

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 26 February 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Les Sibley (Chairman)  
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Tom Beckett  
Councillor Andrew Beere  
Councillor Rebecca Biegel  
Councillor Maurice Billington  
Councillor Besmira Brasha  
Councillor John Broad  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE  
Councillor Patrick Clarke  
Councillor Jean Conway  
Councillor Gemma Coton  
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed  
Councillor Andrew Crichton  
Councillor Sandy Dallimore  
Councillor John Donaldson  
Councillor Donna Ford  
Councillor Ian Harwood  
Councillor David Hingley  
Councillor Matt Hodgson  
Councillor Simon Holland  
Councillor Harry Knight  
Councillor Simon Lytton  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer  
Councillor Fiona Mawson  
Councillor Andrew McHugh  
Councillor Lesley McLean  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Julian Nedelcu  
Councillor Adam Nell  
Councillor Lynne Parsons  
Councillor Rob Pattenden  
Councillor Lynn Pratt  
Councillor Chris Pruden  
Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves  
Councillor George Reynolds  
Councillor Dan Sames  
Councillor Nigel Simpson  
Councillor Dorothy Walker  
Councillor Amanda Watkins  
Councillor Douglas Webb

Councillor Barry Wood  
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Nick Cotter  
Councillor Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Bryn Williams

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive  
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities  
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer  
Alex Rycroft, Strategic Finance Business Partner  
Lynsey Parkinson, Strategic Business Partner – Corporate  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

57 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

58 **Communications**

**Meeting Length and Etiquette**

The Chairman referred to the email sent by the Monitoring Officer to all Members regarding the budget setting at the Council meeting. It was the responsibility of all Members to ensure that the district council set a lawful budget. This was therefore the most important item on our agenda this evening and the Chairman explained he would be ensuring that we allow enough time to debate the budget.

The Chairman asked councillors to be respectful of each other when addressing the meeting and out of courtesy, to remain in their seat during items. If necessary, the Chairman would adjourn the meeting to allow for a comfort break at a suitable point.

**May 2024 Elections**

The Chairman explained that this was the last Council meeting before the scheduled local elections on 2 May 2024 elections.

The Chairman invited the Conservative Group Leader, Councillor Wood, to address Council. Councillor Wood paid tribute to Councillor Patrick Clarke, Councillor John Donaldson, Councillor Bryn Williams, Councillor Dan Sames

and Councillor Maurice Billington where were standing down at the May elections.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman thanked the Members who were standing down for their service to Cherwell residents and the council. The Chairman extended best wishes to all councillors who were standing in May.

### **Former Councillor Henry Mundy**

The Chairman advised Council that former Councillor Henry Mundy had sadly passed away earlier this year. Former Councillor Mundy was a Conservative councillor who represented the North West Kidlington ward from 1991 to 1995.

During his term of office, he was a member of Housing Committee, Environmental Committee, Kidlington and Gosford Sports Centre Management Committee and the Direct Services Management Board.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to the family and friends of former Councillor Mundy.

Council observed a minutes silence in honour of for Councillor Mundy.

### **Chairman's Engagements**

A copy of the events attended by the Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman had been published with the agenda.

The Chairman thanked all Members who had attended or donated to his Charity Dinner in November. The event had raised £7120, which had been passed to his chosen charity for his term of officer, Alexandra House of Joy.

The Chairman thanked all Members who had attended or donated to his recent Sunday lunch and charity auction. He would confirm the amount raised in due course.

### **Councillor Dr Okeke**

On behalf of Council, the Chairman congratulated the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Dr Okeke, and his wife on the recent birth of their son.

### **Members' Pigeon Holes**

Members were reminded to check their pigeon hole and take any post.

## **59 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

## **60 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

61 **Minutes of Council**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62 **Minutes**

a) **Minutes of the Executive, Portfolio Holder Decisions and Executive Decisions made under Special Urgency**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive and Portfolio Holder decisions as set out in the Minute Book be received and that it be noted that since the last meeting of Council at which this was reported, 18 December 2023, no decisions had been taken by the Executive which were not included in the 28 day notice.

b) **Minutes of Committees**

**Resolved**

That the minutes of Committees as set out in the Minute Book be received.

63 **Questions**

a) **Written Questions**

The Chairman advised that one written question, addressed to the Leader, had been submitted with advance notice in accordance with the Constitution and had been published with the agenda. A response to the question had been published as a supplement to the agenda (and as an annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).

The question was from Councillor Broad in relation to the VAT rate for public Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers. Councillor Broad asked a supplementary question which the Leader duly responded to.

b) **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Questions were asked and answers received on the following issues:

Councillor Cherry: Potential regeneration of garage sites in Bretch Hill, Edmonds Road and Appleby Close

Councillor Middleton: Report to 5 February Executive on the development of a Kidlington Infrastructure and Community Asset Strategy

Councillor Middleton: Planning Inquiry

Councillor Middleton: Greenbelt and the Local Plan

Councillor Hodgson: Support to staff facing redundancy at JDE Factory, Banbury

Councillor Woodcock: Response to letters sent to MPs in respect of S21 Notices following motion agreed at December Council meeting

### **c) Questions to Committee Chairmen on the Minutes**

There were no questions to Committee Chairman on the minutes of meetings.

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### **Members' Allowances 2024/2025**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report to determine the levels of the allowances to be paid to Members for the forthcoming 2024/2025 financial year and proposed changes to the Members Allowance Scheme following the consideration of the report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That having given due consideration, the following levels of allowances be included in the 2024/2025 Members' Allowances Scheme:
  - That the Basic Allowance (currently £4836 pa) be increased in line with the 2024/2025 staff pay award (percentage) when agreed, rounded up to give 12 equal payments and payment of the increase backdated to 1 April 2024.
  - That all Special Responsibility Allowances be increased in line with the 2024/2025 staff pay award (percentage) when agreed, rounded up to give 12 equal payments and payment of the increase backdated to 1 April 2024.
  - That a new Special Responsibility Allowance be introduced for Minority Opposition Group Leaders from April 1 2024, based on the following criteria:
    - Group Leader of a minority opposition Group with 2 – 5 Members: 25% of the Main Opposition Group Leader SRA (if required, rounded up to 12 equal payments)
    - Group Leader of a minority opposition Group with 6 or more members: 50% of the Main Opposition Group Leader SRA (if required, rounded up to 12 equal payments)
  - That the co-optees allowance be increased in line with the staff pay award for 2024/2025 (percentage), when agreed, and rounded up to give 12 equal payments and payment of the increase backdated to 1 April 2024.
  - That the Independent Persons allowance be increased in line with the staff pay award for 2024/2025 (percentage), when agreed, and rounded up to give 12 equal payments, and payment of the increase backdated to 1 April 2024.
  - That Dependents' Carers' and Childcare Allowances remain at the current level, are paid on the basis of the actual costs incurred up to the maximum hourly rate set out below and to a maximum cap of 40

hours per month, subject to production of receipts and cannot be paid to a member of the claimant's household:

- Childcare: £10 per hour
  - Dependent Relative care - £20 per hour
  - That mileage remain at the current level in line with HMRC approved mileage rates, and if any adjustments are implemented by HMRC then the revised rates should be applied to Members' travel allowances effective from the date of implementation by HMRC.
  - That there be no change to subsistence allowances.
  - That Democratic Services continue to book overnight accommodation if required.
  - That there be no change to the list of approved duties for which claims may be made.
  - That Non-Executive Director allowances be increased in line with the staff pay award for 2024/205, rounded up to give 12 equal payments, and payment of the increase backdated to 1 April 2024 and costs recharged to the relevant company.
- (2) That the Assistant Director Law and Governance be authorised to prepare an amended Members' Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the decisions of Council for implementation with effect from 1 April 2024.
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Law and Governance be authorised to take all necessary action to revoke the current (2023/2024) Scheme and to publicise the revised Scheme pursuant to The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).
- (4) That the Independent Remuneration Panel for its report and set a fee of £300 for each Panel Member for the work carried out on this review and propose the same level of fee for any reviews carried out in 2024/2025 capped at a maximum of £1200 per person, which can be funded from existing budgets.

## 65 **Budget Setting for 2024/25 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy up to 2028/29**

Prior to consideration of the item, the Chairman advised that the Progressive Oxfordshire Group has proposed an amendment to the budget which had been published as a supplement to the agenda. There were no amendments proposed by the Labour Group or Independent Group.

The Chairman explained that once the budget had been proposed and seconded, the Leader of the Progressive Oxfordshire Group, Councillor Hingley, would respond to the budget and propose the Group's amendment. Once seconded, the amendment would be debated and voted on.

The Chairman reminded Members that the arrangements for debating the budget were set out in the meeting procedure rules. The proposer, when presenting the budget, and Group Leaders, when responding to the budget,

may speak for up to 10 minutes. All other speakers had a three minute time limit.

The Chairman further reminded Members that it was required in legislation that the vote on any motion on or amendment to the budget and council tax setting reports must be a recorded vote. This would be taken at the appropriate time.

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151) submitted a report to consider and approve the Budget Setting for 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2028/29 as per the recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Nell, paid tribute to the Assistant Director of Finance and the finance team who had worked hard on the budget process and submitted a balanced budget to Council against a difficult financial backdrop. Councillor Nell also thanked the Budget Planning Committee and Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee for their hard work supporting the budget setting and business plan process.

Having presented the report, Councillor Nell proposed the adoption of the Business Plan and related revenue budget for 2024/25, medium term financial strategy to 2028/29, capital programme and all supporting policies, strategies and information. Councillor Wood seconded the proposal.

Councillor Hingley, Leader of the Progressive Oxfordshire Group, addressed Council in response to the budget and proposed the Group's amendment to the budget. Councillor Middleton seconded the amendment.

The amendment having been proposed and seconded was debated by Council. As required in legislation, a recorded vote on the motion was taken. Members voted as follows:

Councillor Tom Beckett	For
Councillor Andrew Beere	Abstain
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	Abstain
Councillor Maurice Billington	For
Councillor Besmira Brasha	Abstain
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	Abstain
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE	Abstain
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Jean Conway	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	For
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed	Abstain
Councillor Andrew Crichton	Abstain

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Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor John Donaldson	For
Councillor Donna Ford	Abstain
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Abstain
Councillor Simon Holland	For
Councillor Harry Knight	For
Councillor Simon Lytton	For
Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Andrew McHugh	For
Councillor Lesley McLean	For
Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Julian Nedelcu	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	Abstain
Councillor Lynne Parsons	Abstain
Councillor Rob Pattenden	For
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor Eddie Reeves	Abstain
Councillor George Reynolds	For
Councillor Dan Sames	For
Councillor Nigel Simpson	For
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	Abstain
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	Abstain

The vote on the amendment was carried with 30 votes in favour, no votes against and 14 abstentions.

The Chairman reminded Members that the amendment having been agreed, it became the substantive motion and Council was debating the recommendations as amended.

Councillor Woodcock, on behalf of the Labour Group, addressed Council in response to the budget.

Councillor Sibley, on behalf of the Independent Group, addressed Council in response to the budget.

The substantive motion having been debated, a recorded vote was taken, and Members voted as follows

Councillor Tom Beckett	For
Councillor Andrew Beere	Against
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	Against
Councillor Maurice Billington	For
Councillor Besmira Brasha	Against
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	Against
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE	Against
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Jean Conway	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	For
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed	Against
Councillor Andrew Crichton	Against
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor John Donaldson	For
Councillor Donna Ford	Abstain
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Against
Councillor Simon Holland	For
Councillor Harry Knight	For
Councillor Simon Lytton	For
Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Andrew McHugh	For
Councillor Lesley McLean	For

Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Julian Nedelcu	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	Against
Councillor Lynne Parsons	Against
Councillor Rob Pattenden	For
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor Eddie Reeves	Abstain
Councillor George Reynolds	For
Councillor Dan Sames	For
Councillor Nigel Simpson	For
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	Against
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	Against

The vote on the amendment was carried with 30 votes in favour, 12 votes against and 14 abstentions.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That, having due regard, the statutory report of the Chief Finance Officer and the comments of the Chief Finance Officer in respect of the proposed amendments, be noted.
- (2) That, subject to the following amendments with authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to update the budget papers to reflect the amendments, the proposed Fees and Charges schedule for 2024/25 be approved and it be noted that statutory notices would be placed where required.
  - That the 2024/25 increase in bulky waste charges be removed and the 2023/24 levels be retained and a new premium charge for faster service be introduced
  - That the charge for replacement bins be removed
  - That the 2024/25 increase in the NOA, Cooper School and Stratfield Brake fees and charges be removed and the fees be retained at 2023/24 levels at a cost of £0.012m.

- (3) That, having given due consideration, the Equality Impact Assessments of the Budget be noted.
- (4) That the Business Plan (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (5) That the net revenue budget, for the financial year commencing on 1 April 2024, as set out below incorporating budget movements to fund the amendments to the budget, with authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to amend other tables within the budget accordingly, be approved:

Directorate	Net budget 2024/25 £m	Proposal £m	Revised Net Budget 2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
Communities	8.917	0.117	9.034	0.072	0.152	(0.033)	(0.015)
Resources	4.314	-	4.314	(2.369)	0.021	0.024	(0.100)
Chief Executive	5.355	0.012	5.367	(0.097)	(0.098)	(0.056)	0.009
<b>Service Sub-total</b>	<b>18.586</b>	<b>0.129</b>	<b>18.715</b>	<b>(2.394)</b>	<b>0.075</b>	<b>(0.065)</b>	<b>(0.106)</b>
Corporate Costs	4.293	-	4.293	3.594	1.195	0.532	0.198
Policy Contingency	4.108	(0.129)	3.979	0.837	0.524	0.524	0.524
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>26.987</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>26.987</b>	<b>2.037</b>	<b>1.794</b>	<b>0.991</b>	<b>0.616</b>
Funding	(26.987)		(26.987)	5.001	2.500	2.207	(1.478)
<b>Funding Gap / (Surplus)</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>7.038</b>	<b>4.294</b>	<b>3.198</b>	<b>(0.862)</b>

- (6) That, subject to the following amendments with authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to update the budget papers to reflect the amendments, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2024/25 including the Savings Proposals and Pressures be approved.
  - That savings proposal reference SWAST243 (£0.075m) be removed to reflect resolution (2) to not introduce a charge for replacement bins.
  - That savings proposal SWAST241 be amended by introducing alternative charges for bulky waste (as set out in resolution (2)) in 2024/25 and it be noted this has a net nil impact on the budget and MTFS.

- That savings proposal SPCON242 be reduced by £0.022m in 2024/25 in order to keep Pioneer Square public conveniences open.
  - That a new pressure of £0.020m for an additional cleaning contract for the public conveniences at Pioneer Square be agreed.
  - That the general contingency budget be reduced by £0.129m to fund the agreed amendments to the proposed budget.
- (7) That an increase in the Basic Amount of Council Tax for Cherwell District Council for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2024 of £5, resulting in a Band D charge of £153.50 per annum be agreed.
- (8) That the Capital Bids and Capital Programme (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (9) That the Capital and Investment Strategy 2024/25 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, and the revised 2023/24 MRP Policy (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (10) That the Treasury Management Strategy, including the Prudential Indicators, and Affordable Borrowing Limit for 2024/25 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (11) That a minimum level of General Balances of £6.1m be approved.
- (12) That the Reserves Policy (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) and the medium-term reserves plan (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (13) That the Pay Policy Statement, as required by the Localism Act 2010 (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

66 **Adjournment of Council meeting**

The budget for 2024/25 having been agreed, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, confirmed that he did not require Council to adjourn to allow Executive to meet discuss any issues arising from the budget.

67 **Calculating the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 and setting the Council Tax for 2024/25**

The Assistant Director of Finance submitted a report to detail the calculations for the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 and the setting of Council Tax for 2024/25.

As required in legislation, a recorded vote was taken, and Members voted as follows:

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Councillor Tom Beckett	For
Councillor Andrew Beere	Against
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	Against
Councillor Maurice Billington	For
Councillor Besmira Brasha	Against
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	Against
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE	Against
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Jean Conway	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	For
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed	Against
Councillor Andrew Crichton	Against
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor John Donaldson	For
Councillor Donna Ford	For
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Against
Councillor Simon Holland	For
Councillor Harry Knight	For
Councillor Simon Lytton	For
Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Andrew McHugh	For
Councillor Lesley McLean	For
Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Julian Nedelcu	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	Against
Councillor Lynne Parsons	Against
Councillor Rob Pattenden	For
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor Eddie Reeves	For

Councillor George Reynolds	For
Councillor Dan Sames	For
Councillor Nigel Simpson	For
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	Against
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	Against

### **Resolved**

- (1) That it be noted that the Council Tax Base 2024/25 was determined at the Executive meeting held on 8 January 2024:
  - a) for the whole Council area as 59,027.2 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (“the 1992 Act”)]; and
  - b) For dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as in the attached Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) That it be agreed that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) is £9,060,675.
- (3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the 1992 Act:
  - a) £137,412,530 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the 1992 Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.
  - b) £121,996,104 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the 1992 Act.
  - c) £15,416,426 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the 1992 Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the 1992 Act).
  - d) £261.17 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance

with Section 31B of the 1992 Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).

- e) £6,355,750 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the 1992 Act as per the attached annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
  - f) £153.50 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T(1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the 1992 Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates.
- (4) It be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the 1992 Act, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

<b>Valuation Band</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council</b>	<b>Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley</b>
	£	£
<b>A</b>	1,213.71	179.52
<b>B</b>	1,415.99	209.44
<b>C</b>	1,618.28	239.36
<b>D</b>	1,820.56	269.28
<b>E</b>	2,225.13	329.12
<b>F</b>	2,629.70	388.96
<b>G</b>	3,034.27	448.80
<b>H</b>	3,641.12	538.56

- (5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the 1992 Act, hereby sets the amounts shown in the annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
- (6) That the Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the 1992 Act.

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to consider and agree the Member Development Framework and Programme for 2024-25

**Resolved**

- (1) That the Member Development Framework for 2024-25 be approved.
- (2) That the Member Development Programme for 2024-25 be approved.

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**Updates to the Constitution**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to update Council on the latest changes to the Constitution following meetings of the Constitution Review Group (CRG).

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Dallimore, highlighted that the Constitution was the document by which, in accordance with the law, the Council exercised all its powers and duties. It was essential that it is reviewed to ensure it remained fit for purpose.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the amendments being made under the existing Monitoring Officer delegation be noted.
- (2) That the following amendments to the Constitution be approved: Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules; Contract Procedure Rules, and Annex to the Code of Conduct for local determination of applications.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make the amendments to the Constitution, including a delegation to make textual amendments to address any inconsistencies or correct any cross-referencing errors arising from or as a consequence of the amendments (insofar as the Monitoring Officer does not already have such a delegation).

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**Motions**

The Chairman advised that one motion was included on the agenda, a motion that had been deferred from the 18 December 2023 Council meeting. No further motions had been submitted.

No amendments to the motion had been submitted. In line with the Constitution, no amendments were now permitted.

**Motion: Right To Grow**

It was proposed by Councillor Middleton and seconded by Councillor Beckett that the following motion be adopted:

“The cost-of-living crisis has highlighted the need for access to enough fresh food, especially fruit and vegetables. This has been worsened by the lack of available allotments and communal gardens.

Greater access to growing spaces would better support CDC in ensuring it places the health and well-being of its residents at the heart of its policy making by increasing the availability of fresh locally produced food at an affordable price.

Such initiatives can reduce pressures on NHS and social care whilst increasing community cohesion, tackling loneliness and isolation, and providing for the healthy food needs of their neighbourhoods.

We recognise that officers already work with our communities to encourage them to come together to develop local growing spaces in areas of under-used publicly owned land and that we have endorsed the countywide Food Strategy. But that we can always do more.

This council therefore calls on the Executive to,

1. Identify council owned land suitable for community cultivation and facilitate the production of a publicly available map of such sites.
2. Adopt a ‘Right to Grow’ policy whilst continuing to work with Cherwell Collective and other community organisations to encourage the adoption of such land for growing schemes by means of a simple licence at no direct cost to the community.
3. Consider ways to encourage developers to include community growing spaces in all new developments and, where practical, on land awaiting development.
4. Write to all Cherwell MPs asking them to support the national ‘Right to Grow’ campaign.”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. On being put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the following motion be adopted:

“The cost-of-living crisis has highlighted the need for access to enough fresh food, especially fruit and vegetables. This has been worsened by the lack of available allotments and communal gardens.

Greater access to growing spaces would better support CDC in ensuring it places the health and well-being of its residents at the heart of its policy making by increasing the availability of fresh locally produced food at an affordable price.

Such initiatives can reduce pressures on NHS and social care whilst increasing community cohesion, tackling loneliness and isolation, and providing for the healthy food needs of their neighbourhoods.

We recognise that officers already work with our communities to encourage them to come together to develop local growing spaces in areas of under-used publicly owned land and that we have endorsed the countywide Food Strategy. But that we can always do more.

This council therefore calls on the Executive to,

1. Identify council owned land suitable for community cultivation and facilitate the production of a publicly available map of such sites.
2. Adopt a 'Right to Grow' policy whilst continuing to work with Cherwell Collective and other community organisations to encourage the adoption of such land for growing schemes by means of a simple licence at no direct cost to the community.
3. Consider ways to encourage developers to include community growing spaces in all new developments and, where practical, on land awaiting development.
4. Write to all Cherwell MPs asking them to support the national 'Right to Grow' campaign."

The meeting ended at 9.02 pm

Chairman:

Date: