

Cherwell District Council

Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 21 July 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dorothy Walker (Chair)
Councillor Nigel Simpson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Fiaz Ahmed
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE
Councillor Jean Conway
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lesley McLean
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Julian Nedelcu
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves
Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Alisa Russell
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor Linda Ward
Councillor Amanda Watkins
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Douglas Webb

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Christina Cherry, Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager
Maria Dopazo, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources and Transformation
Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property
Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services

17 **Declarations of Interest**

15. The Granting of a New Lease at 36/37 Bridge Street, Banbury.

Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill, Other Registerable Interest, as a trustee of Banbury Charities and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Ian Harwood, Other Registerable Interest, as a trustee of Banbury Charities and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Rob Pattenden, Other Registerable Interest, as a trustee of Banbury Charities and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

18 **Communications**

Chairman's Engagements

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

The Chair advised that she would be attending the funeral procession of Firefighter Martyn Sadler the following week. The Vice-Chair attended the

funeral procession of Firefighter Jennie Logan. The Firefighters had sadly lost their lives at the tragic fire at Bicester Motion in May.

In support of the Chair's Charity, Homeless Oxfordshire, together with Councillor McLean and Councillor Chris Brant, she would be participating in the Oxford CEO Sleepout. This was an annual event to raise awareness of the homelessness crisis across Oxfordshire, as well as raise funds for local homeless charities and projects.

That Chair reported that she had also visited O'Hanlon House, operated by Homeless Oxfordshire, which was the largest provider of accommodation for people experiencing homelessness in Oxfordshire as well as a wide range of specialist support services

The Chair advised that her Charity lunch would take place on 30 November. Further details would be circulated in due course.

Meeting Etiquette

The Chair reminded Members that all requests to address the meeting should be through the Chair. Members should remain in their seat during items and, if needed, she 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.

19 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

20 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

21 Minutes of Council

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22 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 it was reported, on 16 December 2024, no decisions have 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.

23

Questions

a) Written Questions

There were no written questions.

b) Questions to the Leader of the Council

Questions were asked and answers received on the following issues:

Councillor Cherry: Renewal of fencing by The Hill Community Centre

Councillor Dr Okeke: Initiative to address anti-social behaviour in Banbury Ruscote

Councillor Clarke: Support to employees of JDE, Banbury

Councillor Parsons: Use of additional Government funding to support implementation of the Temporary Accommodation Policy

Councillor Watkins: Attendance at All Member Seminars

Councillor Sibley: Review to introduce 2-hour free parking in CDC operated car parks in Bicester

Councillor Crichton: Adoption of the Hanwell Fields Landscaping Area, "Y5" by Cherwell District Council

Councillor Sibley: A4095 Realigned Howes Lane Bicester

c) Questions to Committee Chairmen on the Minutes

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

24

Submission of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042

The Assistant Director Planning and Development submitted a report to present the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (draft) and to seek approval for its submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination. Executive has considered and had recommended Council approve the submission of the Plan at its meeting on 1 July 2025.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, Councillor Conway, explained that the adopted Local Plan was the main part of the statutory Development Plan, the starting point for considering development proposals. The review of the Cherwell Local Plan had commenced in 2020 with three public consultations were undertaken prior to the publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan in December 2024. Following Executive approval in December 2024, consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan commenced on 19 December 2024 and closed on 25 February 2025.

The 345 consultation responses had been considered by officers in reviewing whether the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (the 'Plan') was 'sound' and legally compliant, the tests of the independent examination of the Plan started when the Proposed Submission Local Plan was submitted.

The view of officers was that the Plan was sound but that a number of 'proposed changes' and 'minor modifications' should be suggested to the examining inspector(s) in the interests of its improvement, clarification and updating and to address minor presentational, grammatical and typographical issues.

In considering the report, Members commended all council officers involved in the Local Plan process and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development for their work on the Local Plan as well as the cross party working through the Member Advisory Group and Group Leaders to reach submission stage for a sound Plan.

