



# Meeting of Council

**Monday 15 December 2025**

**Members of Cherwell District Council,**

**A meeting of Council will be held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD on Monday 15 December 2025 at 6.30 pm, and you are hereby summoned to attend.**

**Monitoring Officer  
Friday 5 December 2025**

## **AGENDA**

**1 Apologies for Absence**

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

**3 Communications (Pages 9 - 10)**

To receive communications from the Chair and/or the Leader of the Council.

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

The Chair to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

Addresses may be presented by:

- A Local Government elector for the area,
- A person who is wholly or mainly resident in the area,
- A Council Taxpayer or National Non-Domestic Ratepayer for the area

Addresses must be on an item on the Agenda before the meeting and not exceed 5 minutes. No person may address more than one meeting on any particular issue.

Requests to address the meeting (including the agenda item and reason for the address) should be submitted to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) The deadline for requests to address this meeting is noon on Friday 12 December.

The deadline to present a petition to this meeting has passed.

Full details of public participation at meetings is available in the Constitution.

## **5 Urgent Business**

The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

## **6 Minutes of Council (Pages 11 - 24)**

To confirm as correct records the Minutes of Council held on 20 October 2025 and the Special Council held on 10 November 2025.

## **7 Minutes**

- a) Minutes of Executive, Portfolio Holder Decisions and Executive Decisions not included in the 28 day notice

The Leader of the Council to formally propose that the minutes of the meetings of the Executive and Portfolio Holder Decisions as set out in the Minute Book (circulated separately) be received and to report that since the last meeting of Council at which this was reported on 20 October 2025, no key or exempt decisions have been taken by the Executive which were not included in the 28 day notice.

- b) Minutes of Committees

The Leader of the Council to formally propose that the minutes of committees as set out in the Minute Book (circulated separately) be received.

## **8 Questions (Pages 25 - 26)**

- a) Written Questions

Four written questions have been submitted with advance notice in accordance with the Constitution. These are attached to the agenda. The deadline for written questions has now passed.

	Question From	Question Topic
1	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Illegal Fly-tipping at Kidlington
2	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Government Funding
3	Cllr Eddie Reeves	CCTV Services across Oxfordshire
4	Cllr David Rogers	Illegal Fly-tipping at Kidlington

A written response to the questions will be published on the working day before the meeting.

The Member who submitted the written question may ask a supplementary question provided it is relevant to the reply and does not introduce any new matter. The Member to whom the question was addressed may reply to such supplementary question or undertake to reply in writing.

b) Questions to the Leader of the Council

The Chair to invite questions to the Leader of the Council (including any matters arising from the minutes).

Following a response to their question being provided Members will be entitled to a follow up or supplementary question.

c) Questions to Committee Chairs on the Minutes

The Chair to invite questions to Chairs of Committees on any matter arising from the minutes of their Committee (if any).

## Council Business Reports

### 9 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27 (Pages 27 - 34)

Report of Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151)

#### Purpose of report

To enable Members to consider the proposed banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for 2026/27.

#### Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the report, and any financial implications for the Council.
- 1.2 To approve:

- The option of no change to the Council Tax Reduction Income Banded Scheme for Working Age Applicants for 2026/27
- To amend Working Age Regulations in line with annual uprating and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.

## **10 Calendar of Meetings 2026/2027 (Pages 35 - 44)**

Report of Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

### **Purpose of report**

Council is asked to consider and agree the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2026/2027 (Appendix 1).

### **Recommendations**

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the calendar of meetings for Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2026/2027 (Appendix 1).

## **11 Appointment of Independent Person to Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (Pages 45 - 50)**

Report of Monitoring Officer

### **Purpose of report**

To appoint a second Independent Person to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

### **Recommendations**

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the appointment of Nelly Lukwo as an Independent Person, to be appointed for a four-year term expiring on the date of the December Council meeting in 2029 and to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make the appointment.
- 1.2 To note that the appointment may be renewable in 2029 for a further term of four years subject to the Independent Person wishing to continue in the role and Council agreeing the renewal of the appointment.

## **12 Appointment of Independent Persons for Standards (Pages 51 - 58)**

Report of Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

### **Purpose of report**

To appoint statutory Independent Persons as part of the standards arrangements.

### **Recommendations**

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To appoint Tom Edwards and Terry Williams as Independent Persons for a four-year term expiring on the date of the December Council meeting in 2029.

## **13 Castle Quay Banbury - Roof Works (Pages 59 - 68)**

Report of Assistant Director Property

### **Purpose of report**

That the utilisation of Capital Programme funds of £1.65 Million to undertake landlords works to ensure a fit for purpose watertight roof to mitigate loss of rent and further claims from occupiers at Castle Quay Banbury be approved.

### **Recommendations**

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the utilisation of Capital Programme funds of £1.65m to undertake landlords works to ensure a fit for purpose watertight roof to mitigate loss of rent and further claims from occupiers at Castle Quay, Banbury.

## **14 Treasury Management Report - Mid-year review 2025/26 (September 2025) (Pages 69 - 84)**

Report of Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)

### **Purpose of report**

To provide information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management strategy for 2024-25 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

To demonstrate 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.

### **Recommendations**

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the contents of this Treasury Management mid-year review as recommended by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on the 19 November 2025.

## **15 Amendment(s) to Committee Membership**

To note amendment(s), if any, to Committee membership notified to the Monitoring Officer by Group Leaders.

## **16 Motions (Pages 85 - 88)**

The deadline to submit motions has passed.

The following motions have been submitted with advance notice, in accordance with the Constitution (to be considered in the order submitted).

	Topic	Proposer	Seconder
1	Free Parking on Remembrance Sunday	Cllr Donna Ford	Cllr Ian Harwood
2	Supporting our High Streets	Cllr Eddie Reeves	TBC
3	Fire Services in Cherwell	Cllr Andrew Crichton	Cllr Rebecca Biegel

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.18, as the detail of motions 1 and 2 falls within the remit of Executive, there will be no Council debate on these motions.

The proposer of the motion will propose the motion, the seconder will confirm, the Leader of the Council response and the motions will stand referred to Executive for consideration.

Motion 3 is for debate by Council. The deadline for amendments to this motion is noon on Thursday 11 December. No amendments will be permitted after this deadline. Any amendments submitted will be published as a supplement to the agenda on the afternoon of Friday 12 December. Amendments for motions will be dealt with in the order submitted.

### **For information**

Please note:

Members are advised that the next scheduled Council meeting on Monday 23 February 2026 is the Budget Setting Council. There are no written questions or motions at this meeting.

The next Council meeting at which written questions and motions may be submitted is Monday 16 March 2026. Written questions and motions for this Council meeting must be submitted to the Assistant Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer, [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk), by noon on Wednesday 4 March 2026.

**Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members' Lounge at the end of the meeting.**

## **Information about this Agenda**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

If you hear the fire alarm, please leave the building via the nearest available exit. The fire assembly point is outside the Premier Inn, adjacent to the canal.

### **Access to Meetings**

If you have any special requirements, such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities to view a meeting online or attend a meeting in person, please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

### **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

### **Webcasting and Broadcasting Notice**

The meeting will be recorded by the council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the council's website. The whole of the meeting will be recorded, except when confidential or exempt items are being considered. The webcast will be retained on the website for 6 months.

If you make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed by the council to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or joining virtually, you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

The council is obliged, by law, to allow members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record, and report on proceedings. The council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

### **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk), 01295 221534

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## **Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker' attendance Report October – December 2025<sup>1</sup>**

### **14 October**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker attended James Macnamara CStJ TD VR JP DL, The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Court Sermon and Glove Ceremony at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford.

The Honourable Mr Justice Edward Murray Preacher – Dr Robin Griffith-Jones, Reverend and Valiant Master of The Tem were also in attendance at the event.

### **15 October**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker, joined Banbury Mayor, Councillor Kieron Mallon, at the Banbury Town Fair for the Golden Key Ceremony. As part of this tradition, the ceremonial Golden Key was used to grant visitors complimentary rides.

### **17 October**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker opened the new Playzone at Princess Diana Park in Banbury.

### **24 October**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker, attended Cllr Oliver Forder's Charity Dinner at the Hilton Garden Inn in Abingdon. The evening featured a comedy set by Nick Revell and raised funds for Mind Oxfordshire and Host Abingdon.

### **4 November**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker, attended the Light Infantry Memorial Plaque Unveiling hosted by the Lord Mayor of Oxford, Cllr Louise Upton. The ceremony featured the unveiling of two newly restored plaques and the symbolic turning of the pages in the Book of Remembrance.

### **9 November**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker, represented the Council at the Bodicote and Kidlington Remembrance Services. Councillor Eddie Reeves attended the Banbury Remembrance Service, while Councillor Les Sibley paid tribute at the Bicester Remembrance Service

### **11 November**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker took part in the Remembrance Service at Castle Quay, arranged by Cllr Rob Pattenden.

### **26 November**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker attended the 'What's next for Afghan Refugees in the UK' at St Catherine's college in Oxford.

### **26 November**

The Vice Chair, Cllr Nigel Simpson attended the premiere of 'Our Club, Our Town', a film by Glyn McGuire at The Green House and Terrace and The Light Cinema. The documentary film explores why Banbury United matters to the community that owns it, and to the town of Banbury. Over twelve months, director Glyn McGuire,

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<sup>1</sup> As at agenda publication, Friday 5 December

supported by media students from Banbury & Bicester College, captured the stories of multi-generational custodians of this non-league football club.

### **3 December**

The Chair, Cllr Dorothy Walker attended the Homeless Oxfordshire Movement - Carol Service at Oxford in support of her chosen charities, Homeless Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Homeless Movement and Asylum Welcome.

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 October 2025 at 6.30 pm

#### **Present:**

Councillor Dorothy Walker (Chair)  
Councillor Nigel Simpson (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Tom Beckett  
Councillor Rebecca Biegel  
Councillor Gordon Blakeway  
Councillor Chris Brant  
Councillor Besmira Brasha  
Councillor John Broad  
Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE  
Councillor Jean Conway  
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray  
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 Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Fiona Mawson  
Councillor Lesley McLean  
Councillor Zoe McLernon  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Julian Nedelcu  
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke  
Councillor Rob Pattenden  
Councillor Chris Pruden  
Councillor David Rogers  
Councillor Les Sibley  
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill  
Councillor Dom Vaitkus  
Councillor Linda Ward  
Councillor Amanda Watkins  
Councillor John Willett  
Councillor Douglas Webb  
Councillor Barry Wood

Present Virtually (no voting rights):

Councillor Robert Parkinson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Fiaz Ahmed

Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Councillor Lynne Parsons

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves

Councillor Alisa Russell

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive

Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration

Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

### 33 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 34 **Communications**

#### **Councillor Eddie Reeves**

At the Chair's discretion, on behalf of Council, Councillor Kieron Mallon congratulated Councillor Reeves and his wife on the recent birth of their daughter.

#### **Former Councillor Gordon Ross**

On behalf of Council, the Chair paid tribute to former Councillor Gordon Ross who had passed away last month. Former Councillor Ross was a Labour Group member, who had represented the Banbury Ruscote ward from 2012 to 2014. Former Councillor Ross also represented the Banbury Ruscote ward on Banbury Town Council and served as Town Mayor in 2016/17.

Prior to becoming a Councillor, former Councillor Ross had worked for Banbury Borough Council and Bicester Urban District Council. He joined Cherwell District Council in 1968, remaining until he retired as Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer in 1992.

Councillor Cherry and Councillor Mallon paid tribute to former Councillor Ross.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to former Councillor Ross' family.

**Former Councillor Anthony Kempton**

On behalf of Council, the Chair paid tribute to former Councillor Tony Kempton who had recently passed away. Former Councillor Kempton was a member of the Conservative Group who represented the Bicester East ward during the 2002-2003 municipal year. He served on North and South Area Planning Committees and Environment Select Committee.

Councillor Wood and Councillor Cotter paid tribute to former Councillor Kempton.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to former Councillor Kempton's family.

Council observed a minutes' silence.

**Members' Allowances Survey**

The Chair referred to the annual survey on Members' allowances. A paper copy had been given to all Members and a link to complete the survey online would be emailed.

All Members were encouraged to complete the survey as the feedback was valued by the Independent Remuneration Panel when considering its recommendations on Members' Allowances. The Panel's recommendations for the 2026/27 Scheme would be submitted to the Budget Council in February 2026.

**Chair's Engagements**

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

The Chair highlighted the CEO Sleepout she had participated in with Councillors McLean and Brant on 9 October in Oxford. The event's aim was to raise awareness of the homelessness crisis across Oxfordshire, as well as funds for local homeless charities and projects. The page for donations was still currently open for anyone wishing to donate and she would share the link.

The Chair advised that her Charity lunch would take place on Sunday 30 November at Exeter Hall, Kidlington. 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.

### **Special Council**

The Chair reminded Members that that a single item Special Council is being held on Monday 10 November. The next scheduled Council meeting was on Monday 15 December.

### **Members' Pigeon Holes**

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

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

### 36 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### 37 **Minutes of Council**

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

### 38 **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 on 21 July 2025 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.

### 39 **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 Vaitkus: Rodent infestation levels in the Cherwell district

Councillor Rogers: Local Government Reform

Councillor Okeke: Community safety

Councillor Rogers: Cherwell Local Plan

Councillor Sibley: Christmas free parking in CDC operated car parks

Councillor Mallon: Banbury Borough Council Minute Books

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

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

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## **Review of Proportionality and Committee Membership**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report for Council to note the amendments to the constitution of political groups and amendments to the proportionality calculations and committee membership arising from a change to political Group membership.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the amended constitution of Political Groups be noted.
  - Liberal Democrat (17 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor David Hingley
    - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Lesley McLean
  - Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance (13 Members, all Conservative Group members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Ford)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Eddie Reeves
    - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor David Rogers
  - Labour (11 Members, all Labour and Labour & Co-operative party members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Amanda Watkins
    - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Andrew Crichton
  - Green and Independent Alliance (5 Members, comprising 4 Green members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Broad)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton
    - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Tom Beckett
  - Independent (2 Members, comprising 2 Independent Members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Les Sibley

- (2) That the amended allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements (Table 1 of the report) be noted.

	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Cherwell Conservative & Independent Alliance	Green & Independent Alliance Group	Independent Group	Total
% entitlement	35.4%	22.9%	27.1%	10.4%	4.2%	100%
Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee	3	2	2	1	0	8
Appeals Panel	4	2	3	1	0	10
Budget Planning Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
General Licensing Committee	5 (+1)	2 (-1)	4 (+1)	1	0 (-1)	12
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
Personnel Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
Planning Committee	6	4	5	2	1	18
Standards Committee	3	2	2	1	0	8
<b>Proportional Entitlement by Committee</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Aggregate Entitlement</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Adjustment Required</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>

- (3) That the amended allocation of seats on committees that are not subject to the political balance requirements be noted.

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Cherwell Conservative & Independent Alliance	Green & Independent Alliance	Independent	Total
Licensing Acts Committee	5	2	4	1	0	12

- (4) That the following Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance committee membership amendments be noted:
- Budget Planning Committee
    - Remove Councillor David Rogers
    - Add Councillor Zoe McLernon
  - General Licensing Committee



- Add Councillor Douglas Webb
  - Licensing Acts Committee
    - Add Councillor Douglas Webb
  - Overview and Scrutiny Committee
    - Remove Councillor Zoe McLernon
    - Add Councillor David Rogers
  - Planning Committee
    - Add Councillor David Rogers as a full committee member (currently a named substitute, therefore creating a named substitute vacancy)
    - Add Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke as named substitute (vacancy arisen as per above)
- (5) That the following Labour Group committee membership amendments be noted:
- Appeals Panel
    - Add Councillor Mark Cherry
  - General Licensing Committee
    - Remove Councillor Andrew Crichton
  - Licensing Acts Committee
    - Remove Councillor Andrew Crichton
  - Overview & Scrutiny Committee
    - Add Councillor Dom Vaitkus
  - Planning Committee
    - Remove Councillor Rebecca Biegel as full committee member
    - Add Councillor Rebecca Biegel as a named substitute

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## Motions

The Chair advised that two motions had been submitted. In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.18, as the detail of both submitted motions fell within the remit of Executive, there would be no Council debate on the motions. 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. The motions would then be referred to Executive for consideration.

### **Motion One: Supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces**

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

"Young women in Cherwell District have reported long-standing concerns related to their right to be free and safe in public spaces, especially after dark. In 2025, local women have started organising, both formally and informally, to put a stop to gender-targeted harassment and assaults. Some emerging initiatives include: young women who work at night clubs organising to make

their industry better at preventing harassment and assault, young women setting up peer support networks in the community, and women seeking the creation of dedicated spaces in town centres for peer support for young women and LGBTQ+ residents and visitors.

Community action from young women leaders is commendable. It benefits all of society, and it deserves strong support from Councils.

Cherwell District Council recognises that our goal to promote a thriving night-time economy must be inclusive of young women's safety and freedom in these spaces. We will ensure young women leaders are consistently engaged as stakeholders in implementing this aspect of the 2042 Local Plan.

Cherwell District Council pledges to encourage local businesses and other private sector stakeholders to support and sponsor young women's community initiatives for safety.

Cherwell District Council will identify low cost out-of-use sites that are suitable for proposals from women-led initiatives for the community benefit, and ensure these sites are financially accessible for community-based initiatives."

### **Motion Two: Planning support for Town and Parish Councils**

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

"Council notes with concern the significant development pressures arising from recent announcements, including: the proposed new town at Heyford Park, the Puy du Fou theme park, large-scale warehousing at Baynard's Green, and the rail freight interchange.

Council recognises that these proposals will have far-reaching impacts on local communities, infrastructure, and the environment, and that Town and parish councils play a vital role in representing residents' views.

However, these councils often lack the specialist planning expertise and resources required to respond effectively to complex applications of this scale. Council therefore resolves:

1. To provide accessible planning-related advice and support to councils within the affected areas, ensuring they are equipped to understand, scrutinise, and respond to major development proposals.
2. To establish a dedicated point of contact within the Planning Department for councils seeking guidance on strategic developments.
3. To explore options for training sessions and briefing notes tailored to councils, delivered in advance of key planning consultations.

This Council believes that empowering town and parish councils with expert advice will strengthen democratic participation, improve the quality of local

input into the planning process, and help ensure that growth is managed responsibly and sustainably.

This officer-time could be funded from the unused heating fund which was in the Conservative budget amendment.”

The meeting ended at 7.23 pm

Chair:

Date:

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## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Special Council**

Minutes of a meeting of a Special Council held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury,  
OX16 5FD, on 10 November 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dorothy Walker (Chair)

Councillor Fiaz Ahmed  
Councillor Tom Beckett  
Councillor Rebecca Biegel  
Councillor Gordon Blakeway  
Councillor Besmira Brasha  
Councillor John Broad  
Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE  
Councillor Gemma Coton  
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed  
Councillor Andrew Crichton  
Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu  
Councillor Ian Harwood  
Councillor David Hingley  
Councillor Frank Ideh  
Councillor Simon Lytton  
Councillor Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer  
Councillor Fiona Mawson  
Councillor Lesley McLean  
Councillor Zoe McLernon  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Julian Nedelcu  
Councillor Robert Parkinson  
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 Dom Vaitkus  
Councillor Amanda Watkins  
Councillor John Willett  
Councillor Douglas Webb  
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Nigel Simpson  
Councillor Nick Cotter  
Councillor Harry Knight  
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke  
Councillor Linda Ward

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Chris Brant  
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray  
Councillor Donna Ford

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive  
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration  
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources  
Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead

42      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

43      **Communications**

**Remembrance Day**

The Chair advised that Members and staff were invited to assemble in the Council Chamber on Tuesday 11 November at 10:30am.

Councillor Pattenden would deliver a call to order and introduction.  
Community Liaison Team Leader, Michal Gogut, would talk about his involvement in the reservists, including his squadron's role in the Second World War.

At 11am, an air horn would mark the beginning of a two-minute silence. The air horn would sound again at two minutes past eleven. Councillor Pattenden will conclude by reading the Kohima Epitaph.

**Cllr Reeves**

Following on from Councillor Mallon at our last Council meeting, on behalf of Council, the Chair congratulated to Councillor Reeves and his wife on the recent arrival of their daughter.

### **Chair's Charity Lunch**

The Chair referred to correspondence that had been sent to Members regarding her charity lunch, which was taking place on 30 November. The Chair commented she looked forward to seeing as many Members as possible at the lunch, which would raise funds for her charities, Homeless Oxfordshire and Asylum Welcome.

### **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.

#### **44 Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

#### **45 Local Government Reorganisation - Full Proposal**

The Executive Director of Resources submitted a report that summarised the council's Full Proposal for Local Government Reform (LGR) in Oxfordshire, which was due to be submitted to the Government on 28 November 2025, subject to Executive approval at the Special Executive 13 November 2025.

The Full Proposal made the case for two unitary councils underpinned by a robust options appraisal and thorough financial analysis. Two unitary councils were proposed to help ensure the future of local government in Oxfordshire was cost effective, simplified and strengthened whilst unlocking further devolution for the county. Council was invited to debate the matters within the report and provide comments to Executive for their consideration.

In introducing the report, the Leader advised Council that the report and the proposal had been brought to the Special Council meeting to allow all Members of the Council the opportunity to consider and comment before the decision was taken at the Special Executive.

In considering the report, Members commented that it was vital that the new structure, when in place, empowered parish councils, whose role would become increasingly important with a larger upper tier council. Members must also be supported to better serve parish councils and residents, ensuring local voices remained central to decision-making.

Members commented that a two-unitary authority model would help keep services more local, supporting the most deprived communities, and enabling a more holistic approach to housing. Local communities expected the council to focus on and operate within their area; as a result, the two-unitary authority model was considered the most appropriate option.

Members raised concerns about whether the proposed governance model would ensure fair distribution of resources, protect rural communities, and prevent further overdevelopment resulting from Oxford's unmet housing needs.

It was highlighted that partnership working remained a key priority, and consideration must be given to the existing Oxford City Housing Revenue Account.

Members noted that the Secretary of State could implement the proposal with or without modification and queried the implications if the Secretary of State decided to take no action, and how would this affect the future of the proposal?

Members raised concerns regarding ribbon development, the influence of developer-led plans versus councillor-led local plans, and the potential for central government control over planning and council operations, especially in relation to the future of the green belt.

Members raised concerns that with the inclusion of Oxford City the future unitary would be dominated by Oxford City, which would result in market towns being disadvantaged and concerns over housing growth being dominated by the City.

Members thanked the Executive and officers for the significant amount of work undertaken in developing the two unitary proposal.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Executive report of 13 November 2025 be noted and comments be provided for Executive to consider as set out in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) That it be noted that Executive is asked to approve the Full Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation across Oxfordshire at its meeting on 13 November, and in doing so, endorse Option 2: A two-unitary model comprising: One unitary authority covering the boundaries of Cherwell District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, and Oxford City Council, with the working title 'Oxford & Shires'; and a second unitary authority covering South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and West Berkshire Council, with the working title 'Ridgeway'.

The meeting ended at 7.33 pm

Chair:

Date:



## Council

**Monday 15 December 2025**

### Written Questions

	Question From	Topic
1	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Illegal Fly-tipping at Kidlington
2	Cllr Eddie Reeves	Government Funding
3	Cllr Eddie Reeves	CCTV Services across Oxfordshire
4	Cllr David Rogers	Illegal Fly-tipping at Kidlington

#### **QUESTION ONE**

**Question From: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor David Hingley**

**Topic: Illegal Fly-tipping at Kidlington**

#### **Question**

“As to Cherwell District Council's knowledge of the industrial fly-tipping near Kidlington,

- (i) when did the Council first become aware of the illegal activity,
- (ii) what actions were taken to monitor and/or remediate the site at each stage, and
- (iii) what is its understanding as to which authority is now liable for cleaning up the appalling mess?”

#### **QUESTION TWO**

**Question From: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor David Hingley**

**Topic: Government Funding**

#### **Question**

“On 21 July 2025, this Council approved a motion regretting the consequences of the Labour government's plans to (i) end the Business Rates Retention scheme introduced under the Coalition government in 2013/14; and (ii) institute a 'Fair Funding' model that is, according to a Budget Planning Committee report dated 8 July 2025 “expected to reduce the Council's funding by up to 40%.”

What update, if any, is the Leader able to share with colleagues surrounding these existential cuts to local services?"

### **QUESTION THREE**

**Question From: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor David Hingley**

**Topic: CCTV Services Across Oxfordshire**

#### **Question**

"According to an article of 1 December 2025 on local news service, *This is Oxfordshire*:

*"Oxford City Council and South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and Cherwell district councils have all reportedly refused to join a new partnership created by Thames Valley's police and crime commissioner."*

The same article goes on to report that:

*"Oxford City Council could have had £61,562, Vale of White Horse was offered £44,336, South Oxon was set for £52,051 and Cherwell could have had £72,764.*

*West Oxfordshire council has accepted £43,760."*

Has the Leader taken a decision not to join the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to centralise and streamline CCTV services across Oxfordshire and, if so, why?"

### **QUESTION FOUR**

**Question From: Councillor David Rogers**

**Question To: Leader of the Council, Councillor David Hingley**

**Topic: Illegal Fly-tipping at Kidlington**

#### **Question**

"Does the Council hold an estimate of the nature and volume of the waste involved further to the illegal landfill site near Kidlington and does it therefore know what the potential cost of remediating the site is bearing in mind the terrible precedent at Hoads Wood in Kent?"

