of our performance management framework and we collect information in a number of ways including asking service users what they think of us, conducting satisfaction surveys via our Citizen's Panel and learning from comments and complaints.

The Satisfaction Survey conducted in June 2013 shows that more residents than ever are satisfied with Cherwell's performance. The overall message from this year's survey is very positive; we have improved satisfaction levels in the majority of areas and we will address areas where satisfaction scores are not as high.

The overall percentage of people satisfied with the services' provided by Cherwell District Council has risen again this year to 76%, from 68% in 2011. This is the highest rating of satisfaction recorded since the survey began.

Summary of customer satisfaction rates by service

Service	% very/fairly satisfied					
	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Overall satisfaction	76	75	68	73	67	67
Recycling centres	90	87	88	87	86	83
Local area as a place to live	80	86	78	N/A	N/A	N/A
Food and garden waste collection	80	80	80	76	N/A	N/A
Household recycling service	83	80	82	83	78	75
Waste collection	82	80	76	78	70	68
Leisure facilities	69	76	74	71	68	63
The way parks and open spaces are looked after	75	77	72	74	73	70
Street cleaning	70	69	64	72	67	66
Local car parking facilities	64	63	49	63	64	63
Leisure activities	59	61	56	N/A	N/A	N/A
Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour & nuisance	55	49	43	44	36	36
Council's approach to dealing with environmental crime	49	47	42	N/A	N/A	N/A

Complaints Management

Cherwell District Council follows a two stage complaints management system (Stage 1, initial investigation and response, Stage 2 investigation review and response by a member of the Joint Management Team). The process follows national good practice, is robust and allows the Council to learn lessons and implement improvements.

This system was introduced in 2013/14 and the categories for complaints follow the organisational structure of the Council -: Community Services, Development Management, Environment Services, Finance & Procurement, Law and Governance, Regeneration & Housing, Strategic Planning & the Economy and Transformation. This process of Stage 1 and Stage 2 allows complaints to be reviewed carefully to ensure lessons are learnt and where appropriate new procedures are implemented.

Figures for 2013/14




Service	2013/14	2012/13	+/-
Total complaints received	231	191	+21%

As expected the updated recording system, training and awareness has seen an increase in the overall number of complaints being accurately recorded. The Customer Insight report details further information around valid and invalid complaints and more importantly lessons learnt.

Gov Metric

As well as learning from complaints and reviewing satisfaction ratings we also use the Gov Metric system to help improve our performance in terms of telephone and web based transactions.

For 2013/14 telephone satisfaction levels remained high but overall website satisfaction levels were significantly lower. Whilst they are improving, as borne out by the SOCITM score of 3 stars for accessibility and range of service available on our website, it still remains a priority to make online services and information easier for the customer.

	Telephone Satisfaction	No of respondents	Web Satisfaction	No of respondents
 Good	98%	5992	44%	1103
 Average	2%	96	13%	315
 Poor	0%	19	43%	1062

Working in Partnership

The Council is committed to working with partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to meet its objectives. During 2012/13 this commitment has been demonstrated in a number of areas including economic development, breaking the cycle of deprivation, housing and homelessness, tackling crime and supporting community safety and town centre regeneration.

A summary of all of our key partnerships is included in the appendix to this report, highlights include:

The Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership

Over the past twelve months the Cherwell LSP Board has been refining its focus on the key priorities that it hopes will be able to benefit most from its cross-sector partnership working approach. These priorities are:

Support the community, voluntary and private sectors to have a more active role in local leadership.

Ensure our social infrastructure grows at the same rate as our communities and current deficiencies in provision are addressed including affordable housing, community buildings, open spaces, cultural and leisure opportunities.

Focus activity on tackling deprivation in both urban and rural Cherwell to ensure that we do not develop further into the “haves” and “have nots” and to create cohesive neighbourhoods where all people receive their fair share, get on well together, and have a real sense of belonging.

Raise expectations and ambitions and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining. We will foster and develop alternative ways of accessing employment such as self-employment, apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training.

Cherish the resources that define Cherwell’s character and distinctiveness including our natural environment, our built heritage and the vitality of our towns and villages.

The Partnership held its Annual Reference Group conference on the themes of welfare reform and the voluntary sector. The event was a great success with representation from a broad range of interests and communities living and working in Cherwell.

The LSP has continued its programme of community engagement events, such as Connecting Our Communities and the Disability and Faith Forums and work to encourage high levels of participation through better communication of all of its consultative forums.



Brighter Futures in Banbury (BFiB)

The BFiB programme aims to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in Banbury through multi-agency working; during 2013/14 the following achievements have been made:

- Increased number of families attending children's centres

Time for Me group at East Street offers respite support for families in crisis and/or children who have specific needs. The Spirals group at the Sunshine Centre is a group for linguistically vulnerable children who may struggle with confidence in a larger group. Britannia Road has a new partnership with Adult Learning which has developed the Learning Matters course supporting parents in understanding how children learn and develop.

- Reducing NEETS (the number of young people not in employment, education or training).

A full programme of activities to support young people into education, employment or training including specialist support, drop-ins and an apprenticeships scheme, resulting in the reduction of the numbers of NEETS. In December 2013 the NEET figure had reduced to 4.7% exceeding the target of 6.5%

- Job Clubs

The successful delivery of job clubs and targeted work to help people return to work has resulted in the number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants returning to 1.0% (878) in February 2014 - a level last seen in early 2008.

- Build a safer more connected community where residents feel socially included. During the year a number of partnership events have taken place that aim to promote social inclusion and build strong communities. This year the CDC 'Connecting Communities' programme was shortlisted for a national award. Events have included: Coming of Age, BBQ in Peoples Park, Play Day, BYHP Big Day Out, Sport Health & Wellbeing and Creative Bicester.

Economic Development

The Council supports a variety of economic development partnerships including work across the region with the Oxfordshire and South Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships and UK Trade and Investment. The Cherwell M40 Investment Partnership continues to offer a comprehensive support service.

We have supported the Oxon Green Business Network in Bicester to develop awareness of opportunities for energy efficiency and environmental technologies amongst local enterprises.

Worked with parish / town councils and business groups in the three urban centres to agree specific actions to maximise the £100,000 granted by Government to promote economic prosperity through town centre initiatives.

- Kidlington - environmental enhancement completed March 2014
- Banbury – signage and co-ordination programme commissioned in March 2014
- Bicester – marketing support for local businesses

Bakels world class food preparation training centre was opened in February 2014

Managing our Resources

As a result of the comprehensive spending review in 2010, the Council's formula grant has been reducing year on year. The reduction in formula grant for 2014/15 is 13.7%

Cherwell District Council has a strong track record of delivering significant efficiency savings and over the last seven years we have reduced our revenue budget by 39%. The Council's net budget was £23.5m in 2007/08 and is now £14.4m in 2014/15.

For 2013/14 our financial performance has been maintained in terms of both capital and revenue, provisional outturns are within set tolerance targets. Our performance demonstrates our ability to respond positively and actively to changing economic circumstances and deliver sizeable capital programmes and effective financial management. Our provisional financial outturns for 2013/14 show that variances within the revenue budget are within the Council's stated tolerances of 2%. For capital our provisional outturn is also with stated tolerances of +2% / -5%.

Our strong financial position is underpinned by effective stewardship of our resources, including:

- Meeting our sickness absence targets with a low annual average sickness absence rate of 4.42 days per full time employee in 2013/14 compared to an average of 7.2 days in the private sector and 8.7 days in the public sector.
- Society of IT Managers (SOCITM) rated the website 3 stars and we shall continue to develop our website and increase the number of our services that can be booked, paid for or ordered online, helping to improve our back office efficiency.
- Collecting 98.3% of council tax and 99.3% of business rates despite the challenging times facing residents and businesses.
- Over 98% of our invoices are paid within 30 days.

Our effective financial management has ensured we have balanced our budget and delivered a council tax freeze for the 2014/15 year.

More details about our budget can be found on the finance pages of our website.

www.cherwell.gov.uk

Procurement

The Joint Procurement Team has been in place since July 2012 and has built on the excellent year on year cashable savings previously achieved, which have outweighed their costs and provided added value across the entire expenditure programme.

The team were nominated by the Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards 2013/14 in the category of Collaborative Procurement and were selected as finalists.

Joint Working with South Northamptonshire Council



South Northamptonshire Council *Cherwell* DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Back in 2011/12 the Council entered into a partnership with our neighbouring authority South Northamptonshire Council. It is a relationship that continues to build and together we now take immense pride in the knowledge that we have been recognised by DCLG as being exemplars in innovation, and representing the future direction of the way in which local government services are delivered.