Councillor Wood proposed that a recorded vote be taken. This was duly seconded by Councillor Mawer. Having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote was taken. Members voted as follows:

Councillor Fiaz Ahmed	For
Councillor Rebecca Biegel	For
Councillor Chris Brant	For
Councillor Besmira Brasha	For
Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Phil Chapman	For
Councillor Mark Cherry	For
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE	For
Councillor Jean Conway	For
Councillor Gemma Coton	For
Councillor Nick Cotter	For
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed	For
Councillor Andrew Crichton	For
Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu	For
Councillor Donna Ford	Abstain
Councillor Ian Harwood	For
Councillor David Hingley	For
Councillor Frank Ideh	For
Councillor Harry Knight	For
Councillor Simon Lytton	For

Councillor Nick Mawer	For
Councillor Fiona Mawson	For
Councillor Lesley McLean	For
Councillor Zoe McLernon	For
Councillor Ian Middleton	For
Councillor Julian Nedelcu	For
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke	For
Councillor Lynne Parsons	For
Councillor Rob Pattenden	For
Councillor Chris Pruden	For
Councillor Edward F Reeves	For
Councillor David Rogers	For
Councillor Alisa Russell	For
Councillor Les Sibley	For
Councillor Nigel Simpson	Abstain
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill	For
Councillor Dorothy Walker	For
Councillor Linda Ward	For
Councillor Amanda Watkins	For
Councillor John Willett	For
Councillor Barry Wood	For

Resolved

- (1) That the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination with all necessary prescribed and supporting documents be approved.
- (2) That the Schedule of Proposed Changes and Minor Modifications to the Proposed Submission Local Plan draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review be approved.
- (3) That the responses to the consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 summarised in the Statement of Consultation be noted.
- (4) That the supporting documents relevant to the preparation of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042: Sustainability Appraisal (November 2024) - Non-Technical Summary; Sustainability Appraisal (November 2024); Sustainability Appraisal Addendum (May 2025); Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (November 2024); Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (November 2024); Consultation Statement (June 2025); Officer responses to representations received (June 2025); Duty to Co Operate Statement of Compliance (June 2025); and, Infrastructure Delivery Plan (June 2025), be noted.

25

Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy 2025

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report which sought approval of the draft Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy.

Consultation on the draft Policy was undertaken from 12 January 2025 until 14 February 2025. All representations received were considered and some amendments made to the draft Policy post consultation. The Policy was considered and approved by the Licensing Acts Committee on 9 July 2025, which recommended it to Council for adoption.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 be approved for adoption and publication by Cherwell District Council be approved.

26

Treasury Management Report - Annual Performance Report 2024/25

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to provide information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2024-25 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

The report demonstrated that all treasury management activities undertaken during the reporting period complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee had considered and recommended this report to Council at their meeting of 28 May 2025.

Resolved

- (1) That the Treasury Management Annual Performance Report and the Capital Prudential indicators be noted.

27

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2024-25

The Assistant Director Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer submitted a report for Council to consider and note the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for the 2024-25 municipal year.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hingley, thanked the Overview and Scrutiny for their work and valuable contributions during 2024-25.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2024-25 be noted.

28 **Amendment(s) to Committee Membership**

The Chair advised that the Monitoring Officer had been not been notified of any changes to Committee membership by Group Leaders.

29 **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 item of business, on the grounds that it 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.

30 **The Granting of a New Lease at 36/37 Bridge Street, Banbury**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the granting of a new lease at 36/37 Bridge Street, Banbury.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

31 **Readmittance of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

32 **Motions**

The Chair advised that three motions had been submitted. The motion "Cherwell Affordable Housing Emergency" was deferred from the cancelled March Council meeting. One amendment had been accepted as a friendly amendment by the proposer. A further amendment had been submitted. In line with the Constitution no further amendments were now permitted.

The motions "Primary Care Facilities in North Oxfordshire" and "Government Review of Local Authority Funding" would be dealt with in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.18, the revised procedure agreed at the May Annual Council meeting. In accordance with the procedure, the proposer of the

motion would propose the motion and address Council, the seconder would confirm their seconding, and the Leader, Councillor Hingley, would respond to the motion. They would then be referred to Executive for consideration as the detail of the motions fell within the remit of Executive.

Motion One: Cherwell Affordable Housing Emergency

It was proposed by Councillor Creed and seconded by Councillor Crichton that the following motion, as amended by a friendly amendment, be adopted.

“The Office for National Statistics data suggests that the average house price in Cherwell is £362,000 in December 2024, a 9% rise in cost since December 2023.

The cost of housing means that for many young people the costs are too high to realistically get on the housing ladder. Rents in the District are also extremely high, in December 2024 the average cost was £1215 up from £1121 in December 2023, making even renting in the district unaffordable for many residents

Cherwell District Council has an ever-increasing housing waiting list, which has increased by 10% in the last year alone. The waiting times are significant ranging from 243 days for 1-bedroom properties to 991 days for 4-bedroom properties, leaving many families waiting up to several years for appropriate accommodation.

In the last financial year alone, the council has spent £332,800 on housing residents in temporary accommodation. The need for housing in Cherwell is greater than ever.

This Council resolves that Cherwell District Council declares it has an affordable and social housing emergency and recognizes that the way forward is to focus on housing delivery in the context of the emerging Local Plan 2042, the approved housing strategy 2025-30 and the housing delivery action plan.”

The Monitoring Officer advised that the further amendment to the motion had been withdrawn by the amendment proposer and would therefore not be debated by Council.

The motion, as amended by the friendly amendment, was debated. On being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

Motion Two: Primary Care Facilities in North Oxfordshire

Councillor Rogers proposed and presented the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor Reeves. Councillor Hingley, Leader of the Council, responded to the motion.

“This Council considers that more needs to be done to expand and improve Primary Care facilities across North Oxfordshire.

Following a productive cross-party meeting between members and representatives of the Integrated Care Board (ICB), together with a careful review of representations from local stakeholders in recent weeks, this Council resolves to request that the Executive facilitates the expansion of Primary Care provision via any reasonable means, which may include, where appropriate and reasonable, the following:

- i. issuing standing advice on planning matters to the ICB to assist it in its place and facilities planning;
- ii. producing evidence to the ICB to support the well understood assertion that Primary Care is now at capacity across this district;
- iii. supporting the ICB to create a plan for the delivery of new and expanded primary care facilities across North Oxfordshire;
- iv. requesting that the ICB estates team better supports its 'drive to digital' by encouraging developer contributions into, inter alia, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) projects; and
- v. review, in conjunction with the ICB, why the proposed facilities at Longford Park, Hanwell Fields and Graven Hill have proven unsuccessful in recent years to avoid failures in new developments elsewhere.
- vi. consider Primary Care needs as widely as reasonably possible in future supplementary planning documents to encourage a greater number of capital projects coming forward and encouraging the ICB to request developer contributions on all applications of 10+ homes without limiting such bids to bricks-and-mortar projects alone."

Motion Three: Government Review of Local Authority Funding

Councillor Reeves proposed and presented the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor Rogers. Councillor Hingley, Leader of the Council, responded to the motion.

"This Council regrets the consequences of the government's plans to:

- (i) end the Business Rates Retention scheme that has contributed to the strength of local public finances since its introduction in 2013/14; and
- (ii) institute a Fair Funding model for local government that redistributes wealth from districts like Cherwell to other parts of the country.

This Council notes that the government's consultation on its Business Rates Reset policy has now ended and further notes that the government's Fair Funding consultation ends soon on 15 August 2025.

Moreover, a report to this Council's Budget Planning Committee meeting on 8 July 2025 concluded that:

"The impact of these changes is expected to reduce the council's funding by up to 40%."

Such a cumulative impact would reduce this Council's expenditure to such an extent that it could be forced to end all discretionary funding and revert to providing statutory services only.

Given the disastrous impact of such cuts, this Council requests as a matter of urgency that the Leader:

- (i) writes to our Members of Parliament with a view to their raising these concerns with Ministers;
- (ii) works through the District Councils Network, the Local Government Association and/or other relevant organisations to ensure that there is the strongest possible lobbying of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, highlighting the plight of a high-growth district like Cherwell;
- (iii) issue as strong an individual submission to the government's Fair Funding consultation as possible with a view to mitigating the effects of these cuts."

Resolved

- (1) That the following motion, as amended by a friendly amendment, be agreed:

"The Office for National Statistics data suggests that the average house price in Cherwell is £362,000 in December 2024, a 9% rise in cost since December 2023.

The cost of housing means that for many young people the costs are too high to realistically get on the housing ladder. Rents in the District are also extremely high, in December 2024 the average cost was £1215 up from £1121 in December 2023, making even renting in the district unaffordable for many residents

Cherwell District Council has an ever-increasing housing waiting list, which has increased by 10% in the last year alone. The waiting times are significant ranging from 243 days for 1-bedroom properties to 991 days for 4-bedroom properties, leaving many families waiting up to several years for appropriate accommodation.

In the last financial year alone, the council has spent £332,800 on housing residents in temporary accommodation. The need for housing in Cherwell is greater than ever.

This Council resolves that Cherwell District Council declares it has an affordable and social housing emergency and recognizes that the way forward is to focus on housing delivery in the context of the emerging Local Plan 2042, the approved housing strategy 2025-30 and the housing delivery action plan."

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chair:

Date: