

# Public Document Pack

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 17 October 2022 at 6.30 pm

#### **Present:**

Councillor Les Sibley (Chairman)  
Councillor Jason Slaymaker (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Hannah Banfield  
Councillor Andrew Beere  
Councillor Rebecca Biegel  
Councillor Nathan Bignell  
Councillor John Broad  
Councillor Hugo Brown  
Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Colin Clarke  
Councillor Patrick Clarke  
Councillor Ian Corkin  
Councillor Gemma Coton  
Councillor Nick Cotter  
Councillor Andrew Crichton  
Councillor Sandy Dallimore  
Councillor Donna Ford  
Councillor Ian Harwood  
Councillor David Hingley  
Councillor Matt Hodgson  
Councillor Simon Holland  
Councillor Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer  
Councillor Fiona Mawson  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Perran Moon  
Councillor Richard Mould  
Councillor Adam Nell  
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke  
Councillor Angus Patrick  
Councillor Lynn Pratt  
Councillor Chris Pruden  
Councillor George Reynolds  
Councillor Katherine Tyson  
Councillor Dorothy Walker  
Councillor Amanda Watkins  
Councillor Douglas Webb  
Councillor Fraser Webster  
Councillor Bryn Williams  
Councillor Barry Wood  
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Present virtually (no voting rights):

Councillor Dan Sames

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Maurice Billington  
Councillor Mike Bishop  
Councillor Jean Conway  
Councillor John Donaldson  
Councillor Eddie Reeves

Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law, Governance & Democratic  
Services/Monitoring Officer  
Shahin Ismail, Interim Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Andrew Low, Assistant Director Property Interim  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

## 32 **Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed Members, officers and guests to the meeting.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman welcomed Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law and Governance to his first Full Council meeting.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Sames was joining the meeting virtually and could speak on items but had no voting rights or rights to propose or second items.

## 33 **Declarations of Interest**

16. Bicester Depot.

Councillor Ian Corkin, Declaration, as set out in the exempt minutes.

18. Motions.

Councillor Katherine Tyson, Declaration, in the motion "Water Sewage Transparency" due to her employment and would therefore not participate in the debate or vote on the motion.

## **Communications**

### **Former Councillor Markham**

The Chairman referred to the sad passing of former Councillor David Markham on 15 July 2022.

Former Councillor Markham had represented the Ambrosden ward from 1992 to 2002, standing down at the 2002 elections. Former Councillor Markham served on many committees, notably Development and South Area Planning Committee.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to Former Councillor Markham's family and friends.

Council observed a minutes silence in honour of former Councillor Markham.

### **Chairman's Engagements**

A copy of the events attended by the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman was published with the agenda.

### **Chairman's Charity Dinner**

The Chairman reminded Members that they had received information about my Charity Dinner on Saturday 19 November. The event will be raising funds for Alexandra House of Joy, which is the charity he was supporting during my term as Chairman.

Members were asked to RSVP to the Chairman's PA if they wished to attend.

### **Meeting Length**

Due to the length of the agenda, out of courtesy to other Members, the Chairman asked Members to remain in your seat during items and advised, if needed, he would adjourn the meeting to allow for a comfort break at a suitable point.

### **Members' Pigeon Holes**

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

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

The Chairman advised there were no petitions.

There was one request to address the meeting. The request was from Parish Councillor Caroline Elmitt on behalf of Bodicote Parish Council, on agenda item 9, "Community Governance Review (CGR) – results of second consultation stage and final recommendations", in relation to the recommendations of the working group's report regarding the boundary change between Banbury and Bodicote.

The Chairman advised Council he would invite Parish Councillor Elmitt to address the meeting at the start of agenda item 9.

36 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

37 **Minutes of Council**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 **Minutes**

a) **Minutes of the Executive, Lead Member 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 held on 18 July 2022 one decision has been taken by the Executive which was not included in the 28 day notice, relating to Responding to the Cost of Living Crisis.

b) **Minutes of Committees**

**Resolved**

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

39 **Questions**

a) **Written Questions**

The Chairman advised Council that one written question, addressed to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, 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 are an annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).

The question was from Councillor Middleton and was in relation to Lord Harrington's visit to Cherwell District Council.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Middleton requested that a written report to all Members regarding what had been discussed with the Minister.



The Leader responded to the supplementary question advising he had nothing to add to the comprehensive written response.

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

Questions were asked and answers received on the following issues:

Councillor Dr Okeke: Banbury canal path

Councillor Hodgson: Malt House Way

Councillor Middleton: Letter to Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regarding the cost of living emergency

Councillor Cotter: Investment zones

Councillor Middleton: Council commercial investments

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

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

## **40 Community Governance Review (CGR) - results of second consultation stage and final recommendations**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update Council on the outcome of the Community Governance Review (CGR) stage two consultation that was held between 4 July and 23 September 2022; to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to complete the required legal order; to update Members on the upcoming Oxfordshire County boundary review being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and the ongoing Parliamentary Boundary Review.

Prior to Council debating the report, Parish Councillor Caroline Elmitt on behalf of Bodicote Parish Council, addressed Council in relation to the recommendation 1.3 of the working group's report regarding the boundary change between Banbury and Bodicote.

In introducing the report and proposing the recommendations, Councillor Mallon, Chairman of the CGR Working Group, proposed that a separate vote be taken on recommendation 1.3. This was duly seconded by Councillor Beere, Vice-Chairman of the CGR Working Group.

At the discretion of the Chairman, the Interim Monitoring Officer addressed Council and reminded Council that this was a quasi-judicial decision, gave advice on decision making and advised that in reaching their decision, Members should give consideration to the most effective and convenient governance for each area of the review.

In the course of the debate, it was proposed by Councillor Hingley and seconded by Councillor Middleton that a recorded vote be taken on recommendation 1.3.

Council voted on all recommendations excluding recommendation 1.3 en bloc. A recorded vote having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote was duly taken on recommendation 1.3 and Members voted as follows.

Councillor Hannah Banfield	For
Councillor Andrew Beere	For
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	For
Councillor Nathan Bignell	For
Councillor John Broad	Against
Councillor Hugo Brown	For
Councillor Phil Chapman	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	For
Councillor Colin Clarke	For
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Ian Corkin	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	Against
Councillor Nick Cotter	Against
Councillor Andrew Crichton	For
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor John Donaldson	For
Councillor Donna Ford	For
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	Against
Councillor Matt Hodgson	For
Councillor Simon Holland	For
Councillor Kieron Mallon	For
Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	Against
Councillor Ian Middleton	Against
Councillor Perran Moon	For
Councillor Adam Nell	Against
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	For
Councillor Angus Patrick	Against
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	Against

Councillor George Reynolds	For
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Jason Slaymaker	For
Councillor Katherine Tyson	Against
Councillor Dorothy Walker	Against
Councillor Amanda Watkins	For
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Fraser Webster	For
Councillor Bryn Williams	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	For

The vote on recommendation 1.3 was carried.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That a change in the boundary between Ambrosden and Blackthorn for area A, as shown by the dotted black line on map 1 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (2) That a change in the next ordinary year of elections for Ambrosden and Blackthorn parish councils, bringing them forward to 2023, be approved.
- (3) That a change in the boundary between Bodicote and Banbury for area F1, as shown by the dotted black line on map 2 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2024, be approved.
- (4) That it be agreed that Merlin Close remain in Bodicote.
- (5) That a change in the boundary between Bodicote and Banbury for area F, as shown by the dotted black line in the inset box on map 3 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2024, be approved.
- (6) That a change in the boundary between Bodicote and Banbury for area E, as shown by the dotted black line on map 3 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2024, be approved.
- (7) That a change in the boundary between Drayton and Banbury for area D, as shown by the dotted black line on map 4 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2024, be approved.

- (8) That a change in the boundary between Drayton and Banbury for area C, as shown by the dotted black line on map 4 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2024, be approved.
- (9) That an increase in the number of Banbury Town Councillors by one, to be allocated to the Hardwick West Town Ward, to take effect in May 2024, be approved.
- (10) That it be agreed that a Banbury-only Community Governance Review take place after the Oxfordshire County Council boundary review has concluded and in advance of the 2028 local elections.
- (11) That a change in the boundary between Bicester, Ambrosden, Blackthorn and Launton for area L, as shown by the dotted black lines on map 5 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2023 be approved.
- (12) That a change in the next ordinary year of election for Launton Parish Council, bringing them forward to May 2023 be approved.
- (13) That a change in the boundary between Chesterton and Bucknell for areas G and H, as shown by the dotted black lines on map 6 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2023, be approved.
- (14) That a change in the boundary between Bicester and Bucknell for area I, as shown by the dotted black lines on map 6 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), to take effect in May 2023, be approved.
- (15) That a change in the boundary between Hanwell and Horley for area O, as shown by the dotted black line on map 7 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (16) That a change in the boundary between Horley and Wroxton for area N, as shown by the dotted black line on map 7 (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (17) That an increase of one parish councillor for Begbroke Parish Council, increasing from six to seven, taking effect in May 2023, be approved.
- (18) That an increase of two parish councillors for Chesterton Parish Council, increasing from seven to nine, taking effect in May 2023, be approved.
- (19) That an increase of one parish councillor for Somerton Parish Council, increasing from five to six, taking effect in May 2023, be approved.

- (20) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Working Group, to prepare and finalise the required Reorganisation Order to implement approved recommendations.
- (21) That an extension of the Terms of Reference of the Working Group to cover the Oxfordshire County Council boundary review be approved, and authority delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Working Group, to consider and draft a response to the LGBCE consultations at the relevant times.
- (22) That the update on the Parliamentary Boundary Review be noted.

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## **Review of Allocation of Seats to Political Groups**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to review the allocation of seats to political groups in light of the disbanding of the Joint Shared Services and Personnel (JSSP) Committee and Joint Appeals Panel and to adopt the Minutes of the final meeting of the JSSP Committee.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the revised allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements as set out in Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be agreed.
- (2) That the following changes to committee membership in accordance with the nominations made by political Group Leaders be noted:

- **Conservative Group**

- Planning Committee**

- Add – Councillor Bryn Williams (permanent Committee member)

- Add – Councillor Phil Chapman (named substitute - additional)

- Add – Councillor Sandy Dallimore (named substitute to replace Councillor Williams who is now a permanent member)

- **Progressive Oxfordshire Group**

- Licensing Committee**

- Remove – Councillor Angus Patrick

- **Labour Group**

- Planning Committee**

- Remove – Councillor Sean Woodcock (permanent Committee member)

- Remove – Councillor Andrew Crichton (named substitute)

- Licensing Committee**

- Add – Councillor Sean Woodcock

- (3) That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Shared Services and Personnel Committee held on 4 July 2022 be adopted.

42 **Calendar of Meetings 2023/2024**

The Assistant Director Law, Governance and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer (Interim) submitted a report for Council is to consider and agree the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2023/2024.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the calendar of meetings for Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.

43 **Changes to Personnel Committee Terms of Reference**

The Interim Monitoring Officer which sought changes to the Terms of Reference of Personnel Committee, to make it possible for that Committee to determine formal applications by senior officers to consider changes to their terms and conditions of employment.

The Council had a suite of employment law policies which give employees the opportunity to work flexibly or seek other changes to their terms and conditions. A recent introduction was a Flexible Retirement Policy, which had been considered and agreed by Personnel Committee at their 17 October 2022 meeting.

**Resolved**

- (1) That additional wording to the Personnel Committee's Terms of Reference, to add *'To determine formal applications by the Head of Paid Service, s151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Corporate Directors for changes to their terms and conditions of employment, including flexible retirement requests'* be approved.
- (2) That it be noted that such applications by officers at Assistant Director grade and below would be determined by officers at the appropriate management level.

44 **Appointment of Monitoring Officer**

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Council to appoint a Monitoring Officer following recruitment to the post of Assistant Director Law, Governance and Democratic Services.

**Resolved**

- (1) That Shiraz Sheikh be appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 18 October 2022.

Following his appointment, Shiraz Sheikh addressed Council, thanked Members for his appointment and commented that he was looking forward to working with them.

45 **Notification of Urgent Action - Appointment of Data Protection Officer**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to inform Council of a decision she had taken under urgency powers in relation to the appointment of a Data Protection Officer.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive in relation to the appointment of a Data Protection Officer be noted.

46 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved**

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

47 **Bicester Depot**

The Corporate Director Resources submitted an exempt report in relation to Bicester Depot.

**Resolved**

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (3) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (4) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (5) As set out in the exempt minutes.

48 **Readmittance of the Press and Public**

**Resolved**

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

49 **Motions**

The Chair advised that four motions had been submitted. No amendments to any of the motions had been submitted. In line with the Constitution, no amendments were now permitted.

**One Planet Living**

As Councillor Sames was attending Council virtually, it was proposed by Councillor Wood and seconded by Councillor Broad that consideration of the motion be deferred to the 19 December 2022 Council meeting. Members agreed to the deferment.

**Fracking**

It was proposed by Councillor Hodgson and seconded by Councillor Watkins that the following motion be adopted:

“Fracking involves injecting water, sand and other substances into subterranean rocks to extract the gas that is trapped between them. It has caused water pollution in the US, earthquakes there and in the UK, massively pollutes the environment and water table and contributes to greenhouse gases when burnt.

We've already seen earthquakes in Lancashire, and Quadrilla were forced to pause fracking there in 2018 after the British Geological Survey showed that there had been 17 earthquakes in 9 days.

Fracking was banned in 2019 by the Conservative government amid these concerns. These concerns have not gone away.

We now have a Prime Minister who believes fracking is fine again and has reversed that decision. Inexplicably so when investment in renewables is both more cost effective and much better for the environment. It is inexplicable that the government should be considering such environmental and climatic destruction when we are facing a climate catastrophe.

Liz Truss has said developers will be given permission "where there is local support". Various sites across the country have been identified as possibilities, some are in Cherwell. As this Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and published the Climate Action Framework in 2020, which includes statements on moving towards net-zero carbon by 2030, we, as a council, need unite behind that and be seen to be standing by it. We, the Labour Group, I know, are united on this and we call upon this Council to declare the District of Cherwell a NO FRACKING ZONE.”



No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. In the course of the debate, it was proposed by Councillor Woodcock that a recorded vote be taken, which was duly seconded by Councillor Moon. Having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote was duly taken and Members voted as follows:

Councillor Andrew Beere	For
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	For
Councillor Nathan Bignell	For
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Hugo Brown	For
Councillor Phil Chapman	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	For
Councillor Colin Clarke	For
Councillor Patrick Clarke	For
Councillor Ian Corkin	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	For
Councillor Nick Cotter	For
Councillor Andrew Crichton	For
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor John Donaldson	For
Councillor Donna Ford	For
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	For
Councillor Simon Holland	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Perran Moon	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	For
Councillor Angus Patrick	For
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor George Reynolds	For

Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Jason Slaymaker	For
Councillor Katherine Tyson	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	For
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Fraser Webster	For
Councillor Bryn Williams	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For
Councillor Sean Woodcock	For

The motion was unanimously agreed.

### **Investment Zones**

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

“The government’s recent ‘mini-budget’ included plans for ‘investment zones’ within which the Chancellor said the Government would “get out of the way to get Britain building”.

The planning process for developers will be shortened and liberalised in these zones providing a more streamlined path towards planning consent. There are also plans to limit the ability for planning decisions to be overturned by the courts.

The government has also published plans for a ‘sunset clause’ on environmental protections introduced when the UK was in the EU. Environmental regulations such as Habitat Regulation Assessments will be scrapped in these zones, with no clarity as to how they will be replaced. This has been described as “an attack on nature” by the RSPB.

In addition, reports have suggested that the planned Environmental Land Management Scheme is to be scrapped. This would have paid farmers to improve nature on their land. There is now uncertainty that payment-by acre will be linked to any environmental measures.

Whilst Cherwell is not included in the initial list of ‘Investment Zones’ there will be an opportunity for all councils to express an interest in becoming one in the future.

This council therefore pledges that :

1. We do not support the ‘Investment Zone’ proposals and have no interest in becoming part of this scheme.

2. Environmental protection in Cherwell will be maintained at current or better levels regardless of any loosening of regulations
3. Local democracy will be upheld and respected in the planning process”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. In summing up, Councillor Middleton requested that a recorded vote be taken, which was duly seconded by Councillor Broad. Having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote was duly taken and Members voted as follows:

Councillor Andrew Beere	Abstain
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	Abstain
Councillor Nathan Bignell	Against
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Hugo Brown	Against
Councillor Phil Chapman	Against
Councillor Mark Cherry	Abstain
Councillor Colin Clarke	Against
Councillor Patrick Clarke	Against
Councillor Ian Corkin	Against
Councillor Gemma Coton	For
Councillor Nick Cotter	For
Councillor Andrew Crichton	Abstain
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	Against
Councillor John Donaldson	Against
Councillor Donna Ford	Against
Councillor Ian Harwood	Against
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Abstain
Councillor Simon Holland	Against
Councillor Kieron Mallon	Against
Councillor Nick Mawer	Against
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Perran Moon	Abstain
Councillor Adam Nell	Against
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	Abstain

Councillor Angus Patrick	For
Councillor Lynn Pratt	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor George Reynolds	Against
Councillor Les Sibley	Against
Councillor Jason Slaymaker	Against
Councillor Katherine Tyson	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	Abstain
Councillor Douglas Webb	Against
Councillor Fraser Webster	Against
Councillor Bryn Williams	Against
Councillor Barry Wood	Against
Councillor Sean Woodcock	Abstain

The vote was lost and the motion therefore fell.

### **Water Sewage Transparency**

It was proposed by Councillor Cotter and seconded by Councillor Mawson that the following motion be adopted.

“Earlier this year Thames Water welcomed Oxfordshire’s first regional river designated as bathing water in Port Meadow’s Wolvercote Mill Stream. It’s important that this success is built on by Cherwell District council to protect our waterways from natural and man-made pollution.

Only 14% of the UK’s waterways are in a good ecological condition, with water companies across the UK having discharged raw sewage into waterways 400,000 times in 2020 – more than 3 million hours of discharge.

In compliance with our climate change emergency motion, this Council has a duty to protect our natural environment. The government has so far failed to hold the water companies to account, so this council should work with Thames Water to increase transparency and minimise discharges into Cherwell’s waterways.

This Council therefore will :

1. Seek to establish a local strategy that puts sewage treatment at the heart of its local plan
2. Ensure that an evidence base is compiled that assesses the cumulative impact of sewage discharges so that this is factored into decisions made within the local plan.

3. Seek to better understand the cumulative impact of wastewater discharge including untreated sewage into our local rivers on wildlife and residents
4. From 2023, request that Thames Water clarifies which treatment works will be managing sewage from new developments and the likely impact on the number of sewage discharges into watercourses
5. Requests that planning officers include a specific section on the impact on watercourses in all relevant reports relating to major developments”

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

## **Climate and Ecology**

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

“In 2019 this council recognised the importance of tackling impending ecological collapse by passing a climate emergency motion. We have also recently adopted the policy of One Planet Living.

The CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY BILL is a plan for a new UK law that addresses the full extent of the climate and nature crisis in line with the most up-to-date science.

The Bill is the only proposed legislation before Parliament that ensures a comprehensive and joined-up approach to the climate emergency. It was written by scientists, experts and campaigners and seeks to ensure that the UK plays its fair and proper role in limiting global temperatures to 1.5°C and has the cross-party backing of 150 parliamentarians.

It calls for urgent action from the Government to take into account our entire global carbon footprint by:

- Tackling the climate and nature crises together
- Doing our fair share to cut UK emissions to stay below 1.5°C of global warming
- Halting and reversing UK biodiversity loss by 2030
- Taking responsibility for the entirety of our global carbon and ecological footprints

To reinforce our commitment to tackling climate change, this council will show support for the CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY BILL by:

1. Taking into account the goals of The Bill when setting its own strategies, policies and targets.
2. Encouraging councillors to join the Zero Hour Campaign at [www.zerohour.uk](http://www.zerohour.uk)
3. Calling on all Oxfordshire MPs to support the CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY BILL when it is debated in Parliament”

No amendments to the motion having been proposed, the motion was debated as submitted. On being put to the vote the motion was lost and therefore fell.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That consideration of the motion "One Planet Living" be deferred to the 19 December 2022 Council meeting.

- (2) That the following motion be adopted:

"Fracking involves injecting water, sand and other substances into subterranean rocks to extract the gas that is trapped between them. It has caused water pollution in the US, earthquakes there and in the UK, massively pollutes the environment and water table and contributes to greenhouse gases when burnt.

We've already seen earthquakes in Lancashire, and Quadrilla were forced to pause fracking there in 2018 after the British Geological Survey showed that there had been 17 earthquakes in 9 days.

Fracking was banned in 2019 by the Conservative government amid these concerns. These concerns have not gone away.

We now have a Prime Minister who believes fracking is fine again and has reversed that decision. Inexplicably so when investment in renewals is both more cost effective and much better for the environment. It is inexplicable that the government should be considering such environmental and climatic destruction when we are facing a climate catastrophe.

Liz Truss has said developers will be given permission "where there is local support". Various sites across the country have been identified as possibilities, some are in Cherwell. As this Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and published the Climate Action Framework in 2020, which includes statements on moving towards net-zero carbon by 2030, we, as a council, need unite behind that and be seen to be standing by it. We, the Labour Group, I know, are united on this and we call upon this Council to declare the District of Cherwell a NO FRACKING ZONE."

- (3) That the following motion be adopted:

"Earlier this year Thames Water welcomed Oxfordshire's first regional river designated as bathing water in Port Meadow's Wolvercote Mill Stream. It's important that this success is built on by Cherwell District council to protect our waterways from natural and man-made pollution.

Only 14% of the UK's waterways are in a good ecological condition, with water companies across the UK having discharged raw sewage

into waterways 400,000 times in 2020 – more than 3 million hours of discharge.

In compliance with our climate change emergency motion, this Council has a duty to protect our natural environment. The government has so far failed to hold the water companies to account, so this council should work with Thames Water to increase transparency and minimise discharges into Cherwell's waterways.

This Council therefore will :

1. Seek to establish a local strategy that puts sewage treatment at the heart of its local plan
2. Ensure that an evidence base is compiled that assesses the cumulative impact of sewage discharges so that this is factored into decisions made within the local plan.
3. Seek to better understand the cumulative impact of wastewater discharge including untreated sewage into our local rivers on wildlife and residents
4. From 2023, request that Thames Water clarifies which treatment works will be managing sewage from new developments and the likely impact on the number of sewage discharges into watercourses
5. Requests that planning officers include a specific section on the impact on watercourses in all relevant reports relating to major developments"

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm

Chairman:

Date:

## Council

**Monday 17 October 2022**

### **Agenda Item 8 (a), Written Questions**

**Question From: Councillor Ian Middleton**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood**

**Topic: Lord Harrington visit to Cherwell District Council**

#### **Question**

“At the last full council meeting I brought a motion highlighting concerns that this council may face an upsurge in people presenting as homeless as a result of refugees not being able to secure private accommodation due to unmanageable reference requirements of private landlords. This is likely to negatively impact on our already overstretched homelessness service.

My motion called on you to make a case to the government that we and other councils will need a system of guarantees to private landlords and other arrangements in order to help refugees secure accommodation after the Homes for Ukraine scheme ends.

Instead of accepting that reasonable request you and your colleagues amended away that requirement and replaced it with an invitation to refugees Minister Lord Harrington to come to Cherwell and speak to us.

I and the rest of my group accepted this amendment pragmatically and on the basis of your verbal assurances that any meeting with the Minister would include members of all the parties represented on the council, in recognition that this is a cross-party, non-political issue.

However you reneged on that promise by only including Conservative members in the meeting with the Minister, excluding other members, all of whom will have to deal with this issue in their wards, myself included. Instead of seeking to tackle what could become a serious operational issue for this council, you chose instead to make it an opportunity for political grandstanding. Not only was that disrespectful to other members of the council, it was also counterproductive as we all had different experiences we could have related to the Minister.

Since the meeting there has been no formal report about the outcome of the meeting, save for a press release with vague references to discussions and a brief mention of the meeting having taken place in an internal memo.

Since that meeting Lord Harrington has resigned from the post of Minister for Refugees citing discontent with the way the government was handling these issue. It's unclear if he made any recommendations to government to address the



concerns raised in my motion or if these were discussed with him during the meeting.

This problem has not gone away. Fresh reports of these concerns are still being published [1]. Charities who were involved with the rematching service have also scaled back their support citing problems with the Homes for Ukraine scheme [2]. This can only add to the burden on councils.

It seems clear that the government is not going to tackle this very serious issue and is going to leave local authorities like ours to deal with this problem. If recent events are anything to go by, there are probably not going to be any significant additional resources made available to the council to tackle any increases in homelessness as a result, in fact quite the reverse. We need to tackle this issue seriously before circumstances potentially overwhelm us.

So could you please provide a full written report to ALL members on what was discussed with the minister during his visit, what assurances were given and how these have been implemented since.”

[1] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-63061116>

[2] [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/02/charity-refugees-at-home-ukrainians-find-uk-hosts-scale-back-work?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/02/charity-refugees-at-home-ukrainians-find-uk-hosts-scale-back-work?CMP=share_btn_tw)

### **Response From: Leader of the Council, Councillor Barry Wood**

Councillor Middleton, thank you for your question which provides me with the opportunity to update the chamber on the considerable activity underway to support the different asylum and refugee schemes in operation.

I am very proud of the work officers and our communities are leading, to respond to and make a success of the many different humanitarian crises we are presented with. I hope all Councillors have taken the time to read the regular updates provided in the Chief Executive's weekly emails - with specific reference to the comprehensive newsletter circulated on the 8 October.

I am sure you will agree Cherwell is going the extra mile in partnership with our communities and key stakeholders. We have a dedicated full time Community Liaison Officer who is working with Ukrainian guests and hosts to support them in finding employment, ESOL classes, and signposting them successfully to community organisations and partnerships to enable these newest of Cherwell residents to feel settled. There is a regular Wednesday afternoon surgery for anyone to drop into at our Community Pop Up space in Castle Quay to discuss and concern and be signposted to necessary support. A number of standalone events and job fairs have also been organised.

We are also conscious of the immense generosity of our residents who have opened their homes and I would want to publicly thank them for the role they are fulfilling in being such a needed and necessary resource.

The visit by Lord Harrington was specifically planned to enable him and thus the Government to understand the situation on the ground – to go beyond the words

always heard from politicians and senior officers in the many District Councils' Network (DCN) / Local Government Association (LGA) national calls we attend.

The officer team arranged for Lord Harrington to meet Ukrainian families and sponsors and also families with us from Afghanistan. This was powerful – they did the talking and explained what the process 'felt' like to be part of and what were the challenges and extra help needed. We wanted to put the human element at the heart of the short time the minister had with us - he and his officials left with a better understanding of the human impact and the challenges we are facing.

I am a member of the DCN Councillor executive, and we are very active in lobbying central government – this visit was a way to bring our words to life. This was a visit for 'our guests' to speak for themselves and not for the politicians. This is why we limited the number of politicians in attendance. I'm aware you requested there was cross party representation, but this wasn't agreed to for the reasons I've just given, it was about our guests, not about us. I attended with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder in order that we also better understand the reality of the situation and thus as the administration support our officer team with the challenges ahead as well as feeding back to other elected members. These decisions were not based on politics but genuinely trying to maximise the value of the visit for our communities.



We fully recognise the significant challenges we are facing in supporting the many schemes - as in the motion to Full Council one of the concerns is the number of schemes and thus ensuring we have parity in the response provided to them all.

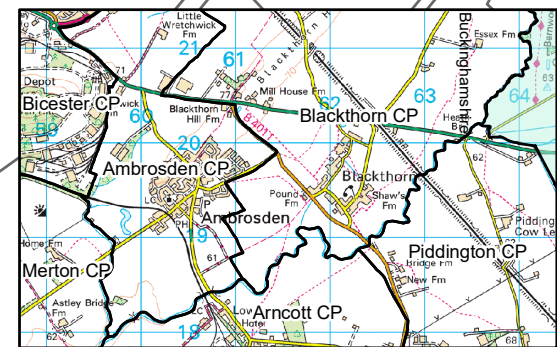
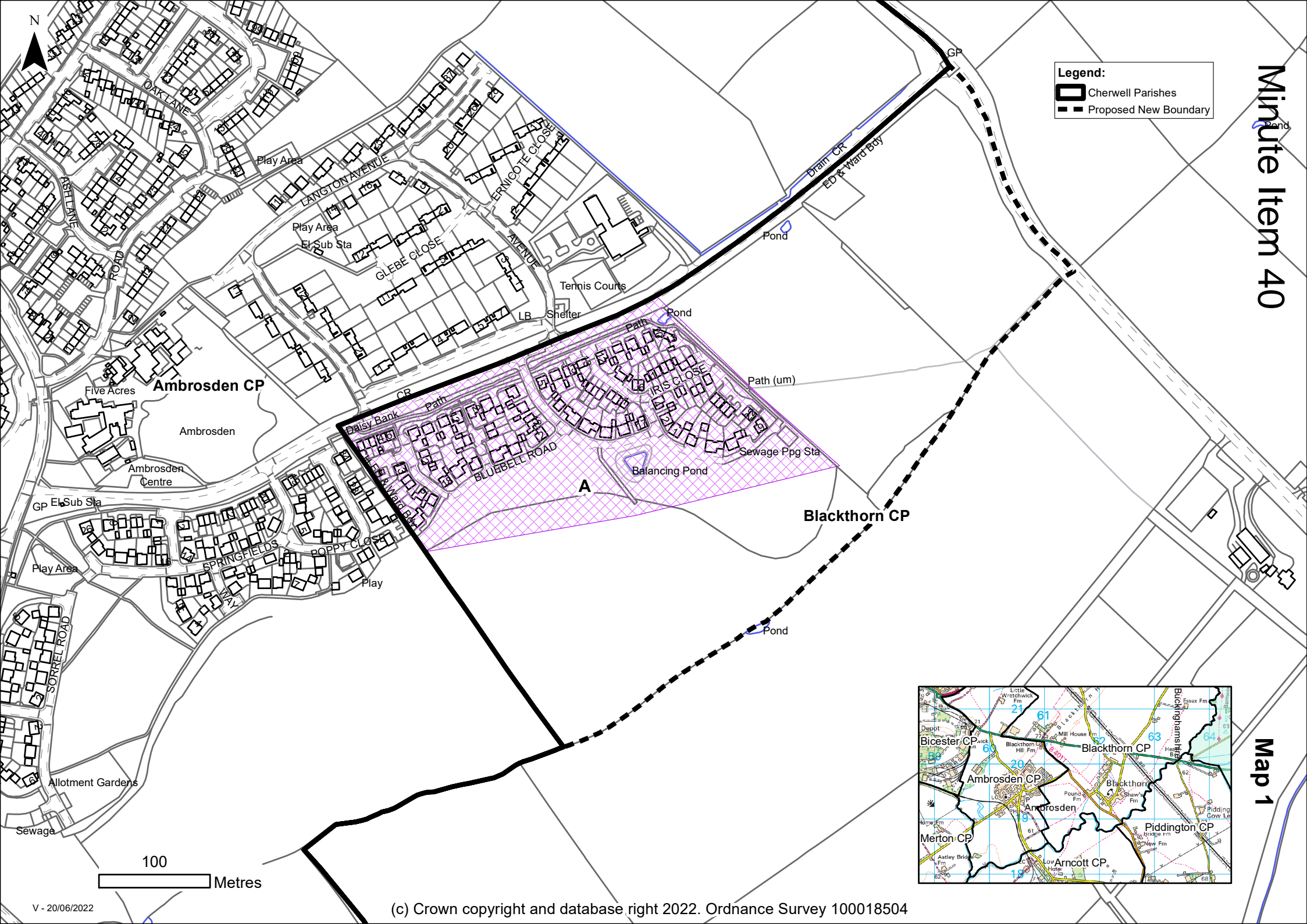
Key challenges are lack of a housing supply and competition for it, both from our own residents and the number of refugee schemes. Housing supply and its cost are a major challenge for Cherwell, and this is where we need to focus our efforts. There may well be an issue with private landlords requesting references, but it's not our guests or our major concern, the overall availability of housing is. We have been working as a system in Oxfordshire with partners across authorities to put processes in place to support all refugees moving on into independent accommodation. We also need to consider the impact of asylum requests (hotels) and dispersal accommodation – the latter played out in the media with small boat arrivals on our shores.

We champion the critical role played by District councils and seek to influence the decision makers on both process and funding.

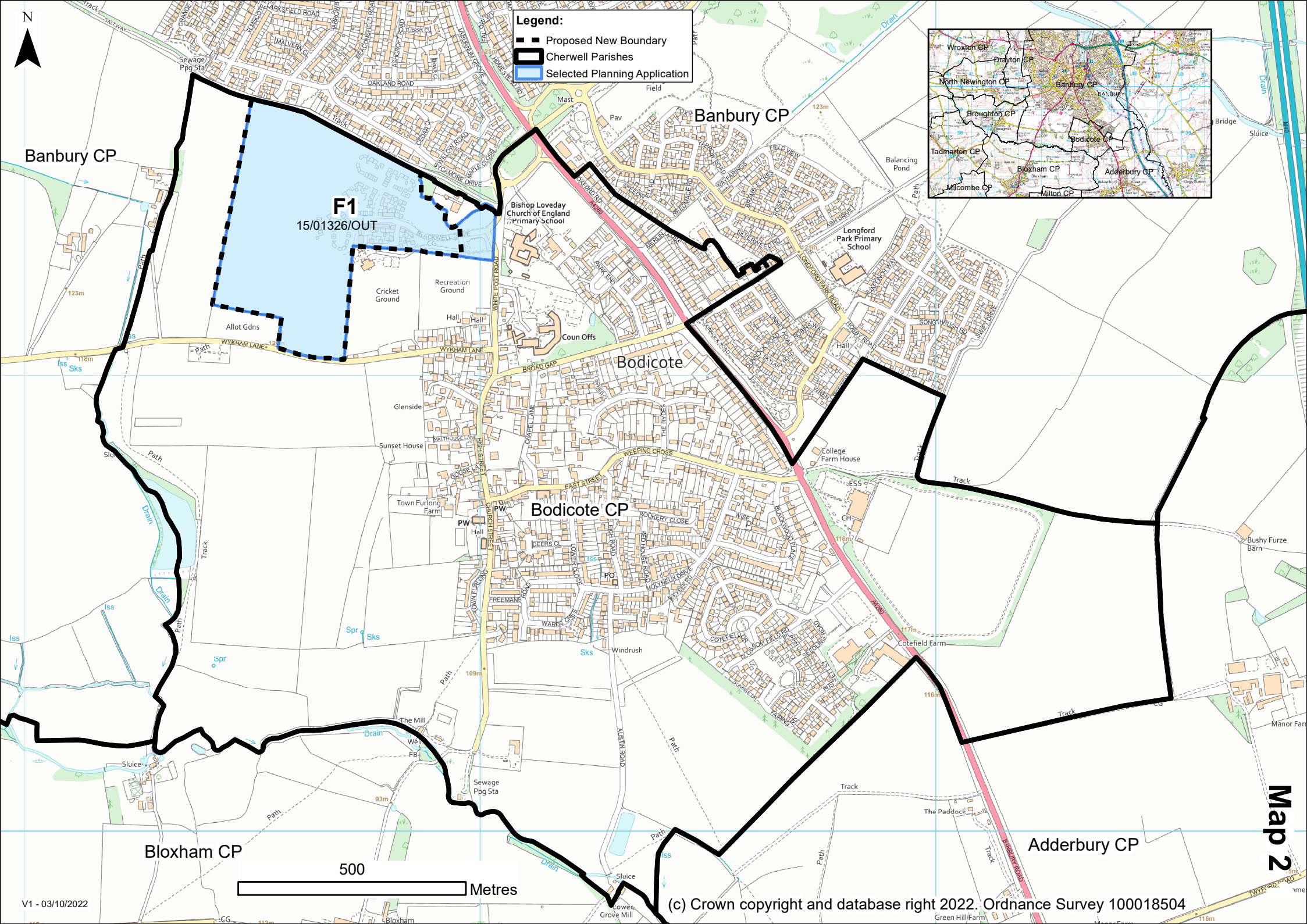
I hope the chamber will join me in supporting our officer team with the work they are doing and also recognising these sad circumstances impact all our partners - local health services, schools and police. In Oxfordshire we have been recognised and commended for our joined-up approach to this agenda and I hope the chamber can put politics to one side so we can work together to support those who need us.

**Legend:**

-  Cherwell Parishes
-  Proposed New Boundary

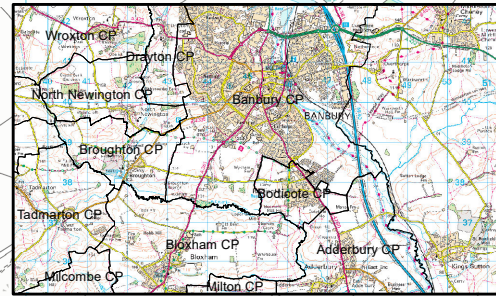




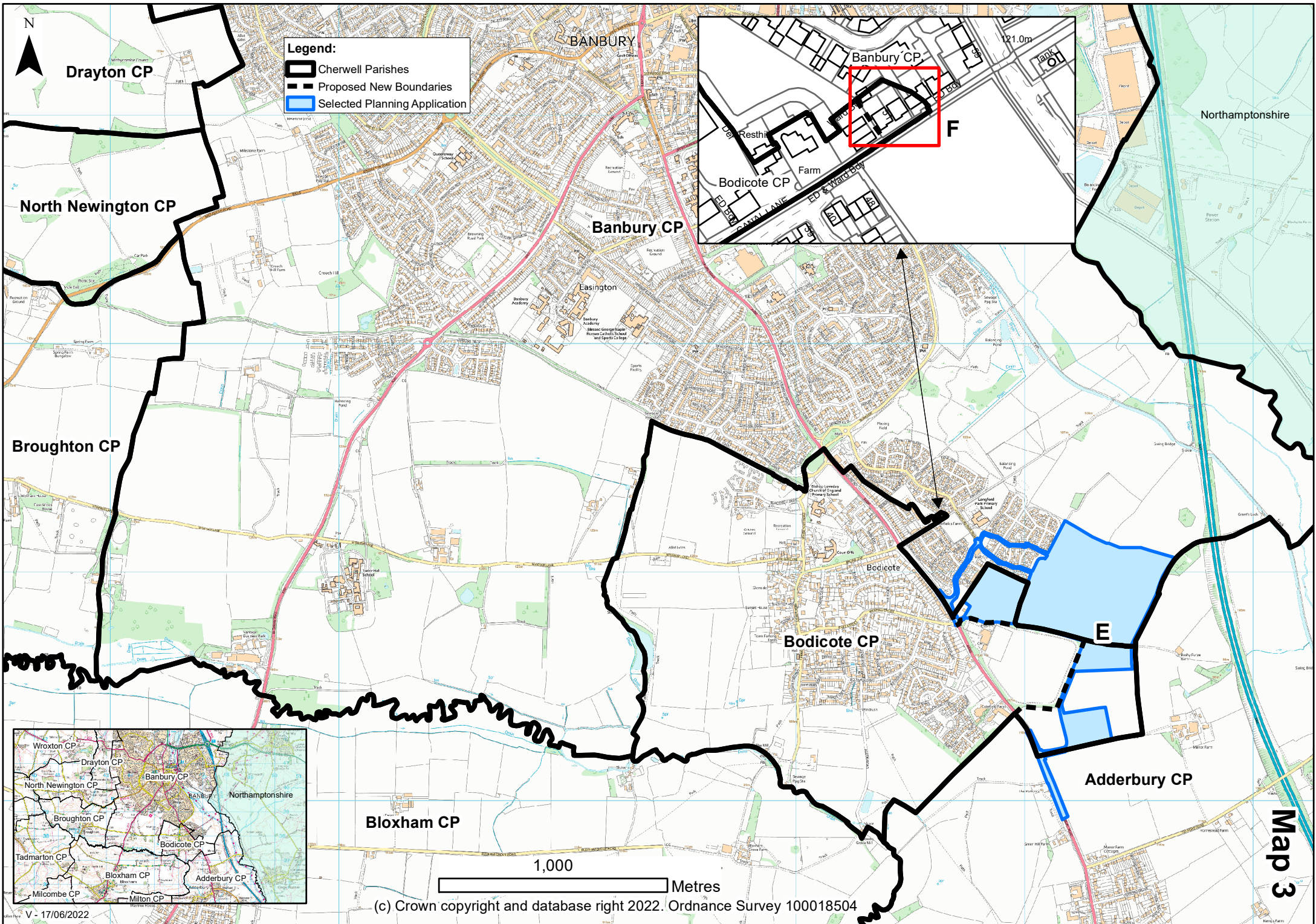


**Legend:**

- Proposed New Boundary
- Cherwell Parishes
- Selected Planning Application












# Map 4

## Legend:

-  Cherwell Parishes
-  Proposed New Boundary
-  Selected Planning Application