This report is public	
Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	15 December 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property Councillor Lesley Mclean
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	3 December 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151), Michael Furness

## Purpose of report

To enable Members to consider the proposed banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for 2026/27.

## 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

1.1 To note the contents of the report, and any financial implications for the Council.

1.2 To approve:

- The option of no change to the Council Tax Reduction Income Banded Scheme for Working Age Applicants for 2026/27
- To amend Working Age Regulations in line with annual uprating and to amend the Council Tax Regulations for pensioners in line with uprating announced by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The current scheme was introduced from April 2020 following a period of consultation and engagement. In general, it has been well received with limited contact from customers. It is proposed to continue with the current scheme uprated for inflationary factors.
- 2.2 The scheme assesses the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction based on the net income of the applicant and household members; the main principles of the scheme remain unchanged. Pensioners are protected and continue to be eligible to receive 100% Council Tax Reduction.

- 2.3 If the applicant or partner is in receipt of a passported benefit such as Income Support Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), income based and income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or receiving War widows or War disablement pensions they will be placed into the highest band and will receive 100% Council Tax Reduction. Working age households will receive a discount, depending on their level of income and the band that they fall into.
- 2.4 The current scheme is understood by customers and has enabled them to budget for their council tax payments, and this is reflected in the Council Tax collection rates with Cherwell being the highest performer across the county for 2024/25.
- 2.5 The current scheme reduces the number of changes that the customer will experience with less bills and notification letters generated and enables better personal budgeting.
- 2.6 There is still a lot of financial uncertainty for many customers and in the current financial climate, it is therefore recommended that the existing scheme should be retained for 2026/27.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
<b>Finance</b>	<p>The MTFs has assumed the current scheme will be retained. Any changes to the existing caseload will be accommodated as part of the budget process with final estimates included in the annual council tax base calculation.</p> <p>The proposed administrative change could cost up to £72k and it is anticipated that any increase would be addressed as part of the budget setting process.</p> <p>Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 29 October 2025</p>
<b>Legal</b>	<p>Since 1 April 2013, local authorities in England have been responsible for running their own local schemes for help with council tax. These are called Council Tax Reduction schemes.</p> <p>Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council as the billing authority to make a localised council tax reduction scheme in accordance with section 1A of the Act. Each financial year the council must consider whether it wants to revise the scheme, leave as is or replace it. Consultation must occur on any options required to change the scheme prior to introduction and is set out in Schedule 1A (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. No changes to the scheme are being considered in this report.</p> <p>The 1992 Act provides that a billing authority's Council Tax Reduction Scheme must include prescribed matters set out in the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012. Therefore, the Council is required,</p>

	without any exercise of discretion, to amend the CTR Scheme, to reflect any changes made to those regulations.			Denzil Tuberville, Head of Legal Services, 28 October
<b>Risk Management</b>	There are no risk implications arising as a direct consequence of this report, if any arise, they will be managed through the service operational risk and escalated the leadership risk as and when deemed necessary.			Ceila Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 28 October 2025
<b>Impact Assessments</b>	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>	x			<p>This report, and the proposal to continue the Council Tax Reduction Scheme have been developed with our most vulnerable residents in mind. Any equality and diversity concerns have been appropriately considered from the outset, if a new proposal arises this will be screened for relevance against our statutory duties to promote equality and an impact assessment will be completed.</p> <p>Ceila Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 28 October 2025</p>
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				The reduction of bills and notification letters being issued because of the income bands is having a positive impact on the carbon footprint for Cherwell.
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>				None required. The scheme uses only existing data held. No further personal data will be requested, obtained, held, or published.

<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Quality Housing and Place Making			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	<p>Budget Planning Committee was consulted on the proposed scheme for 2026/27 at its meeting on 8 July 2025. The Committee resolved to recommend to Executive that the current scheme is retained for 2026/27.</p> <p>There would be no need to consult on the widening of the claiming criteria as the current scheme allows for claims to be received in writing i.e., not on a council approved application form, which includes emails or electronic format, therefore we could implement this immediately without changes to the scheme. This would mean CTR could be automatically processed as soon as the information from the DWP is shared with the council via the current sharing agreement we have in place with the DWP, and would maximise entitlement, increase Council Tax collection rates and reduce administration due to a reduction in the requirement for the claimant to produce evidence and complete a council form. This approach will provide an efficient mechanism for claiming in all future schemes. The Council will need to include information on its website and inform stakeholders.</p>			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council Tax Reduction caseload has been monitored and there has been a reduction in the number of live cases from 6,035 in June 2024 to 5878 as of October 2025.
- 3.2 As working age customers transition onto Universal Credit (UC) they are not always advised by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that in order to make a claim for Council Tax Reduction (CTR), they will need to make this directly with the local authority, so in these circumstances we do see the caseload fluctuate when backdated requests for CTR are received throughout the year.
- 3.3 Currently UC applicants have to make a separate claim for CTR with the local authority, this includes in writing and by email. Electronic data shared directly from the DWP with the customers UC information could also be automatically processed as a CTR claim once this is received from the DWP. This would maximise entitlement and potentially reduce the arrears of council tax and further increase collection rates.

- 3.4 The in-year Council Tax collection rate for the 2022/23 financial year was 98.05% compared to 98.02% in 2023/24 and unchanged for 2024/25 at 98.02%, which remains the highest rate within the Oxfordshire authorities. In considering the CTR Scheme for 2026/27 members should be mindful that any changes to the scheme that reduce entitlement to CTRS could have an adverse impact on collection rates.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 Since the introduction of the CTRS the benefits landscape has drastically changed. Universal Credit (UC) is based on real time information which means that any change in income generates a change in CTR through data files received directly from the DWP. Residents were therefore, receiving multiple bills and letters during the year making the process a poor user experience and making budgeting for individuals very difficult.
- 4.2 In December 2019 the Council agreed to move to an income banded scheme for customers that were of working age. The scheme assesses the maximum level of CTR based on the net income of the applicant and household members; the main principles of the scheme are as follows:
- If the applicant or partner is in receipt of one of the passported benefits (Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance Income Based and Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or receiving War Widows or War Disablement Pensions they will automatically be placed in the highest band of the scheme and will receive 100% support.
  - Working age households will receive a discount, depending on their level of income and the band that they fall into.
  - Under this scheme, as part of our ongoing commitment to support disabled people, we will continue to disregard Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Attendance Allowance, War Disablement Benefits and will also continue to disregard Child Benefit and child maintenance.
  - As highlighted earlier in this report the introduction of Universal Credit and Real Time Information files means that customers can experience frequent changes in their Council Tax Reduction which in turn impacts on the amount of Council Tax payable. This makes budgeting for households more of a challenge and is impacting on our ability to collect Council Tax. The banded scheme is simpler for residents to understand and any future changes to the value of awards can be achieved by simply adjusting the banding thresholds.
  - Residents experience less change in their CTR, and the scheme reduces the number of letters and Council Tax demands issued. The Council has continued to see an overall reduction in printed mail and dispatch packs year on year with the introduction of the banded CTR scheme.
- 4.3 The current scheme was introduced from April 2020 following a period of consultation and engagement. In general, it has been well received with limited contact from customers affected by the change.

- 4.4 There is a requirement to consult with the public, major preceptors, and other parties, who may have an interest in the CTR Scheme on any material changes to the scheme. If Members would like to consider a change to the current banded scheme, then a full consultation will need to be undertaken.
- 4.5 Any amendments proposed to the scheme (other than uprating thresholds for inflation) would require significant consultation to take place. If any changes were made to the scheme, it is unlikely to generate significant additional resources to the Council. No changes are proposed to the scheme and its eligibility criteria.
- 4.6 A change is proposed to the administration of the process to include Universal Credit customers as CTR applicants by accepting the DWP information through the data sharing agreement, would maximise any potential entitlement by reaching those potential applicants sooner and simplify access to claiming CTR for working age customers receiving UC.
- 4.7 The UC customers were monitored for 3 months from April 2025- to June 2025, this has shown that the authority has received DWP files for 128 potential council tax reduction claims that could have been put into payment immediately by using the information received from DWP at first point of contact.
- 4.8 This would mean CTR could be automatically processed as soon as the information from the DWP is shared with the council via the current sharing agreement we have in place with the DWP, and would maximise entitlement, increase Council Tax collection rates and reduce administration due to a reduction in the requirement for the claimant to produce evidence and complete a council form. This approach will provide an efficient mechanism for claiming in all future schemes. The Council will need to include information on its website and inform stakeholders.
- 4.9 It is anticipated that the increase in the scheme's cost would be nominal, with an estimated additional cost of £72K. It is anticipated that any increase would be offset by the streamlined administration of onboarding new CTR claims at the point of the customer claiming UC.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The alternative option is to undertake a review of the current CTRS scheme but 6.1 explains the rationale for not taking this course of action.

## **6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 The current scheme is understood by customers and has enabled them to budget for their council tax payments. One of the main advantages of the banded scheme is that it reduces the number of changes that the customer will experience enabling more effective personal budgeting. There is still a lot of financial uncertainty for many customers and in the current financial climate with the ongoing cost of living crisis it is therefore recommended that the existing scheme should be retained for 2026/27.



- 6.2 Budget Planning Committee considered the proposed CTRS scheme for 2026/27 at its meeting 8 July 2025 it resolved that the Executive be recommended to agree that the current scheme (adjusted for inflationary purposes) be retained for 2026/27.
- 6.3 Executive subsequently considered and recommended to Council that the current scheme (adjusted for inflationary purposes) be retained for 2026/27.

## Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	N/A
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Sandra Ganpot, Benefit Services and Performance Manager
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:Sandra.ganpot@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Sandra.ganpot@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221 721
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of Section 151 Officer

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This report is public	
Calendar of Meetings 2026/2027	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	15 December 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Service, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	5 December 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer), Shiraz Sheikh

## Purpose of report

Council is asked to consider and agree the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2026/2027 (Appendix 1).

## 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the calendar of meetings for Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2026/2027 (Appendix 1).

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 It is necessary for Council to agree a calendar of meetings to enable the business of the council to be programmed appropriately in conjunction with its statutory requirements and the Executive's and Committee's work programmes and to enable the corporate leadership team and senior managers to programme key dates into their work plans.
- 2.2 The proposed Cherwell District Council 2026/2027 calendar of meetings is attached at Appendix 1.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from this report.

	Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer), 18 November 2025			
<b>Legal</b>	Meetings which the Council is required by legislation to hold have been included on the meeting calendar. There are no other legal issues arising from this report. Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, 4 December 2025			
<b>Risk Management</b>	The Council needs to have in place a programme of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decision making. Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, 4 December 2025			
<b>Impact Assessments</b>	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>				N/A
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				N/A
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	All - Agreement of a calendar of meetings has significant implications for the Council's business planning and the programming of work.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	Corporate Leadership Team: Support and recommend the adoption of the proposed calendar			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Cherwell District Council calendar of meetings has been prepared on the basis of the considerations set out in the paragraphs below and takes into account Bank Holidays, Oxfordshire school holidays, the summer period and the 2026 post-election and 2027 pre-election periods when meetings are not scheduled as far as practicable
- 3.2 The calendar has been developed over time to meet the changing needs of the authority. Meeting dates are set to ensure that there are appropriate reporting lines to allow relevant committees to be informed, scrutinise and make valuable contributions to the decisions of Executive and Council.

### 4. Details

#### Full Council

- 4.1 Council meetings are held on Mondays apart from the Annual Council meeting, which will take place on Wednesday 20 May 2026. This date was agreed as part of the consideration of the 2025/2026 meeting calendar in December 2024.
- 4.2 The 2027/28 Annual Council is included on the meeting schedule at Appendix 1. District council elections are currently scheduled in 2026 (polling day is Thursday 6 May 2027), and whilst these may be cancelled in light of local government reform, the proposed date, Wednesday 19 May 2027, will allow time for political groups to meet and nominate their committee members before the Annual Council meeting.
- 4.3 At the conclusion of the Annual Meeting, the first meetings of formal committees, excluding Overview and Scrutiny Committee, are held for Committees to appoint their Chair and Vice-Chair for the forthcoming municipal year.
- 4.4 The February Council meeting is solely for the purpose of setting the budget for the forthcoming financial year and any associated items, i.e. the setting of council tax.

#### Executive and Shareholder Committee

- 4.5 Meetings of Executive are scheduled on the first Tuesday of each month as far as practicable. Where they are later week in the month (June and July), this has been discussed and agreed with the Leader, and. There are no Executive meetings scheduled in August and May. The September meeting is provisional.

- 4.6 The Shareholder Committee is a sub-committee comprising five Executive members who will be appointed by Executive at their first meeting of the 2026/27 municipal year. Shareholder Committee meetings are scheduled quarterly. Meeting dates will be confirmed with Committee members.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Budget Planning Committee**

- 4.7 Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Budget Planning Committee are scheduled to tie in with key activities undertaken by each Committee. The scheduling ensures that meetings enable feedback between the Executive and the respective Committee.
- 4.8 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out that the first meeting of the Committee at which the Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed, will not be held at the conclusion of the Annual Council meeting. A meeting for this purpose is therefore scheduled to take place on the same date as training for Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.
- 4.9 Scrutiny review working groups established by the Overview and Scrutiny will set their own meeting dates.

### **Planning Committee**

- 4.10 Meetings of the Planning Committee are scheduled every 4 weeks as far as practicable taking into account Bank Holidays and election periods.
- 4.11 It is mandatory for councillors appointed to Planning Committee or as a named substitute to attend training each municipal year prior to attending a committee meeting. The training date will be included in the induction programme, which will be submitted to the March Council meeting as part of the Member Development Framework 2026/2027.

### **Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee**

- 4.12 The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee is a key component of Cherwell District Council's corporate governance framework. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment, the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee has six scheduled meetings.
- 4.13 It is mandatory for all members appointed to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee each municipal year to attend training prior to attending a committee meeting. The training date will be included in the induction programme, which will be submitted to the March Council meeting as part of the Member Development Framework 2026/2027.
- 4.14 Additional training/briefings for Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee members will continue to be scheduled prior to or at the conclusion of scheduled meetings as this has been received favourably by Committee members.

### **Personnel Committee and Appeals Panel**

- 4.15 The Personnel Committee is responsible for staffing matters in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Meetings are scheduled quarterly to enable the Committee to receive regular staffing updates and support officers scheduling items that require decision by the Committee. A short training session for Personnel Committee members will take place immediately prior to the first scheduled meeting.
- 4.16 The Appeals Panel would only meet to determine appeals in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Meetings will be arranged if required, following consultation with the Appeals Panel Chair (or Vice-Chair in their absence), HR and relevant Director(s).

#### **General Licensing Committee, Licensing Acts Committee, General Licensing Sub-Committee and Licensing Acts Sub-Committee**

- 4.17 The Licensing Acts Committee is responsible for determining all matters under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. The General Licensing Committee is responsible for determining issues relating to licensing and registration.
- 4.18 As the membership of the two Committees is the same, two placeholder dates are scheduled to allow for meetings of either, or both, Committees to take place if there is business for either Committee.
- 4.19 The Licensing Acts Sub-Committee is required to meet if decisions on applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 cannot be determined under delegated powers as valid objections/representations have been received and not withdrawn. The Licensing Acts Sub-Committee must meet within set timescales and meeting dates will be agreed with Sub-Committee members and Licensing Officers to ensure the statutory requirements are fulfilled.
- 4.20 The Licensing Acts Sub-Committee will be made up of any three Members drawn from the membership of the Licensing Acts Committee who have received appropriate training. This training will be scheduled as part of the Member Induction programme.
- 4.21 The General Licensing Sub-Committee is required to meet if decisions on applications in respect of street trading, provisions of facilities on the highway or animal welfare licensing cannot be determined under delegated powers as valid objections/representations have been received and not withdrawn. The General Licensing Sub-Committee must meet within set timescales and meeting dates will be agreed with Sub-Committee members and Licensing Officers to ensure the statutory requirements are fulfilled.
- 4.22 The General Licensing Sub-Committee will be made up of any three Members drawn from the membership of the General Licensing Committee who have received appropriate training. This training will be scheduled as part of the Member Induction programme.

#### **Standards Committee**

- 4.23 The Standards Committee is responsible for matters relating to Member conduct and the ethical framework in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Two meetings are scheduled as placeholders and will take place if there is business for the Committee.

### **Committee Specific Training and All Member Briefings**

- 4.24 Cherwell local elections are scheduled to take place in May 2026. Following Cherwell local elections an induction programme is scheduled between May and July to support newly elected Members and provide all information and support they need to fulfil their role. The induction programme will be submitted to the March 2026 Council meeting with the Member Development Framework 2026/2027.
- 4.25 Monthly “All Member Briefings” have been included on the proposed calendar of meetings. The briefings are scheduled monthly from September 2026 to March 2027. The day of the week varies in acknowledgement of other commitments Members have. Additional briefing and training sessions will be arranged throughout the year as necessary to cover matters as requested by Members or officers.
- 4.26 Member briefing and training sessions are not open to the public. It is anticipated that sessions will be largely hybrid or virtual, content dependant, in continuation of the well-received and well-attended hybrid and virtual sessions. Hybrid and virtual seminars also help the Council meet its climate change objectives by eliminating the need for travel, which in turn supports facilitates attendance for Members in reducing the time taken to travel.

### **Cherwell Parish Liaison Meetings**

- 4.27 The bi-annual Parish Liaison Meetings are scheduled and organised by the Localism Team. The 2026/2027 meetings will be held on Wednesday 10 June 2026 (in person) and Wednesday 11 November 2026 (virtual). The dates are included in this report for information. Further details will be provided to Parish Councils and Members in advance of each meeting.

### **Publicising Meeting Dates and Addition of Meeting Dates to Calendars**

- 4.28 Once agreed, all committee meeting dates listed at Appendix 1 will be added to the Council’s website. This online calendar is the most effective way to view accurate and up to date public meeting dates. Members (and anyone who wishes) can download meeting dates into their own calendar from the website.
- 4.29 The Democratic and Elections Team will send meeting requests to committee members to ensure Members have meeting dates in their calendars. After the May 2026 Annual Council Meeting, updated meeting requests will be sent as required to reflect any changes to committee membership.
- 4.30 For Member Seminar and Briefing sessions, the meeting requests will include details as to how to join the sessions virtually.

### **Amendments to the Calendar of Meetings**

- 4.31 Members are reminded that the Council’s Constitution sets out that no alterations to the dates and times of meetings shall take place unless Council, the Committee or Sub-Committee agrees an ad-hoc change or the Chair of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee, after consultation with the Assistant Director Law and Governance, concurs with either a cancellation, or an alternative date or time.



- 4.32 If there are any changes to meeting dates Members will be notified via email, updated meeting requests sent, and the website updated accordingly.

### **Format of Meetings**

- 4.33 Committee members (and appointed substitutes) are required to attend formal meetings in person to be able to participate and vote. Formal meetings are held as hybrid meetings which enables non-committee members, officers and members of the public wishing to address a meeting to attend virtually. All meetings are webcast unless exempt or confidential items are being considered.
- 4.34 Most informal meetings and Member briefings are held virtually or hybrid. This helps facilitate attendance for Members and supports the council's climate agenda by reducing travel where possible.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To amend dates in the proposed calendar. This is not recommended as any changes to the proposed calendar may have a knock on effect to the meeting cycle or performance targets / statutory deadlines which may in turn require the whole calendar to be redrafted. The Constitution allows for in-year meeting dates to be added and changes to meeting dates. The process for this is set out at paragraphs 4.31 and 4.32.

## **6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 It is believed that the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2026/2027 as set out at Appendix 1 will provide a suitable decision-making framework for Cherwell District Council.

### **Decision Information**

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

### **Document Information**

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Proposed Meeting Calendar for the municipal year 2026/2027
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221534
<b>Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of statutory officer, Monitoring Officer

Appendix 1 - Cherwell District Council Calendar of Meetings 2026/27<sup>1</sup>

Notes:

- Bank Holidays during the municipal year 2026/27: Monday 25 May 2026; Monday 31 August 2026; Friday 25 December 2026; Monday 28 December 2026; Friday 1 January 2027; Friday 26 March 2027; Monday 29 March 2027; Monday 3 May 2027.
- Chairs and Vice-Chairs for all Committees (excluding OSC, to be appointed at first OSC meeting, 9 June) for the municipal year 2026/27 will be appointed at the first meetings of Committees held at the conclusion of the Annual Council meeting
- Licensing Act Sub-Committees, General Licensing Sub-Committees and Appeals Panel meetings will be arranged if required.
- Parish Liaison Meetings - Wednesday 10 June 2026 (in person) & Wednesday 11 Nov 2026 (virtual)
- Oxfordshire school holidays May 26-May 27: 25 May-29 May; 21 July-1 Sept26-30 Oct; 21–31 Dec; 15-19 Feb; 30 March–10 April; 1 June–4 June;

CDC Council	Executive	Shareholder Committee	Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee	Budget Planning Committee	Licensing Acts Committee / General Licensing Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Personnel Committee	Planning Committee	Standards Committee	Monthly (from Sept) All Member Seminar
Mon, 6.30pm <i>(excluding Annual Council; report deadline is also motion / written question deadline)</i>	Tues, 6.30pm	TBC, 6.30pm	Weds, 6.30pm	Tues, 6.30pm	Bi-annual, Wednesday 6.30pm  <i>Placeholders - Meetings only held if business for either / both Committees</i>	Tues, 6.30pm	Weds, 6.30pm	Thurs, 4pm	Bi-annual, Wednesday, 6.30pm  <i>Placeholder - Meetings only be held if business for Committee</i>	<i>May – July: Induction period</i>  <i>Monthly from September, 5pm – 6pm, hybrid / virtual dependent on topic</i>
<b>2026</b> Wednesday 20 May 2025 Annual Council  <i>(Cherwell local elections on Thursday 7 May 2026)</i> 20 July 19 October 14 December <b>2026</b> 22 February – budget setting 15 March   Annual Council for 2027/28 municipal year: Wednesday 19 May 2027 Annual Council  <i>(local elections on Thursday 6 May 2027)</i>	<b>2026</b> 16 June 14 July PROV: 1 September 6 October 3 November 1 December <b>2027</b> 5 January 2 February 2 March 13 April	<b>2026</b> TBC June TBC October <b>2027</b> TBC January TBC March	<b>2026</b> 6.30pm, 17 June 22 July 30 September 25 November <b>2027</b> 13 January 17 March	<b>2026</b> 30 June 15 September 8 December <b>2027</b> 19 January 9 March	<b>2026</b> 8 July <b>2027</b> 24 February	<b>2026</b> 9 June 28 July 8 September 13 October 17 November 15 December <b>2027</b> 26 January 23 March	<b>2026</b> <i>24 June: 6.00pm – 6.25pm training</i> 24 June 16 September 2 December <b>2027</b> 3 March	<b>2026</b> <i>Before 4 June – Mandatory Planning training</i> 4 June 2 July 30 July 3 September 1 October 5 November 10 December <b>2027</b> 14 January 11 February 11 March 15 April	<b>2026</b> 15 July <b>2027</b> 3 February	<b>2026</b> <i>Thursday 24 September</i> <i>Monday 12 October</i> <i>Monday 23 November</i> <i>Wednesday 9 December</i> <b>2027</b> <i>Thursday 28 January</i> <i>Monday 8 February</i> <i>Wednesday 10 March</i>

<sup>1</sup> Dates and time may change. The website will be updated and Members notified accordingly.

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This report is public	
Appointment of Independent Person to Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	15 December 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	12 November 2025
Report of	Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

## Purpose of report

To appoint a second Independent Person to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

## 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the appointment of Nelly Lukwo as an Independent Person, to be appointed for a four-year term expiring on the date of the December Council meeting in 2029 and to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make the appointment.
- 1.2 To note that the appointment may be renewable in 2029 for a further term of four years subject to the Independent Person wishing to continue in the role and Council agreeing the renewal of the appointment.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has for many years recommended that local authorities have Independent Persons as part of their audit committees. Cherwell District Council recognises that adding independent and technical experts to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committees improves scrutiny on its financial position, especially in regard to the annual statement of accounts.
- 2.2 In recognition of the added value, two Independent Persons were recruited and appointed in 2023. Following the resignation of one earlier this year, this report sets out the outcome of the recruitment process to appoint a replacement Independent Person to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (AARC). Throughout this period, one Independent Person has remained a member of AARC.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		<p>As set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme, each independent person receives an annual allowance of £900 (subject to annual increases as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and agreed by Council) and can claim travel expenses for attending meetings in person. This is provided for in the Members' Allowances budget. The guidance is clear that the payment of an allowance does not negate independence.</p> <p>The appointment of independent persons will also allow enhanced scrutiny of the Council's financial position</p> <p>Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance &amp; Section 151 Officer, 10 November 2025</p>		
<b>Legal</b>		<p>The Council's Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee is defined by the Local Government Act 2000 and its purpose is to give assurance to elected members and the public about the governance, financial reporting and performance of the Council. The appointment of independent Persons on the committee will assist and promote good governance and scrutiny of the committee.</p> <p>Shiraz Sheikh Assistant Director Law &amp; Governance &amp; Monitoring Officer, 10 November 2025</p>		
<b>Risk Management</b>		<p>Adequate vetting procedures and adherence to the Person Specification have been followed throughout this recruitment process. The appointment of a second Independent Person will augment the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee's independence, provide additional expertise, and provide an opportunity for the community to play an enhanced role in the governance of the Council.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 7 November 2025</p>		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>			X	
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or			X	
				N/A

accessed, that could impact on inequality?				
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	N/A			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Audit Committees are a key component of corporate governance. They are a key source of assurance about the organisation's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment, and reporting on financial and non-financial performance.
- 3.2 Whilst it is not a statutory requirement to appoint an Independent Person, it is considered best practice by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

### 4. Details

- 4.1 Independent Persons are non-councillors who are suitably qualified with experience in the area of audit/governance and bring specialist knowledge and insight to the workings and deliberations of the committee to provide:

- An effective independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework.
- Independent review of the Council's financial and non-financial performance.
- Independent challenge to, and assurance over, the Council's internal control framework and wider governance processes.

- 4.2 The Independent Persons do not have voting rights in the same way as elected Members of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee and are part of the committee in an advisory and consultative manner fully involved in the discussion on issues coming before the Committee.
- 4.3 In 2022, the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee agreed arrangements for the appointment of Independent Persons to the Committee. The decision to appoint Independent Persons to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee rests with Full Council.
- 4.4 In May 2022, Council subsequently agreed to amend to the Terms of Reference of the Committee to include an Independent Person (non-voting) as part of the membership of the Committee. To provide resilience, Council agreed a further amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference to include two Independent Persons. Harry Lawson and Sarah Thompson were subsequently appointed by Council in February 2023.
- 4.4 Harry Lawson resigned as an Independent Person on the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, following the March 2025 AARC meeting. This meant there was a vacancy for an Independent Person on the Committee.
- 4.5 Following the resignation, in line with guidance, the Independent Person position was publicly advertised. Following the receipt of an application, an interview was undertaken by a Panel comprising the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Chair and Vice Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.
- 4.6 Following consideration of the application form and interview responses, the interview panel concluded that, subject to receipt of satisfactory references by the Monitoring Officer (duly received), Nelly Lukwo should be recommended to Council for appointment as an Independent Person.
- 4.7 Nelly Lukwo is an Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) qualified accountant and has extensive experience of working in financial positions across a broad range of organisations.
- 4.8 There is no prescribed time limit on the terms of officer of Independent Persons and these are therefore at the discretion of the Council. It is considered appropriate that the appointments should be for a fixed term to enable a refresh from time to time. As such, it is proposed the role are recommended to be appointed for a four-year fixed term, renewable once.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.



Option 1: Not to appoint a new Independent Person. This is not recommended as there would be a lack of resilience in only having one Independent Person on the Committee.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Independent Persons with appropriate skills and experience supplement those of the elected members and improve the effectiveness of Audit Committees.
- 6.2 The decision to appoint an Independent Person to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee rests with Full Council. The recommended appointment follows a robust recruitment process involving public advertisement, written application and interview with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	None
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:patrick.davis@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">patrick.davis@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221742
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of the Monitoring Officer

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This report is public	
Appointment of Independent Persons for Standards	
<b>Committee</b>	Council
<b>Date of Committee</b>	15 December 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	5 December 2025
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

## Purpose of report

To appoint statutory Independent Persons as part of the standards arrangements.

### 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To appoint Tom Edwards and Terry Williams as Independent Persons for a four-year term expiring on the date of the December Council meeting in 2029.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) requires the standards arrangements adopted by the Council to include provision for the appointment of at least one independent person.
- 2.2 The Independent Person is a statutory role under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 with the purpose of assisting the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected, appointed and co-opted Members of the Council and in relation to disciplinary matters concerning the Council's Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.
- 2.3 Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 states that local authorities must appoint at least one Independent Person and must ensure that the process to appoint Independent Persons must be open and transparent, and any appointment must be approved by a majority of Members of the authority
- 2.4 The Council currently have two Independent Persons appointed to the Standards Committee and were appointed on 13 December 2021 Full Council meeting. The four-year terms of the two appointed Independent Persons end on 15 December 2025.

- 2.5 The role was advertised and following an interview process, both Tom Edwards and Terry Williams were successful and the panel recommends their appointment. The biographical information is appended to this report.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		<p>As set out in the Members' Allowance Scheme, each independent person receives an annual allowance of £900 (subject to annual increases as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and agreed by Council) and can claim travel expenses for attending meetings in person. This is provided for in the Members' Allowances budget. The guidance is clear that the payment of an allowance does not negate independence.</p> <p>The appointment of independent persons will also allow enhanced scrutiny of the Council's financial position.</p> <p>Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner for Resources, 4 December 2025.</p>		
<b>Legal</b>		<p>To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 (section 28(7)), the Council should appoint at least one Independent Person. However, should it be necessary to set up a Panel in compliance with The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 referred to in paragraph 2.2 above it is recommended that the Council appoints two Independent Persons.</p> <p>Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law &amp; Governance and Monitoring Officer, 4 December 2025</p>		
<b>Risk Management</b>		<p>Failing to appoint Independent Persons would place the Council in breach of its statutory duty under the Localism Act 2011 and prevent or delay the Monitoring Officer from dealing with complaints in accordance with the Council's code of conduct complaints procedure</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 4 December 2025</p>		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>			X	
<b>A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</b>			X	
		<p>There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report. The recent recruitment process was fair and open therefore ensures the Independent Persons to be appointed on merit.</p> <p>N/A</p>		

<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>				N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	N/A			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Independent Persons are key to Standards Committees including their role in the Councils arrangements for complaints of alleged breach of the relevant code of conduct by Members.
- 3.2 Independent Persons are consulted by the Monitoring Officer or Officer on behalf of the Monitoring Officer during the arrangements of allegations of alleged breach of the code of conduct by members of the District Council or Town/Parish Council's within the Cherwell District area. The Councils arrangements were adopted in May 2022 and reviewed in February 2024.
- 3.3 The current Independent Persons appointed to the Standards Committee are Tom Edwards and Dr Sadie Reynolds.
- 3.4 The Council currently have two Independent Persons appointed to the Standards Committee and were appointed on 13 December 2021 Full Council meeting. The four-year terms of the two appointed Independent Persons end on 15 December 2025.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 Having regard to the required formal procedure to comply with The Act, the Independent Person for standards role was advertised on the Council's website between 28 October and 14 November 2025.
- 4.2 Two applications were received in response to the advertisement. Interviews took place on 24 November and 4 December. The interview panel comprised of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Executive Director – Resources and a Democratic and Elections Officer.
- 4.3 Following consideration of the application forms and interview responses, the interview panel concluded that the following two individuals should be recommended to Council for appointment as an Independent Person:
- Tom Edwards
  - Terry Williams
- 4.4 There is no prescribed time limit on the terms of office of Independent Persons and these are therefore within the discretion of the Council. The Standards Committee agreed in 2021 that the appointments for Independent Persons should be a four-year term.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to appoint Independent Persons. This is not recommended as failing to appoint an Independent Person would place the Council in breach of its statutory duty under the Act and prevent the Monitoring Officer from dealing with complaints in accordance with the Council's code of conduct complaints procedure.

## **6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 To comply with the statutory requirements the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person. Following the delegation from Council to the Standards Committee, supported by the Monitoring Officer, a process for the recruitment of Independent Persons was agreed and undertaken. Following this robust recruitment process, it is recommended that Council appoint Tom Edwards and Terry Williams as Independent Persons for a four-year term, renewable once.

## **Decision Information**

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A

<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All

## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Candidate biographical information
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Matthew Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:matthew.swinford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">matthew.swinford@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221591
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of the Monitoring Officer

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## **Appendix 1 - Biographical information for the recommended Independent Persons for Standards**

### **Tom Edwards**

Tom worked as a Trading Standards Officer for most of his working life working at Oxfordshire County Council.

Tom became a director of Oxfordshire Football Association after volunteering within the administration of football in Oxfordshire.

Tom has been an Independent Person for Standards at Cherwell District Council since 2012.

### **Terry Williams**

Terry is retired after working in the Digital Forensic field for over 15 years both for Thames Valley Police as well as commercial organisations. He has written reports and given evidence as an Expert Witness in both criminal and civil cases.

Terry was Chairman of Oxfordshire Football Association for over 12 years and sat on many disciplinary hearings for the association.

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This report is public	
Castle Quay Banbury – Roof Works	
Committee	Council
Date of Committee	15 December 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Councillor Lesley McLean Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property, and Regeneration
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	5 December 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Property Mona Walsh

## Purpose of report

That the utilisation of Capital Programme funds of £1.65 Million to undertake landlords works to ensure a fit for purpose watertight roof to mitigate loss of rent and further claims from occupiers at Castle Quay Banbury be approved.

## 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the utilisation of Capital Programme funds of £1.65m to undertake landlords works to ensure a fit for purpose watertight roof to mitigate loss of rent and further claims from occupiers at Castle Quay, Banbury.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 To recommend utilisation of Capital Programme funds of £1.65m to undertake roof replacement works at Castle Quay. The budget estimate is inclusive of contingency and fees.
- 2.2 There are a number of areas of the roof fabric that are, due to age, have failed and are at the end of their life with leaks becoming more frequent. As a result of roof part so the roof need replacing.
- 2.3 Customer and tenant complaints are numerous. Wet areas on the tiled floors in mall areas present potential slip/trips and fall hazards and need be managed by the centre management team to ensure public safety. Leaks impact letting of vacant and void units, where CDC are fully liable for all costs incurred.
- 2.4 Works required are of a capital nature to extend the life of the of the asset. The existing roof is now at least 25 years old. The works will have a warranty of between 10 and 15 years.

- 2.6 The plan at Appendix 1 shows the roof of Castle Quay roof with some areas marked up to help with orientation.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	The proposed capital expenditure will incur revenue costs associated with financing the project. Minimum revenue provision (MRP) and interest are estimated to amount to c£0.080m per annum. This will need to be built into the council's medium term financial strategy. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance (D151), 12 November 2025			
Legal	The report notes that the contract to undertake the works will be procured, and detailed procurement/legal advice will need to be provided in relation to this procurement exercise and the contract to undertake the works. Legal advice may also be required in relation to the ability to recover some or all of these costs as increased service charge from the existing tenants if that is the Council's intention going forward. Executive approval will be required to enter into the contract once the procurement exercise has been completed. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 12 November 2025			
Risk Management	There are no risks arising directly from this report. Any arising risks will be managed by the relevant service operational risk register and escalated to the corporate leadership risk register as and when necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 4 December 2025			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		x		Not applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics.		x		

including employees and service users?				
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>	x			The proposed works will help extend the life of the asset, will improve insulation in parts and enable future installation of PV solar panels subject to feasibility, budget and approval.
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				Not applicable
<b>Data Impact</b>				Not applicable
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				Any procurement activity undertaken must comply with the Council's Procurement Rules and Regulations. All expenditure must be properly recorded using the appropriate forms and go through the relevant approval process. Subject to receiving the necessary approvals and governance, we will look to carry out a procurement exercise under an appropriate framework. Darren Jacobs, Procurement Manager, 11 November 2025
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Economic prosperity			
<b>Human Resources</b>	Not applicable			
<b>Property</b>	This report has been written by the AD Property and therefore no further comments are needed. Mona Walsh Assistant Director Property, 10 November 2025			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	Not applicable			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council as Landlord, are responsible for undertaking repair and maintenance to the structure of Castle Quay, subject to a Service Charge mechanism allowing recovery of qualifying expenditure. Undertaking a timely programme of necessary replacement of the roof fabric maintains the structure and reduces overall expenditure in the long term by avoiding the need for emergency repair. In addition, a structured replacement programme creates an attractive environment necessary to attract occupiers and consumers to the Centre.
- 3.2 The proposed works and the associated capital investment demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment not only to Castle Quay but the wider town of Banbury by supporting the wider economy and protecting the continuing effective function of the Centre and Banbury Town Centre.

- 3.3 The proposed replacement works to the roof fabric are required to address works needed to areas of the roof fabric that are, due to age, deteriorating and leaks are becoming more frequent.
- 3.4 The procurement will be carried out by CDC Capital and Special Projects team, and they will oversee the works. Competitive Tenders will be obtained to ensure the works are delivered at best value.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 To undertake works in the sum of £1.65 m, inclusive of contingency and fees, comprising: -
- Removal of redundant equipment from the roof areas and capping of redundant apertures.
  - Strip back existing roof coverings to a sound substrate and localised replacement of insulation where this has been damaged due to water ingress.
  - New roof waterproofing fabric to priority areas. New roof fabric will have a warranty of no less than 10 years.
  - Electrical installation alterations as required to undertake the roof works
  - Lightning Protection and reinstatement as required to undertake the roof works
  - Install suitable edge protection and ladder access to ensure future safe access for maintenance of the roof areas.
- 4.2 These proposals will reduce CDC's exposure to continued repair and long-term escalating maintenance costs, reduce costs of continued call out and emergency repairs impacting on tenants, customers and visitors. The proposal will continue to support the shopping centre experience and its environment demonstrating a continuing commitment to Castle Quay and Banbury.
- 4.3 The new roof membrane and removal of redundant plant and equipment on the roof will allow CDC to install solar PV onto this roof space, under a separate contract of works, helping to reduce the councils carbon emissions.
- 4.4 The Council has explored funding of these works under the service charge provisions of tenant leases and this is potentially not feasible due to the nature and location of the proposed works and the operation of the RICS Service Charge Code.
- 4.5 A sinking fund model is unsuitable for funding works in shopping centres like Castle Quay. Shopping centres use service charges to manage maintenance costs, as tenants have short lease terms and pay for day-to-day services. Sinking funds are designed for long-term asset replacement and are more common in residential properties with long-term leaseholders who share responsibility for upkeep. Service charge accounting is a clearer and more practical system for commercial property management.
- 4.6 The Council's climate strategies support installation of solar energy PV panels in suitable locations. It is not possible to include PV panel installation as part of the works proposed in this report as they are two separate workstreams requiring specialist and different contractors. However, the roof enhancement works proposed in this report will help support future delivery of PV panels by upgrading

the roof area, removing redundant plant and other equipment, provision of re-enforcement panels, infrastructure ducting and routes. Installation of solar energy PV panels will require a separate report to Executive.

- 4.7 The plan at Appendix 1 shows the roof of Castle Quay roof with some areas marked up to help with orientation.

## **5.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following options have been identified. Option 4 is the preferred/recommended option. The other options have been rejected for the reasons as set out below.

### **Option 1: Do Nothing**

This option has been rejected because not undertaking the works would lead to deterioration of the Castle Quay Centre, both in terms of its structural longevity and its commercially viability.

- Structurally - leading to a greater overall repair & maintenance cost. Water ingress in some localised areas is already causing concern.
- Commercially - a deteriorating unattractive environment would impair the ability of the Centre to retain and attract retail and other occupiers, resulting in occupiers relocating to alternative venues and undermining the viability of the Centre.
- Safety - Water ingress can cause issues with health and safety both in the short term through slips and longer term in the form of mould growth and fungal spores.

### **Option 2: Reducing the scope or complete works to a reduced area or lower specification.**

This option has been rejected because the proposed new roofing works identified are regarded as essential to prolonging the life of the structure, reduce long term revenue expenditure and protecting the asset value. Ad hoc and short term repairs are not a sufficient remedy to ensuring the longevity of the assets.

### **Option 3: Replace the entire roof.**

The whole roof does not yet need replacement. Wholesale replacement would incur significant cost. This option has been rejected on the basis of need not being established.

### **Option 4: Undertaking the works as described in this report with approval by Executive and Council in December 2025:**

The following timeline would apply:

- CSR approval asap after Council approval on 15 Dec.
- By early Jan – procure via Framework on a mini -competition. We are currently reviewing frameworks but several are known to be suitable. We most recently used Public Procure for roof works at another property. We will be able to make that decision/recommendation within a couple of weeks.
- Feb – award contract
- Late Feb/early March – start on site. The initial phase of works is removing redundant equipment and preparation for works. During the initial phase we are not exposing the property/existing roof and it is therefore acceptable to commence onsite in late Feb/early March

- July/Aug – works completed, programme of c5 months with the works exposing the property completed during the summer months.

This is the preferred/recommended option as it means the later phase of the works are less likely to be impacted by inclement weather. In addition Property have the capacity and resources to manage the CQ roof project at this time without impacting on the procurement and delivery programme for the Salix project. It is not possible to accelerate or delay the Salix project to grant funding conditions.

Option 5: Undertaking the works as described in this report with approval by Executive and Council in March 2026:

- CSR approval asap after Council approval on 16 Mar.
- By early April – procure via Framework on a mini -competition. We are currently reviewing frameworks but several are known to be suitable. We most recently used Public Procure for roof works at another property. We will be able to make that decision/recommendation within a couple of weeks.
- May – award contract
- Late May/early June – start on site. The initial phase of works is removing redundant equipment and preparation for works.
- Oct/Nov – works completed, programme of c5 months with the later phases of works exposing the property to potentially inclement weather completed during late autumn/early winter.

This option has been rejected because it would mean the later phases of the project taking place in late autumn/late winter when there is a greater risk of inclement weather. In addition Property will not have the capacity or resources to manage this project and the Salix project at the same time. It not possible to accelerate or delay the Salix project.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Undertaking the works to the roof maintains the structure and reduces overall expenditure in the long term by avoiding the need for emergency repair. In addition, a structured replacement programme creates an attractive environment necessary to attract occupiers and consumers to the Centre. The work will have a warranty of at least 10 years helping maintain the future commercial value and structural viability of the centre and will support future installation of solar PV panels as a separate project.

### Decision Information

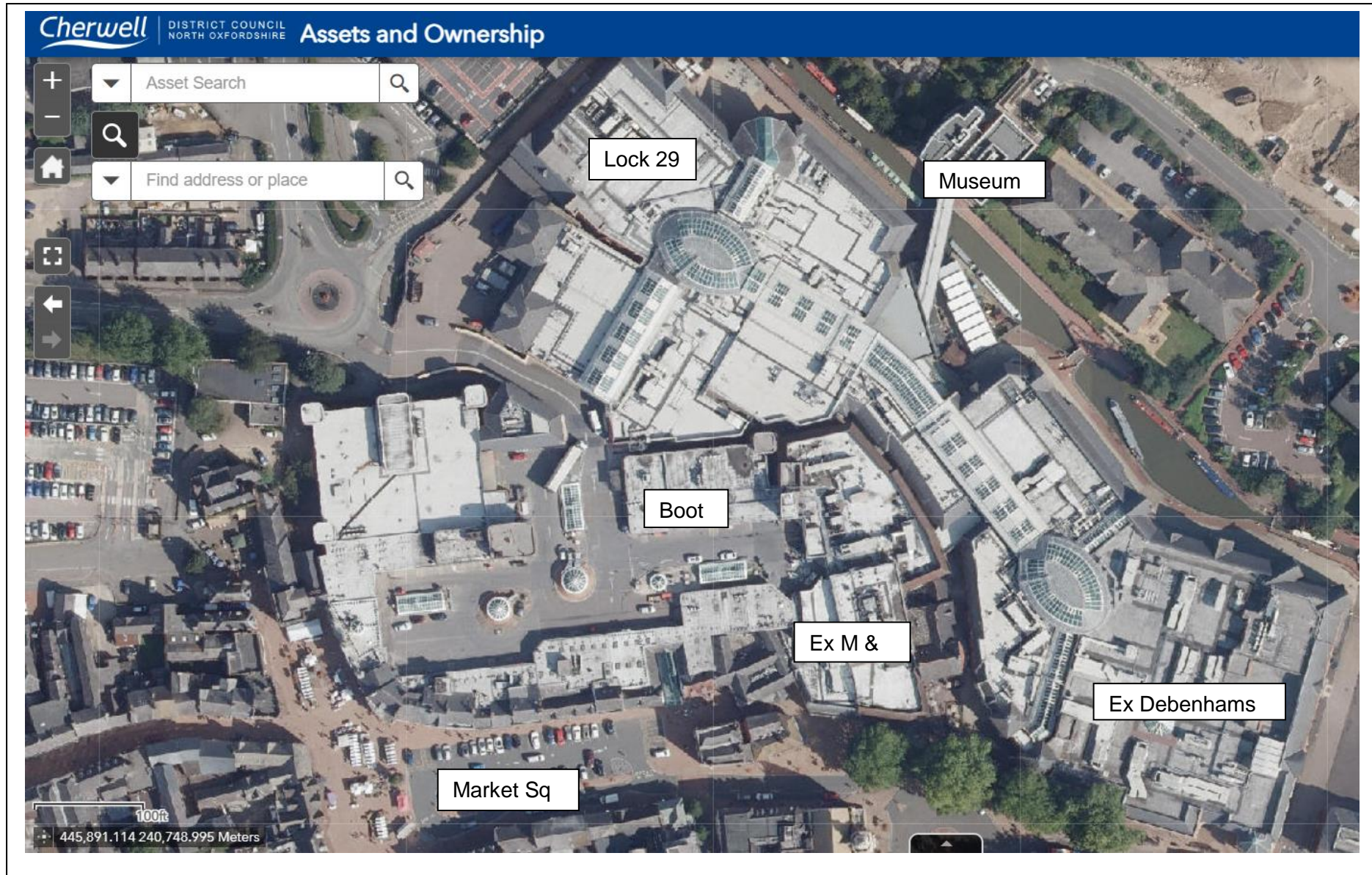
<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	Banbury Cross and Neithrop



## Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Castle Quay Roof Plan
<b>Report Author</b>	Mona Walsh AD Property
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:Mona.walsh@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Mona.walsh@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221602
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration 5 December 2025

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**APPENDIX 1 – Castle Quay roof plan**

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This report is public	
Treasury Management Report – Mid-year review 2025/26 (Sept 2025)	
<b>Committee</b>	Council
<b>Date of Committee</b>	15 December 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property, Councillor Lesley McLean
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	4 November 2025
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director of Finance (S151), Michael Furness

## Purpose of report

To provide information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2025-26 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

To demonstrate 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.

## 1. Recommendations

Council resolves:

- 1.1 To note the contents of this Treasury Management mid-year review as recommended by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on the 19 November 2025.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The council complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires the council to approve Treasury Management semi-annual and annual reports.
- 2.2 The council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2025-26 was approved by Council on 24 February 2025. The Treasury indicators have been included in this report as per the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice requirements.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
<b>Finance</b>		The financial implications have been taken into account in the Budget Management reports considered by Executive.  Lynsey Parkinson, Strategic Business Partner, 29 October 2025		
<b>Legal</b>		The presentation of the report is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to review the treasury management activities, the actual prudential indicators and the treasury related indicators.  Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 27 October 2025		
<b>Risk Management</b>		It is essential that this report is considered by the Audit Committee as it demonstrates that the risk of not complying with the council's Treasury Management Policy has been avoided. This and any other risks related to this report will be managed through the service operational risk and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when necessary.  Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader, 27 October 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>Equality Impact</b>			X	
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?			X	
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?			X	
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>			X	
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				
<b>Data Impact</b>				



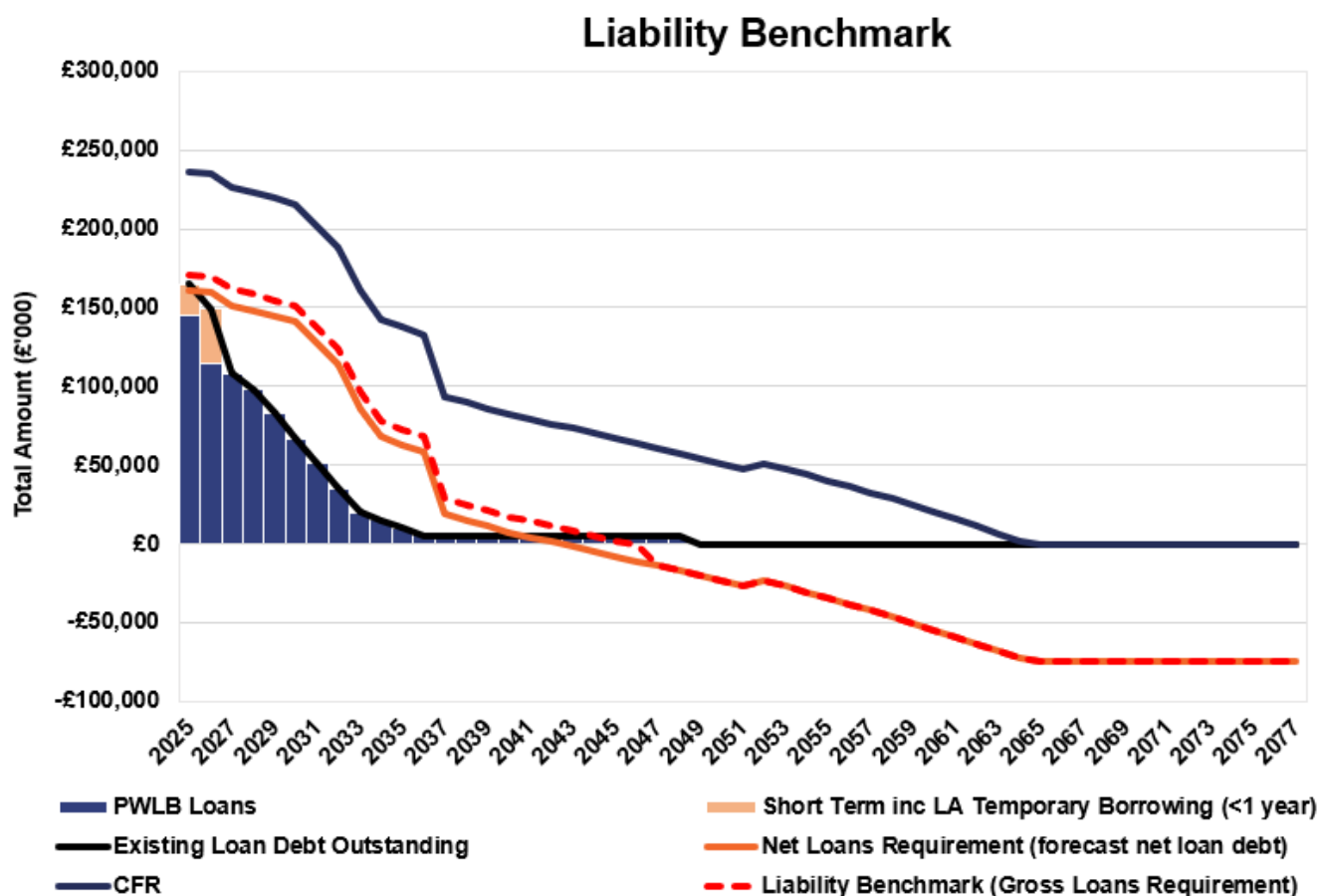
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	N/A			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	N/A			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 It is a statutory duty for the council to determine and keep under review its affordable borrowing limits. During the first quarter of 2025/26, the council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26. The Assistant Director of Finance reports that no difficulties are envisaged for future years in complying with these indicators.
- 3.2 As at the end of September 2025 the council had borrowing of £171m and investments of £41m – a net borrowing position of £130m. This is a reduction from the net borrowing position of £139m at 30/06/25.
- 3.3 The net borrowing position at the end of September 2024 was £149m. The year-on-year decrease is primarily due to the £14.6m discount the PWLB awarded on repaying a 50-year loan early. The £25m loan due to mature in November 2071 was repaid in April 2025 for the principal amount of £10.4m with the council retaining the £14.6m discount. The discount is to be amortised over 10 years, resulting in a £1.46m windfall in 25/26 which has been moved to reserves. This is referred to in point 4.18 and reflected in the forecast year end position in Table 12.
- 3.4 The Liability benchmark is a prudential indicator which shows the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), loan requirements and committed loans in a 50-year forecast. This graph reflects the council's position on the basis that no new capital expenditure is funded from borrowing after the end of the current capital programme.

Table 1: Liability benchmark



This graph above demonstrates the following:

- 3.4.1 The council is expecting its loans to decrease in line with the CFR and that it will not be in an overborrowed position in the future.
- 3.4.2 Cash flow is being actively managed by utilising internal borrowing (comprising of reserves and working capital) to bridge the shortfall between the CFR and net loan requirement.
- 3.4.3 The liquidity buffer - the difference between net loans requirement and the liability benchmark - has been reduced from £20m to £10m in response to borrowing costs remaining higher than forecast. This strategic adjustment is delivering tangible savings in borrowing expenses and is not expected to impact the council's ability to meet its cashflow obligations.
- 3.4.4 According to the current forecast, the requirement for borrowing ceases in the financial year 2041/42. The final £5 million PWLB loan, with a fixed interest rate of 2.5%, is scheduled to mature on 31 May 2048.



## 4. Details

### Borrowing performance for year as of 30 September 2025

- 4.1 The council continues to pursue its strategy of keeping borrowing below its Capital Financing requirements, this is referred to as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and borrowing costs.
- 4.2 The council's main objective when borrowing is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required.

Table 2: Borrowing Position for quarter ended 30 September 2025

	<b>Borrowing Amount £m</b>	<b>Average Interest Rate</b>	<b>Interest Paid Budget £m</b>	<b>Interest Paid Actual £m</b>	<b>Variance to Date £m</b>
April to Sept 25	159 (average)	2.88%	2.456	2.282	(0.174)
As at 30/09/25	171	3.04%	-	-	-

\* Interest payable relates to external loans only, excluding finance lease and other interest

- 4.3 As a comparison, the table below shows average borrowing rates.

Table 3: Average borrowing rates for the reporting period

#### HIGH/LOW/AVERAGE PWLB RATES FOR 01.04.25 – 30.09.25

	<b>1 Year</b>	<b>5 Year</b>	<b>10 Year</b>	<b>25 Year</b>	<b>50 Year</b>
<b>01/04/2025</b>	4.82%	4.94%	5.38%	5.95%	5.63%
<b>30/09/2025</b>	4.58%	4.95%	5.53%	6.23%	5.98%
<b>Low</b>	4.36%	4.62%	5.17%	5.78%	5.46%
<b>Low date</b>	04/08/2025	02/05/2025	02/05/2025	04/04/2025	04/04/2025
<b>High</b>	4.84%	4.99%	5.62%	6.41%	6.14%
<b>High date</b>	02/04/2025	21/05/2025	03/09/2025	03/09/2025	03/09/2025
<b>Average</b>	4.55%	4.82%	5.40%	6.11%	5.83%
<b>Spread</b>	0.48%	0.37%	0.45%	0.63%	0.68%

- 4.4 Loans totalling £32 million are scheduled to mature before the end of the financial year. Given that PWLB rates remain higher than anticipated, only £10 million of this will need to be refinanced through short-term borrowing as a result of reducing the council's liquidity buffer from £20m to £10m. Therefore, external borrowing will reduce to £149 million, while internal borrowing will increase to £86 million. This strategy is expected to deliver savings against the interest payable budget.

4.5 A full list of current borrowing is shown below:

Table 4: Borrowing

<b>Lender</b>	<b>Principal Borrowed £m</b>	<b>Maturity Date</b>
Arun District Council	2	17/10/2025
London Borough of Havering	5	17/10/2025
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	5	31/10/2025
Middlesbrough Council	5	14/11/2025
East Lindsey District Council	3	14/11/2025
South Holland District Council	2	14/11/2025
Middlesbrough Council	5	17/11/2025
Devon County Council Pension Fund	5	17/11/2025
Lincolnshire County Council	5	01/05/2026
Lincolnshire County Council	5	29/05/2026
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	5	30/06/2026
South Oxfordshire District Council	5	17/07/2026
PWLB 7-year maturity	6	19/09/2026
Portsmouth City Council	5	28/09/2026
PWLB 5-year maturity	10	26/07/2027
PWLB 10-year maturity	10	31/05/2028
PWLB 6-year maturity	5	26/07/2028
PWLB 7-year maturity	10	26/07/2029
PWLB 10-year maturity	6	25/09/2029
PWLB 8-year maturity	10	26/07/2030
PWLB 11-year maturity	6	19/09/2030
PWLB 9-year maturity	16	26/07/2031
PWLB 10-year maturity	15	26/07/2032
PWLB 15-year maturity	5	31/05/2033
PWLB 15-year maturity	5	25/09/2034
PWLB 16-year maturity	5	19/09/2035
PWLB 30-year maturity	5	31/05/2048
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171</b>	

4.6 The council monitors its exposure to refinancing risk with the maturity structure of borrowing indicator. While it is important to have flexibility to navigate changing market conditions it is critical that loan repayments are spread appropriately. The lower limit has been considered but kept at zero to ensure that the council is not forced into taking borrowing in a particular category that would lock it into an unfavourable borrowing situation.

Table 5: Maturity structure of borrowing

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit	Actual structure
Under 12 months	50%	0%	37%
12 months and within 24 months	50%	0%	6%
24 months and within 5 years	60%	0%	27%
5 years and within 10 years	70%	0%	24%
10 years and above	80%	0%	6%

### Investment performance 1 April to 30 September 2025

- 4.7 Funds available for investment are on a temporary basis because the council prioritises keeping borrowing to a minimum and only invests surplus funds retained to meet its commitments. The availability of investable funds is primarily influenced by the timing of precept payments, receipt of grants and funding of the Capital Programme.
- 4.8 Table 6 below shows the investment position during and at the end of the reporting period. Treasury management interest income is currently on track to meet budget expectations, reflecting stable performance in line with forecasted investment returns.

Table 6: Investment Position

	Investment Amount £m	Average Interest Rate	Interest Earned Budget £m	Interest Earned Actual £m	Variance to Date £m
April to Sept 25	31 (average)	4.24%	(0.533)	(0.533)	0.000
As at 30/09/25	41	4.07%	-	-	-

- 4.9 As a comparison, Table 7 below shows average money-market rates. The Council currently has an average investment period of 65 days.

Table 7: Average investment rates for the reporting period

	Bank Rate	SONIA	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
High	4.50	4.46	4.47	4.36	4.28	4.17
High Date	01/04/2025	07/05/2025	03/04/2025	01/04/2025	02/04/2025	02/04/2025
Low	4.00	3.97	3.97	3.96	3.89	3.75
Low Date	07/08/2025	29/08/2025	16/09/2025	08/09/2025	07/08/2025	04/08/2025
Average	4.23	4.19	4.16	4.10	4.01	3.88
Spread	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.39	0.39	0.42

- 4.10 While the council is always looking for ways to invest sustainably (or green investments) this must be done within the criteria laid out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy with counterparties that meet the council's investment criteria. Security, liquidity and yield remain the primary investment considerations as required by the Treasury Management Code.

The council continues to invest in three Money Market funds that meet the criteria pursuant to Article 8 of the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (Regulation EU/2019/2088). These are highlighted in green in the full list of current investments in Table 8 below.

- 4.11 A full list of current investments is shown in Table 8 below:

Table 8: Investments

Counterparty	Principal Deposited £m	Maturity Date / Notice period
<u>Fixed Term Deposits</u>		
Wrexham County Borough Council	1.00	16/10/2025
National Bank of Kuwait (International) Plc	3.00	17/10/2025
Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council	5.00	14/11/2025
SMBC Bank International Plc	3.00	17/11/2025
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd	3.00	21/11/2025
Lancashire County Council	5.00	19/01/2026
First Abu Dhabi Bank	3.00	12/02/2026
Development Bank of Singapore	3.00	12/02/2026
Qatar National Bank	3.00	19/02/2026
<u>Money Market Funds</u>		
Royal London Asset Management	3.00	2-day notice
Legal & General Investment Management	5.00	Same day
Federated Investors UK	2.84	Same day
Northern Trust Asset Managements	0.02	Same day
CCLA Investment Management Limited	0.02	Same day
Goldman Sachs Asset Management	1.45	Same day
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41.33</b>	

4.12 Compliance with investment limits are detailed in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Investment Limits

Counterparty	2025/26 Limit £m	Complied?
UK Central Government	Unlimited	Yes
Other Local Authorities	5 each	Yes
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	5 per group	Yes
Approved counterparties – Banks/Building Societies	3 each	Yes
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	5 per manager	Yes
Money Market Funds total	20 in total	Yes

### Non-treasury investment activity

- 4.13 The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code covers all the financial assets of the council. This is replicated in the government's Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets that provide a financial return.
- 4.14 As of 30 September 2025, the council holds £102.8m of investments that qualify under the code in the form of shares (£35.6m) and loans (£67.2m) to subsidiary companies and other organisations, primarily Graven Hill and Crown House.
- 4.15 The loan elements of these non-treasury investments generate a higher rate of return than that earned on treasury investments due to the commercial nature of the loans issued. Table 10 below shows the investment position for this reporting period.

Table 10: Non-treasury Investment Position

	Investment Amount £m	Average Interest Rate	Interest Earned Budget £m	Interest Earned Actual £m	Variance to Date £m
April to Sept 25	66.19 (average)	5.94%	(1.972)	(1.997)	(0.025)
As at 30/09/25	66.19	5.94%	-	-	-

## Overall performance

4.16 The overall performance for the mid-year review, April to September 25, is:

Table 11: Overall Treasury Position for the Period

	<b>Budget 25/26 £m</b>	<b>Actual 25/26 £m</b>	<b>Variance to date £m</b>
Borrowing costs	2.456	2.282	(0.174)
Other interest payable	0.385	0.001	(0.384)
Other interest receivable	0.000	(1.459)	(1.459)
Treasury income	(0.533)	(0.533)	0.000
Non-treasury income	(1.972)	(1.997)	(0.025)
Transfer to Reserves	0.000	1.957	1.957
<b>Total cost / (income)</b>	<b>0.336</b>	<b>0.251</b>	<b>(0.085)</b>

4.17 Transfers to Reserves represents 2025/26's £1.459m share of the amortised PWLB early redemption premium and £0.498m of previously declared treasury management surpluses. The full year forecast at 30 September 2025, found in Table 12 below, reflects a further surplus £0.769m made up of surpluses arising from improvements in the cost of borrowing. This forecast surplus is being used to offset service overspends.

Table 12: Overall Treasury Position Forecast to Year End

	<b>Full Year Budget £m</b>	<b>Full Year Actual £m</b>	<b>Full Year Variance £m</b>
Borrowing costs	4.913	4.484	(0.429)
Other interest payable	0.769	0.001	(0.768)
Other interest receivable	0.000	(1.459)	(1.459)
Treasury income	(1.067)	(1.088)	(0.021)
Non-treasury income	(3.943)	(3.992)	(0.049)
Transfer to Reserves	0.000	1.957	1.957
<b>Total cost / (income)</b>	<b>0.672</b>	<b>(0.097)</b>	<b>(0.769)</b>

## Interest rate forecast

4.18 The council has appointed MUFG Corporate Markets (previously known as Link Group) as its treasury advisors and part of their service is to assist the council to formulate a view on interest rates.

MUFG Corporate Markets' latest forecast on 11 August 2025 sets out a view that short, medium and long-dated interest rates are expected to fall back over the next year or two, although there are upside risks in respect of the possibility that inflation targets will not be achieved and a continuing tight labour market, as well as the size of gilt issuance.

Table 13: Forecast Rates

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 11.08.25													
	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28
BANK RATE	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.60
5 yr PWLB	4.80	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60
25 yr PWLB	6.10	5.90	5.70	5.70	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20
50 yr PWLB	5.80	5.60	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.10	5.10	5.00	5.00

## 5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The nature of this report is such that alternative options are not appropriate. It is an option to request further information on the performance reported.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 This report details the Treasury Performance for the council for the first half of 2025/26. It is submitted to council for information as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

## Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	N/A

## Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Capital Prudential Indicators
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	Treasury Management Report – Q1 2024/25 (June 2024) <a href="https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s56552/Treasury%20Management%20Report%20Q1%202024%2025.pdf">https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s56552/Treasury%20Management%20Report%20Q1%202024%2025.pdf</a> Treasury Management Report – Annual Performance Report 2023/24 with Capital Prudential indicators

	<a href="https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s56500/Treasury%20Management%20Outturn%20Report%202023%2024.pdf">https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s56500/Treasury%20Management%20Outturn%20Report%202023%2024.pdf</a>  Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26 <a href="https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s58192/Appendix%202%20-%20Treasury%20Management%20Strategy%202025-26.pdf">https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/documents/s58192/Appendix%202%20-%20Treasury%20Management%20Strategy%202025-26.pdf</a>
<b>Report Author</b>	Janet du Preez, Finance Business Partner – Treasury and Insurance
<b>Contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:janet.du-preez@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">janet.du-preez@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221606
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Report of Section 151 Officer



## Appendix 1 – Capital Prudential Indicators

### 1. Introduction

This appendix is structured to update members on:

- The council's capital expenditure plans;
- How these plans are being financed;
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

### 2. Capital Expenditure

This provides a summary of the council's capital expenditure for 25/26. It reflects the original estimate from the 24/25 Treasury Management annual performance report, the current actual spent, as well as the revised position for 25/26.

Table A1: Capital Expenditure

	25/26 Original Estimate £m	25/26 Current Position £m	25/26 Revised Estimate £m
Service Loans			
Capital Projects	13.6	2.2	9.3
New Finance Lease and PFI			
New Projects (not yet approved by Council)			
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Financed by:			
Capital Receipts (Asset Disposals)	(5.1)		
Capital Receipts (Loan Principal)			
Revenue Contributions			
Grants and other contributions (existing projects)	(5.8)	(1.7)	(5.9)
Grants and other contributions (new projects)			
Finance Lease and PFI liabilities			
<b>Total financing</b>	<b>(10.9)</b>	<b>(1.7)</b>	<b>(5.9)</b>
<b>Net financing need for year</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>

The current and revised estimates have been taken from the mid-year forecasting. This indicator reflects that most of the capital expenditure is expected to take place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, however delays could lead to reprofiling spend to 26/27.

### 3. Capital Financing Requirement

The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) shows the difference between the council's capital expenditure and the revenue or capital resources set aside to finance that spend.

The CFR will increase where capital expenditure takes place and will reduce as the council makes Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) or otherwise sets aside revenue or capital resources to finance expenditure.

Table A2: Capital Financing Requirement

	25/26 Original Estimate £m	25/26 Revised Estimate £m
Opening CFR	241.6	235.5
Capital Spend	13.6	9.3
Resources used	(10.9)	(5.9)
MRP	(4.7)	(4.2)
<b>Closing CFR</b>	<b>239.7</b>	<b>234.7</b>

This reflects the reduction in capital expenditure forecast.

### 4. Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

An authority should only borrow to support a capital purpose, and borrowing should not be undertaken for revenue or speculative purposes.

The council should ensure that gross debt does not, except in the short-term, exceed the total of the CFR. If the level of gross borrowing is below the council's capital borrowing need – the CFR – it demonstrates compliance with the requirement of this Indicator.

Table A3: Gross Debt & Capital Financing Requirement

	25/26 Original Estimate £m	25/26 Revised Estimate £m
CFR	239.7	234.7
Gross borrowing	179.0	149.0
<b>Under / (over) borrowing</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>85.7</b>

This indicator shows that the council is under borrowed and that debt is only being used to support capital expenditure.

In April 2025, a £25m loan due to mature in November 2071 was repaid for the principal amount of £10.4m, with the council retaining the £14.6m discount. The discount has strengthened working capital and supports an increase in internal borrowing, contributing to reduced reliance on external debt and delivering savings on interest costs.

## 5. Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit

The Operational Boundary is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed.

Unlike the Authorised Limit, the Operational Boundary is not an absolute limit, but it reflects the Council's expectations of the level at which external debt would not ordinarily be expected to exceed.

Table A4: Estimated Debt, Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit

	25/26 Original Estimate £m	25/26 Revised Estimate £m
External Borrowings	179	149
<b>Operational Boundary</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Authorised Limit</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>310</b>

The council continues to have debt below its operational boundary, indicating that the council is effectively managing its debt and cashflows.

## 6. Financing cost to Net Revenue Stream

This Indicator shows the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long-term obligation costs) against the net revenue stream. Funding includes income such as Council tax, Business Rates as well as New Homes Bonus and Revenue Support Grant but excludes income from investments.

Table A5: Ratio of Financing costs to Net Revenue stream

	25/26 Original Estimate £m	25/26 Revised Estimate £m
Interest costs on existing borrowing	4.5	4.5
MRP	4.7	4.2
<b>Total Financing Costs</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>
Funding	26.2	26.2
Non-specific grant income	5.5	5.1
<b>Net Revenue Stream</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>31.3</b>
<b>Ratio of Financing costs</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>27.8%</b>

This indicator shows that the ratio of financing costs to net revenue streams is high, however what this does not consider is that a large proportion of the council's financing costs are offset by the interest from on-lending to the council's subsidiaries, and income generated by the revenue generating assets acquired as part of the regeneration programme. See item 7 below for detail on this.

## 7. Net Income from Service Investment Income to Net Revenue Stream

The next indicator is the Net income from Commercial and Service investments Income to Net Revenue Stream. This Indicator shows the financial exposure of the council to the loss of its non-treasury investment income.

The council does not hold any commercial investments. All investments that are not treasury-related are service investments, the majority relating to housing and regeneration.

Table A6: Ratio of Investment Income to Net Revenue stream

	25/26 Original Estimate £m	25/26 Revised Estimate £m
Income from long term investments	4.0	4.0
Income from assets	6.9	5.8
<b>Total Investment income</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Funding	26.2	26.2
Non-specific grant income	5.5	5.1
<b>Net Revenue Stream</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>31.3</b>
<b>Ratio of investment income</b>	<b>34.4%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>

The last two ratios dovetail, as much of the debt was incurred with the expectation of non-treasury investment income that would in part offset the financing costs. Deducting the Ratio of net income from Service Investments from the Ratio of Financing costs reveals the affordability ratio.

Table A7: Affordability Ratio

	25/26 Original Estimate	25/26 Revised Estimate
Ratio of Financing costs	29.0%	27.8%
Ratio of Investment income	34.4%	31.4%
<b>Affordability ratio</b>	<b>(5.4%)</b>	<b>(3.6%)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Affordability ratio in £</b>	<b>(1.7)</b>	<b>(1.1)</b>

The affordability ratio shows that the council has an overall net revenue income for capital financing.

There is no established Local Authorities benchmark for this ratio as activities differ widely. Interest earned on Treasury investment is not taken into account in either of the calculations.

## Council

**Monday 15 December 2025**

## Motions

	Topic	Proposer	Second
1	Free Parking on Remembrance Sunday	Cllr Donna Ford	Cllr Ian Harwood
2	Supporting our High Streets	Cllr Eddie Reeves	TBC
3	Fire Services in Cherwell	Cllr Andrew Crichton	Cllr Rebecca Biegel

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.18, as the detail of motions 1 and 2 falls within the remit of Executive, there will be no Council debate on these motions. The proposer of the motion will propose the motion, the seconder will confirm, the Leader of the Council response and the motions will stand referred to Executive for consideration.

Motion 3 is for debate by Council. The deadline for amendments to this motion is 12noon on Thursday 11 December.

### **MOTION ONE** (referral to Executive)

**Motion Proposer: Councillor Donna Ford**

**Motion Secunder: Councillor Ian Harwood**

**Topic: Free Parking on Remembrance Sunday**

### **Motion**

“This Council notes that Remembrance Sunday is a solemn national occasion when communities come together to honour the memory of all who have served and sacrificed to protect our freedoms and way of life.

Many residents depend on Council-operated car parks to attend such commemorations. At present, standard parking charges apply, meaning serving personnel, veterans, bereaved families, and other attendees may face unnecessary financial barriers when paying their respects.

This Council recognises the profound sacrifice made by our Armed Forces and considers that providing free parking on this day is a practical and meaningful gesture of support for the Armed Forces community.

The financial impact of suspending charges for one day is minimal, while the benefit to residents and veterans is significant.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Suspend parking charges in all Cherwell District Council-operated car parks on Remembrance Sunday each year, beginning from the next Remembrance Sunday following this motion.
2. Publicise this measure in advance through the Council's communications channels to ensure residents are aware of the free-parking provision.
3. Work with local Royal British Legion branches, Armed Forces organisations, and town and parish councils to support attendance and ensure the policy benefits those it is intended to help."

### **MOTION TWO (referral to Executive)**

**Motion Proposer: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Motion Seconder: TBC**

**Topic: Supporting our High Streets**

#### **Motion**

"Local hospitality businesses across North Oxfordshire — from family-run restaurants, pubs and cafés to small independent venues — face substantial and growing financial pressures due to rising operating costs, higher taxes and a stagnating economy.

There is now a growing political consensus about the need to provide meaningful help to small independent retailers and hospitality businesses on our high streets.

This Council notes that District councils also have certain discretionary powers to support vulnerable local businesses where urgent relief is justified.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Executive reviews any policies that are already in effect surrounding discretionary business rates relief, involving local independent business groups, together with the Overview & Scrutiny and/or Budget Planning committees (as appropriate) about any changes.
2. Ensure that any such changes focus on local independent businesses facing genuine financial hardship, rather than national chains and/or large retailers.
3. Further ensure that its discretionary policies surrounding business rates relief are better advertised to ensure that local businesses can benefit from Council support, where it is financially viable.
4. Ask the Leader to urgently write to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, copied to North Oxfordshire MPs, urging him to review the national

business rates system as regards its impacts on local hospitality and high street businesses as a matter of urgency.

5. Report back to members on progress surrounding the above steps without delay.”

### **MOTION THREE (Council debate)**

**Motion Proposer: Councillor Andrew Crichton**

**Motion Seconder: Councillor Rebecca Biegel**

**Topic: Fire Services in Cherwell**

#### **Motion**

“Council notes

1. That Oxfordshire County Council is currently considering proposals that merge Rewley Fire Station with Kidlington Fire Station into a single Fire Station.
2. The proposals also include the loss of four full time Firefighters at Banbury Fire Station, and the implementation of 12 hour day shifts for firefighters at Bicester Fire Station.
3. Cherwell is a growing district which places greater demand on local emergency response capacity.
4. The proposals could affect response times and lead to diminished fire cover for incidents across Cherwell and Oxfordshire. The FBU has said the implementation of 12 hour shifts is unsafe.

#### **Council believes**

1. Closing and merging stations could increase average response times, when Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's response times are already significantly longer than the national average.
2. The loss of four full time Firefighter positions in Banbury and implementation of 12 hour shifts at Bicester could have a detrimental impact on public safety in Cherwell.
3. That decisions on fire service changes must prioritise public safety above financial or administrative considerations.

#### **Council therefore resolves to:**

1. Support residents and Firefighters in Oxfordshire by making clear our opposition to the reduction in Firefighter numbers, implementation of 12 hour shifts, and the merger of Kidlington and Rewley Fire Stations.”