Our two Councils have worked together to identify opportunities for joint working and sharing services and this has enabled efficiencies and savings to be made, as illustrated below:

	CDC	SNC	COMBINED
	Actual	Actual	Actual
Joint Working and Transformation Savings (to end 13/14)			
Business Cases	£	£	£
Joint Management Team	806,000	397,000	1,203,000
Building Control - Joint Working	132,000	67,000	199,000
Democratic Services and Elections	7,286	5,386	12,672
Finance and Procurement	75,000	75,000	150,000
Corporate Performance	19,250	15,750	35,000
ICT Phase 1	247,000	394,500	641,500
Human Resources	98,000	-4,000	94,000
Total Shared Services	1,384,536	950,636	2,335,172
Other Collaboration			
Fraud support to SNC	22,800	5,000	27,800
Health and Safety to SNC	23,950	20,000	43,950
Monitoring Officer Support to SDC**	16,000	16,000	32,000
HR Support to SDC **	-	12,000	12,000
Total	62,750	53,000	115,750
Procurement	630,400	194,000	824,400
Combined Benefit	2,077,686	1,197,636	3,275,322

** one off savings through the provision of interim support and not year on year savings

In the early part of 2014 the two authorities implemented a shared Environmental Service which will realise approx. £200,000 savings in 2014/15 (both capital and revenue – through a mix of procurement, reduction in vehicles, agency staff and some posts, plus savings in leasing arrangements).

Transformation Challenge Award

During 2013 the three Councils of Cherwell District, South Northamptonshire and Stratford on Avon successfully bid for £367,000 to support our collective on-going commitment to leading the way in which future local government services can be delivered.

Through this financial award we have been able to establish a three way transformation team who will facilitate a major review of all our services to identify, and where the business case is proven, implement new ways of working.

Our first three way shared service, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and harmonisation programme has recently been supported by the three Council's, and goes live early in 2014/15. Proposals for a three way shared legal service business case are well advanced and will be considered by each of the three Council's imminently.

Once again this illustrates the extent to which the three Councils are pushing boundaries in the delivery of our services. We are actively demonstrating that local government services can be successfully delivered across three sovereign Council's, in three different counties; proving that geographical boundaries are not a barrier to innovation, efficiency and excellence.



Cherwell District Council

South Northamptonshire Council

Stratford on Avon District Council

Looking forward

Our focus on service delivery, innovation and performance in 2014/15 remains strong.

Our Business Plan 2014/15 sets out a detailed overview of our priorities and we will report progress on a quarterly basis. For the coming year we have also made a series of performance pledges. We believe these are some of the key services and projects that local people care about and our aim is to put these right at the heart of what we do.

For the coming year our performance pledges are:

A District of Opportunity

- ➔ Make progress on site for the initial housing development at North West Bicester – exemplar site
- ➔ Delivery in North West Bicester of the Eco Bicester Business Centre.
- ➔ Deliver the Local Plan to provide a framework for sustainable housing, employment and infrastructure

Safe, Green and Clean

- ➔ Maintain a household recycling rate above 57%
- ➔ Improve local residents' satisfaction with street and environmental cleanliness continuing our successful programme of neighbourhood litter blitzes.
- ➔ Maintain the Council's five year commitment to reduce our carbon footprint by further improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and vehicles.

Thriving Communities

- ➔ Continue working with our partners to provide support to the most vulnerable individuals and families in the district, building on the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme.
- ➔ Work with the local police and licence holders to ensure our town centres remain safe and vibrant in the evenings.
- ➔ Deliver 150 units of affordable homes in the district and support opportunities for self build and development of self build skills
- ➔ Continue to support skills development, apprenticeships and job clubs in order to help support local employment and reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training

Sound Budgets and Customer Focused




- ➔ Deliver the savings target of £500,000
- ➔ Continue to improve our website, and implement additional online services for customers
- ➔ Extend the Joint Working Programme to include new methods of service delivery and more services delivered in partnership

Getting in touch

Throughout the year the Council provides opportunities for local people to have their say. Whether this be through customer satisfaction surveys, budget consultation, consultation on new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback via our link-points or web site we are keen to listen to what people like and what needs to be improved. Our consultations are published on our one-stop consultation portal which can be found at:

<http://consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal/>

However, if you would like to provide feedback about any other matter you can do so using the contact details below.

<p>Click</p> 	<p>Consultation inbox: consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</p> <p>To find and email your ward councillor: http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/mgFindCouncillor.aspx</p>
<p>Call</p> 	<p>The Performance and Insight team: 01295 221575 Customer Services: 01295 227001</p>
<p>Write</p> 	<p>The Performance and Insight Team Bodicote House Bodicote Banbury Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA</p>

For general enquiries our contact details are via the web site www.cherwell.gov.uk or the customer service team 01295 227001.

Alternative formats

This document is available in alternative formats and languages, please contact 01295 227001:

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać. 01295 227001

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ। 01295 227001

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。01295 227001

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