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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday 17 June 2025

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

Membership

Councillor Lynne Parsons (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke

Councillor Phil Chapman (Vice-Chair)

Councillor John Broad
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitutes Any member of the relevant political group, excluding Executive members

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Members should not normally be subject to the party whip. Where a member is subject to a party whip they must declare this at the beginning of the meeting and it should be recorded in the minutes.

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

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. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2025.

4. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

5. Urgent Business

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

6. Finance and Performance Monitoring Report End of Year 2024-2025 (Pages 9 - 90)

Report of Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and Assistant Director Customer Focus

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's forecast financial position and performance at the end of Year 2024-25.

The full report, as submitted to the 10 June 2025 Executive meeting, is submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for considering the performance aspects of the report (Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, Appendices 8 and 9). The Budget Planning Committee is responsible for considering the finance aspects.

(Please note that there is no appendix 6)

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial and performance report at the End of Year 2024-25, focussing on the performance aspects.

7. Work Programme Planning for 2025-2026

The Chairman, Assistant Director – Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer and the Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead will facilitate a discussion on work programme planning for the 2025-2026 Municipal Year.

Committee members will have the opportunity to propose subjects for consideration, and should bear in mind the five roles of scrutiny:

- Performance Monitoring
- Policy Development
- Policy Review
- Holding the Executive to Account – the latest version of the Executive Forward Plan can be viewed via the [Cherwell District Council website](#)
- External Scrutiny

The Committee will also need to consider whether the following three working groups should continue in 2025-2026.

- Climate Action
- Food Insecurity
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (joint group with Personnel Committee)

Officers will also give details of suggested topics by service areas, for Committee consideration.

For Information - Scrutiny Guide

The Scrutiny Guide is attached for information and reference.

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

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to 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.

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

Webcasting and Broadcasting Notice

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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.

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Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Emma Faulkner / Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections
democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221534

Shiraz Sheikh
Monitoring Officer

Published on Monday 9 June 2025

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 3 June 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lynne Parsons (Chair)
Councillor Phil Chapman (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Harry Knight

Also Present:

Councillor David Hingley, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership
Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder Planning and Development Management

Officers:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Christina Cherry, Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager
Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management

It was proposed by Councillor Chapman and seconded by Councillor Broad that Councillor Parsons be elected Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2025/2026.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Lynne Parsons be elected Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/2026 Municipal Year.

The Monitoring Officer opened the meeting and dealt with agenda item 1, Upon being appointed, Councillor Parsons then took the chair.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2025/2026

It was proposed by Councillor Creed and seconded by Councillor Okeke that Councillor Chapman be elected Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/2026 Municipal Year.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Phil Chapman be elected Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/2026 Municipal Year.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 March 2025 were agreed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

6 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

7 Housing Delivery Action Plan

The Assistant Director - Planning and Development submitted a report which presented a draft Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP).

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management and Assistant Director - Planning and Development advised that the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2024 had been submitted to the February 2025 meeting of the Executive. The AMR had assessed the council's five-year housing land supply position and concluded the council could only demonstrate a 2.3-year supply, which was a shortfall of 5017 homes per annum. The position was exacerbated by the amalgamation of Oxfor's unmet housing needs.

The Executive resolved that a HDAP be prepared in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management. The HDAP sought to address the housing shortfall and highlighted the need for additional resources and investment in software.

In response to a question regarding the focus on the council's housing waiting list and whether the action plan took into account families and vulnerable people with housing needs, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management agreed that there should be a focus on the existing housing needs for the district and that a strategy had been developed to help ensure the implementation of the HDAP.

In response to a question regarding capacity of the Bicester and Oxford Sewerage works to handle the increase in demand from future housing developments, the Assistant Director - Planning and Development advised that detailed discussions had taken place with relevant stakeholders such as Thames Water and the Environment Agency who were satisfied with the proposals set out within the development plan.

In response to a question regarding the communication between utility companies and housing developers, and the role the council took aligning the two to mitigate any infrastructure issues that may occur, the Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager advised that relevant officers liaised with developers and infrastructure providers annually via the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Annual Monitoring Report, and that information was updated on an ongoing basis.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Housing Delivery Action Plan report be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the proposed plan requires more resource than is currently available to deliver it.
- (3) That the following recommendations be submitted to the 10 June 2025 Executive meeting when it considers the Housing Delivery Action Plan:
 - (1) That the Executive is cognisant of the large numbers of people on the housing waiting lists.

- (2) That implementation of the Housing Delivery Action Plan include prioritisation of staffing and resources.
- (3) That more details on the resources to deliver the Housing Delivery Action Plan be provided by The Assistant Director - Planning and Development.
- (4) That the Leader write to central Government on any delays that might be caused by delays in responses by Government departments.
- (5) That suitable measures be taken to ensure that Section 106 agreements are processed on time to avoid delays.
- (6) That further consideration be given to necessary infrastructure developments to deliver the Housing Delivery Action Plan.
- (7) That further consideration be made to risk management of the delivery of the Housing Delivery Action Plan.

8 **Work Programme Planning for 2025 - 2026**

The Chair advised members that further discussions on the work programme for 2025/26 would be held at the next meeting of the Committee on 17 June. Prior to this meeting there would be an informal work programme planning meeting on 11 June 2025. Members were encouraged to forward work programme suggestions to the Democratic and Elections team for consideration at the informal work programme planning meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Chair and Vice-Chair work with officers to bring forward a work programme, incorporating topics suggested by members, to the next Committee meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair:

Date:

This report is public	
Finance and Performance Monitoring Report End of Year 2024-2025	
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny
Date of Committee	17 June 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Performance aspects: Portfolio Holder Corporate Services, Councillor Brant Finance aspects (not presented at OSC), Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property, Councillor Lesley McLean
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	28 May 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Michael Furness and Assistant Director Customer Focus, Shona Ware

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's forecast financial position and performance at the end of Year 2024-25.

The full report, as submitted to the 10 June 2025 Executive meeting, is submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for considering the performance aspects of the report (Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, Appendices 8 and 9). The Budget Planning Committee is responsible for considering the finance aspects.

1. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's financial and performance report at the End of Year 2024-25, focussing of the performance aspects.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report is split into two sections:

- Finance
- Performance

- 2.2 The Finance section presents the outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year.

- 2.3 The Performance section sets out how the council has performed against its priorities for 2024-25, which are set out in its Outcomes Framework.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
Finance		Financial and Resource implications are detailed within sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this report. The reserves policy requires Executive to agree transfers to and from earmarked reserves and general balances during the financial year. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 21 May 2025		
Legal		There are no legal implications arising at this stage. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables Executive to remain aware of issues and understand the actions being taken to maintain a balanced budget. The report sets out as at March 2025 finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal, 7 May 2025		
Risk Management		There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Juile Miles, Performance Analyst and Developer, 19 May 2025		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
Equality Impact			X	
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			X	

lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A
Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	This report links to all council's priorities, as it summarises our progress against them till End of Year 2024-25.			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its financial and performance positions to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.
- 3.2 This monitoring takes place monthly for finance, and quarterly for performance, so the council can identify potential issues at the earliest opportunity and put measures in place to mitigate them.
- 3.3 These updates are consolidated into a single report given the implications and interdependencies between them, and this is the summary for the end of Year 2024-25.

4. Details

4.1 Finance Update

The council's overall yearend position for 2024/25 is a surplus of (£0.162m) which will be transferred to general fund balances. This is subject to the agreement of the proposed transfers to reserves of £2.020m as detailed at the bottom of table 1.

Table 1: Year End Position

Service	Current Budget £m	Spend to March 2025 £m	2025 Year End Variance (Under) / Over £m	% Variance to current budget %	January Variance (Under) / Over £m	Change since Previous (better) / worse £m	
Finance	3.246	3.193	(0.053)	-1.6%	0.000	(0.053)	
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	2.530	2.673	0.143	5.7%	0.125	0.018	
ICT	1.730	1.756	0.026	1.5%	0.000	0.026	
Property	(2.317)	(2.229)	0.088	3.8%	0.224	(0.136)	
HR & OD	0.856	0.893	0.037	4.3%	0.030	0.007	
Customer Focus	2.526	2.365	(0.161)	-6.4%	(0.130)	(0.031)	
Resources & Transformation	8.571	8.651	0.080	0.9%	0.249	(0.169)	
Planning & Development	2.343	2.295	(0.048)	-2.0%	0.115	(0.163)	
Growth & Economy	0.379	0.476	0.097	25.6%	0.014	0.083	
Environmental	6.459	7.122	0.663	10.3%	0.371	0.292	
Regulatory	1.162	1.036	(0.126)	-10.8%	(0.047)	(0.079)	
Wellbeing & Housing	2.396	2.460	0.064	2.7%	(0.050)	0.114	
Communities	12.739	13.389	0.650	5.1%	0.403	0.247	
Subtotal for Directorates	21.310	22.040	0.730	3.4%	0.652	0.078	
Executive Matters	4.400	2.725	(1.675)	-38.1%	(0.182)	(1.493)	
Policy Contingency	1.277	0.219	(1.058)	-82.9%	(0.470)	(0.588)	
Total	26.987	24.984	(2.003)	-7.4%	0.000	(2.003)	
FUNDING	(26.987)	(27.166)	(0.179)	0.7%	0.000	(0.179)	
(Surplus)/Deficit before proposed transfers to reserves	0.000	(2.182)	(2.182)		0.000	(2.182)	

Move to interest Reserve 1.070

Market Risk Reserve -

Employers NI 0.200

Elections Reserve 0.250

LGR Reserve 0.250

Planning Reserve 0.250

(Surplus)/Deficit - to General Fund**(0.162)**

Note: A positive variance is an overspend or a reduction in forecast income and a (negative) is an underspend or extra income received.

Green represents an underspend and red represents a overspend for the outturn position.

4.1.2 Table 2 below analyses the variances to distinguish between base budget variances and variances resulting from the non-delivery of previously approved savings. The non-delivery of savings has a knock-on impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as failure to deliver on an ongoing basis adds to future pressures.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance – March 2025

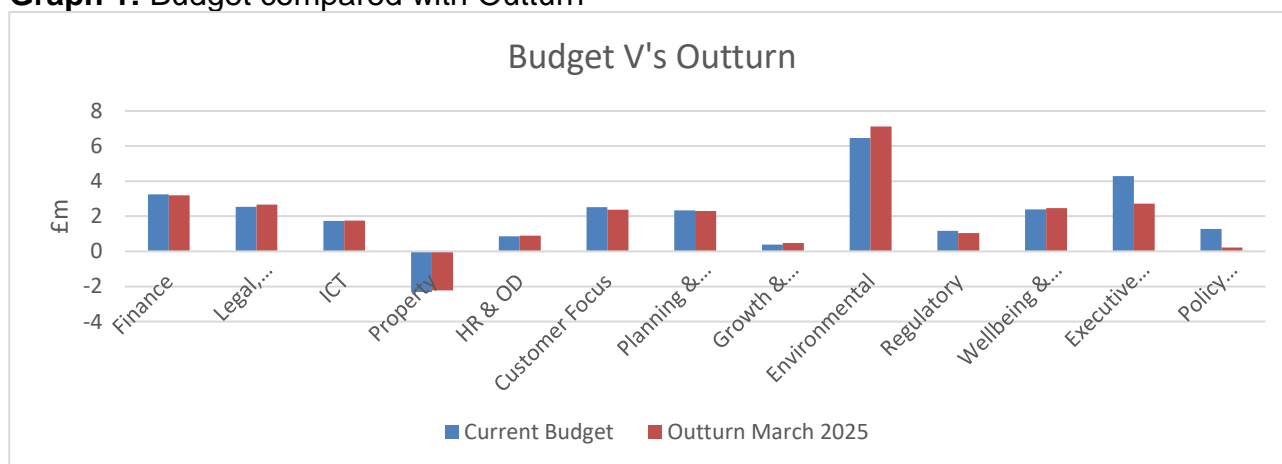
Breakdown of current month forecast	Spend to March 2025 £m	Base Budget Over/ (Under) £m	Savings Non-Delivery £m
Resources	0.080	(0.147)	0.227
Communities	0.650	0.248	0.402
Subtotal Directorates	0.730	0.101	0.629
Executive Matters	(1.675)	(1.675)	0.000
Policy Contingency	(1.058)	(1.058)	0.000
Total	(2.003)	(2.632)	0.629

FUNDING	(0.179)	(0.179)	0.000
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(Surplus)/Deficit	(2.182)	(2.811)	0.629
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4.1.3 The graph below shows the Budget compared with the forecast to the end of the financial year.

Graph 1: Budget compared with Outturn



4.1.4 Table 3 below summarises the major forecast variances for the reporting period. Further details can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 3: Top Major Variances:

Service	Current Budget	Variance	% Variance
Environmental	6.459	0.663	10.3%
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	2.530	0.143	5.7%
Executive Matters	4.400	(1.675)	-38.1%
Policy Contingency	1.277	(1.058)	-82.9%
Customer Focus	2.526	(0.161)	-6.4%
Regulatory	1.162	(0.126)	-10.8%
Total	18.354	(2.214)	

Reserves

4.1.5 Allocations to and from reserves are made according to the Reserves Policy. Table 5 below summarises the movements which have been requested as at 31 March 2025, more details can be found within Appendix 5.

Table 5: Reserves:

Reserves	Balance 1 April 2024	Original Budgeted use/ (contribution)	Changes agreed since budget setting	Changes proposed March 2025	Balance 31 March 2025
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Balance	(6.153)	0.000	(1.700)	0.000	(7.853)
Earmarked	(28.325)	(0.776)	0.290	(2.454)	(31.265)
	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.033)	(0.033)
Ringfenced Grant	(2.552)	0.898	0.297	(0.562)	(1.919)
Subtotal Revenue	(37.030)	0.122	(1.113)	(3.049)	(41.070)
Capital	(6.293)	3.250	0.000	(2.277)	(5.320)
Total	(43.323)	3.372	(1.113)	(5.326)	(46.390)

Under the delegated authority outlined in the reserves policy, the Assistant Director of Finance has approved the contributions to and uses of capital reserves for 24/25. This includes usage of £1.496m of capital receipts and £0.679m of capital grants unapplied which were used to support the overall funding of the capital programme. This usage reduces the Council's Capital Financing Requirement and therefore the associated ongoing Minimum Revenue Provision which is met from the revenue budget. The table shows a net proposed change of (£2.277m) reflecting that the majority of the £3.25m budgeted usage has been reprofiled and the capital receipts and capital grants unapplied that have been received in year.

*According to the Reserves Policy Executive are only required to approve uses of Capital Reserves, not contributions.

4.2 Capital

4.2.1 Table 6 below summarises the projected year end forecast for profiled spend in 2024/25 and Table 7 summarises the financing. There is an in-year underspend of (£0.776m), with £0.206m that is recommended to be reprofiled into future years. The current month variance is due to underspends on the Town Centre House Purchase & Repair (£0.425m), Castle Quay (£0.373m) and (£0.150m) Discretionary Grants Domestic Properties, Community Centre Works (£0.073m) and overspends on the following, Bicester East Community Centre £0.084m, Sunshine Centre £0.088m and Development of New Land Bicester Depot £0.063m and minor variances totalling £0.010m. Further detail can be found in appendix 1. Projects that are recommended to have budget reprofiled from 2024/25 are detailed in Table 9.

Table 6: Capital Year End Outturn

Directorate	Revised Budget £m	Actual Spend 2024/25 £m	Re-profiled beyond 2024/25 £m	Variance to Budget £m	Prior Month Variance to Budget £m
Resources & Transformation	7.442	7.265	0.000	(0.177)	(0.002)
Communities	7.345	6.539	0.206	(0.599)	(0.546)
Total	14.787	13.804	0.206	(0.776)	(0.548)

For further detail on individual schemes please see Appendix 1.

Note: A positive variance is an overspend or a reduction in forecast income and a (negative) is an underspend or extra income received.
Green represents an underspend and red represents a overspend for the outturn position.

Table 7: How the Capital Programme is financed

Financing	2024/25	Future Years £m	Total
Borrowing	10.972	11.015	21.987
Capital Grants	2.080	9.202	11.282
Capital Receipts	0.425	5.896	6.321
S106 Receipts	1.310	4.489	5.799
	14.787	30.602	45.389

4.2.2 Table 8 below summarises the spend against the full capital programme (i.e. spend across all years of the capital programme). Since January's report there has been an increase in underspend in the programme of (£0.162m) predominantly due Castle Quay (£0.140m) and Community Centre Works (£0.073m) and other minor variations.

Table 8: Total Capital Project Outturn

Directorate	Budget £m	Actual Spend 2024/25 £m	Variance to Budget £m	Prior Month Variance to Budget £m
Resources & Transformation	12.943	12.766	(0.177)	(0.002)
Communities	32.446	31.847	(0.599)	(0.546)
Total	45.389	44.613	(0.776)	(0.548)

4.2.3 Table 9 below details the capital scheme which it is recommended budgets are reprofiled from 2024/25 to 2025/26 or beyond. The reprofiling of capital budgets can be for several reasons and is common on multi-year projects. The reasons for the recommendations are summarised in section 4.2.4.

Table 9: Requested capital budget reprofiling

Code	Top In-Year Variances	Budget Total £'000	Reprofile to 24/25 £'000	% of in year Budget Variance
40286	Transforming Market Square Bicester	225	96	42.67%
40288	UKSPF Rural Fund	408	11	2.69%
40028	Vehicle Replacement Programme	726	52	7.16%
40303	S106 Hanwell Fields Community Centre Projects	20	4	20.00%
40319	Local Authority Housing Fund R2	304	7	2.30%
40324	Development of Activity Play Zones	7	3	42.85%
40328	S106 – Windmill Community and Sports Centre Tennis Courts	51	16	31.37%
40329	Spiceball Leisure Centre Structural Beams	30	17	56.67%
		1.771	206	

4.2.4 Capital schemes recommended to be reprofiled:

- Transforming Market Square Bicester (40286)
The market square preferred concept design has been chosen with significant input from the local businesses and the Bicester community, with this work coming in below the estimated/projected budget. The next steps are to establish the programme of development including the initial cost analysis, which will be undertaken by our project consultants. This will be completed by May 2025. During the summer 2025 we will begin the procurement process (with continued support from our project consultants), the works aiming to start in Spring 2026, with a 12-month programme the estimated completion is Spring/Summer 2027.
- UKSPF Rural Fund (40288)
All Rural England Prosperity fund capital projects have been completed and £0.011m will be reprofiled into 2025/26 due to unspent grant.

- Vehicle Replacement Programme (40028)
£0.052m required to be reprofiled into 2025/26. Delivery times have been slipped for the vehicles currently on order. Budget re-profiling is required as a result.
- S106 Hanwell Fields Community Centre Projects (40303)
Initial project work, Royal Institute of British Architects stages 1 & 2, completed. Moving to Royal Institute of British Architects stages 3 - 6.
- Local Authority Housing Fund R2 (40319)
Homes under Local Authority Housing Fund R2 have been delivered. Any remaining budget will be used to finalise refurbishments, decorate, furnish, or otherwise prepare any remaining unlet properties for rent.
- Development of Activity Play Zones (40324)
Planning has now been approved for two Play Zones at Princess Diana Park and Chandos Close, subject to the discharge of Biodiversity Net Gain condition, expected commencement May 2025.
- S106 – Windmill Community and Sports Centre Tennis Courts (40328)
Mini Tennis Courts complete, awaiting painting of the new tennis court lines. Work due to take place Spring 2025.
- Spiceball Leisure Centre Structural Beams (40329)
This been re-profiled into 2025/25 to coincide with commencement of works in June.

4.3 Performance Summary

- 4.3.1 The council has performed well against its objectives, which consist of 36 Business Plan Measures, 15 Annual Delivery Plan actions, and 25 Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan activities.

4.4 Business Plan Measures

- 4.4.1 Of the 19 business plan measures 11 achieved their year-end target or within the agreed tolerance. The eight measures that missed their 2024-25 target are:

4.4.2 **“Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation”**

The number of households in temporary accommodation has been consistently high and above target throughout the year. This has increased again through Q4, as it did similarly in Q4 of 2023-24. The service has been increasing the numbers of self-contained accommodation to reduce the number of hotel placements that are made to accommodate this growing client group. The waiting list for permanent housing has increased 10% in the last year, and most of these households are in housing need, so the numbers across the service suggest a significant and growing demand for housing.

4.4.3 **“Percentage of Major Applications overturned at appeal”**

The national target is to ensure that less than 10% of major planning application decisions are overturned at appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. During 24/25

10.71% of decisions were overturned (6 out of 56 decisions). National monitoring takes place over a prescribed two-year period and allows an additional period for appeal decisions to follow. Over the period April 2022 to March 2024, and allowing for appeal decisions to December 2024, 10.4% of decisions on major applications were overturned at appeal (12 out of 115 decisions). Consequently, the Council is under review for potential designation for the quality of its decisions on applications for major development. Officers are engaging with the Planning Advisory Service about a review of decision-making to support improvement. Had one application fewer been overturned; the Council would have been under the 10% threshold.

4.4.4 “Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs”

Provisional housing completions for the year were 783 against a target of 1,142. Final figures have not yet been verified. However, this is the second consecutive year when housing completions have been significantly below the requirements of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031. Housing completions have not yet commenced on the sites contributing to Oxford’s needs. Housing completions are dependent on the wider housing market and economic conditions affect housebuilders. Although the district has over 8,000 homes with outline or full planning permission, there are also local factors affecting delivery such as infrastructure provision at Bicester in particular. The rate of delivery affects the district’s five-year housing land supply position. The Council is preparing a Housing Delivery Action Plan with the aim of doing all it can to support delivery.

4.4.5 “Percentage of BC full plans assessed within 5 weeks (or longer with applicant's agreement)”

The end of year percentage for full plan applications determined within five weeks (or otherwise agreed period) is 90.43%. Although the 95% target has not been met, the Building Control service is taking management measures to achieve a higher percentage. There have been no instances where a development has proceeded without approval.

4.4.6 “Percentage Waste Recycled & Composted”

Recycling rate will end the year down 1% due to the reduction in garden waste of 1,000 tonnes. This was due to the poor weather in the summertime.

4.4.7 “Percentage Reduction in fuel consumption”

In the reporting Year 2024/25 there has been no change in the fleet profile from previous year but a slight reduction in fuel usage.

4.4.8 “Percentage of Climate Action plan delivering to target”

At the end of 2024/25 the position of the Climate Action plan is of the 126 Climate Actions, 103 were Ongoing, 13 On-hold, and 10 Completed. RAG ratings showed 56 actions in Green, 54 in Amber, and 16 in Red.

Work on the Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) is progressing in partnership with OCC, ARUP, and neighbouring authorities. Phase 1 began with a mobilisation meeting in January, and we're advancing the baseline report and stakeholder engagement plan.

The Climate Action Working Group concluded its work this municipal year, recommending seven priority actions, which were taken to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. A briefing on the Solar Strategy study was held with councillors, and the final report will be available early next quarter (April'25).

We hosted a Climate Community event with around 30 attendees from 14 community groups and organizations. Draft reports for the district's carbon baseline, and a fleet study were received, reviewed, and shared with the consultants for further refinements. Draft report for business and industrial emissions was received and is under review.

4.4.9 “Reduction in total Greenhouse gas emissions for the year”

During 2023/24 Cherwell District Council (CDC) total emissions increased by 1.2% (49 tonnes CO₂e), from 4,071 tonnes CO₂e in 2022/23 to 4,119 tonnes CO₂e in 2023/24. Comparison for 2024/25 is not yet available. The main reason for the increment in emissions in 2023/24 is related to decarbonisation equipment installed in 2022/23 not realising reductions in gas demand, particularly in the leisure property portfolio. Emissions increased in areas namely Corporate Electricity, Leisure Electricity, Leisure Gas, Business Travel, Water emissions. One third of emissions increase is directly related to a 5% increase in the carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid. Also, For the first time, CDC is reporting emissions from water supply, water treatment and waste disposal.

4.4.10 Monitoring Measures

There are also 17 measures that the council monitors to be able to identify any emerging trends that might require early intervention from us or partners. There are no targets for these measures as they are dependent on external factors.

During the Financial Year we observed the following trends:

- **Homes improved through enforcement action** – The numbers are higher for the FY 2024-25 with a total of 162 in comparison to the previous FY with a total of 138. With the highest number in Q3 of 43, 11 cases were relating to damp and mould compared to the same quarter last year at 30.
- **Tonne’s residual household waste collected** – This year we have seen an increase of approx. 1.000 tonnes which was a total of 28.726 tonnes for FY 2024-25 in comparison with last year’s total of 27.707 tonnes. This would be in line with property growth within the district.
- **Percentage of recycling contamination rate** – Contamination rate for FY 2024/25 has been slightly higher (13.1%) than previous year’s (12.3%) due to the fire at the Materials Recovery Facility causing damage to the testing station. In the final quarter of the year contamination rate has started to reduce due to the work the service development team have carried out.
- **Number of Visits/Usage of all Leisure Facilities within the District** – Usage figures as an overall number continued to grow in 2024/25, however this has largely been due to the performance of Spiceball Leisure Centre with individual visits for

January to March up by circa 15,500 on same period last year. Woodgreen Leisure Centre has shown a small increase of 3,000 visits for January to March with usage at directly managed figures broadly in line with 2024. Bicester and Kidlington have shown small decreases within the 3-month period against 2024 of 1,000 and 2,000 respectively.

- **Residents who have taken part in programmes contributing to improving health inequalities** – 2024/25 has been a highly successful year with a large number of residents benefitting from the health intervention programmes You Move (3,659 residents on programme) and Move Together (3,252 residents on programme). You Move offers families in receipt of free school meals reduced and free opportunities has seen clear increases in Physical Activity with a 48% increase in Children's activity levels from being part of You Move. You Moves impact features in Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health report as having a positive impact on Mental Wellbeing. Move Together which offers a bespoke physical activity pathway for residents with long term conditions has seen excellent results with 84% of residents reporting an improvement in pain management, 23% fewer falls and 4.5 GP appointments saved per participant per year.
- **Number of Illegal Fly Tips** – This year 2024/25 was an increase of 211 with a total of 1,311 in comparison to 2023/24 with a total of 1,100, benchmarkable national information is not available at the moment of doing this report.

Please note some of the graphs included with these measures would not include previous year comparison due to the metrics being new.

See Appendix 8 for the full list of targeted and monitoring measures.

4.5 Annual Delivery Plan Priorities

4.5.1 All of the 15 Priorities were successfully delivered for 2024/25.

See Appendix 9 for End of Year updates on the Annual delivery plan.

4.6 Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Action plans

4.6.1 Of the 25 actions identified for 2024-25, 23 achieved their year-end target or within the agreed tolerance. The two measures that missed their 2024-25 target are:

4.6.2 **“Complete an Equalities Impact Assessment on the website (including the terms and conditions)”**

Reported slightly behind schedule for End of Year. We have now completed the draft assessment and sent it to our Assistant Director. There may be work arising from the EIA; therefore, an action reflecting the support work undertaken to improve our website accessibility should be considered going forward.

4.6.3 **“Conduct an access audit on Castle Quay and other major council buildings (internal)”**

Reported slightly behind schedule for End of Year. Main tasks for this action were completed in 2024/25 any remaining actions will be completed in the following as Business as Usual.

See Appendix 10 for End of Year updates on Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Action plans.

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: This report summarises the council's forecast financial position and performance position up to the end of End of Year 2024-25, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The report updates the Committee on the year-end financial position of the council for 2024/25, and performance position as of the end of year 2024-25. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its resources sustainably.

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	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Capital Outturn March 2025
Appendix 2	Detailed Revenue Narrative on Forecast March 2025
Appendix 3	Virements & Aged Debt March 2024
Appendix 4	Funding March 2025
Appendix 5	Use of Reserves and Grant funding March 2025
Appendix 6	n/a

Appendix 7	Savings
Appendix 8	Business Plan & Monitoring measures End of Year 2024-25
Appendix 9	Annual Delivery Plan End of Year 2024-25
Appendix 10	EDI Action Plans End of Year 2024-25
Background Papers	N/A
Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Celia Prado-Teeling - Performance Team Leader Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner – Business Partnering & Controls
Report Author contact details	Celia.prado-teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221556 Leanne.lock@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 227098
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director for Resources & Transformation, 20 May 2025

Appendix 1 - CHERWELL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Cost Centre	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET 2024/25	Year End March 2025 Outturn	RE- PROFILED BEYOND 2024/25	Current month Variances £000	Prior month Variances £000	Forecast Narrative (Public)
40139	Banbury Health Centre - Refurbishment of roof covering and removal of redunant ventilation plant from roof	84	87	0	3	1	Works complete
40141	Castle Quay Waterfront	0	37	0	37	0	Contractors are managing the defects on Castle Quay. Time of rectifiction has exceeded the standard 12 months. Repairs are on going
40144	Castle Quay	940	567	0	(373)	(233)	As part of the Castle Quay Development and the regeneration of Banbury, the Council is working closely and in partnership with a number of public and private organisations to repurpose parts of Castle Quay Shopping Centre to deliver a number of complimentary uses enabling the regeneration of Banbury. The majority of the underspend results from a cash flow and technical accounting adjustment per the requirements of the CIPFA code on Local Authority Accounting. These costs will instead be recognised as Revenue costs, spread over the life of the project
40167	Horsefair, Banbury	20	(0)	0	(20)	(17)	Works complete
40219	Community Centre - Works	94	21	0	(73)	0	Design works are complete.
40224	Fairway Flats Refurbishment	13	17	0	4	3	Planning approval has been approved. Designers are completing the detail design and specification for the solar panels and roof works. We will then need to tender these works as they are over £0.100m. There is budget available in 25/26 for this purpose

40227	Banbury Museum - Decarbonisation Works	0	(20)	0	(20)	(20)	Retention payment will not be paid as the defects in the system still need to be resolved and the contractor has gone into liquidation.
40232	Kidlington Leisure Centre - Decarbonisation Works	0	4	0	4	4	Small overspend for retention payment (offset elsewhere)
40239	Bicester East Community Centre	685	769	0	84	64	Overspend due to additional works needed on resolving public sewers (from a third party) .These works delayed works on site thus incurring further costs from the main contract works.
40242	H&S Works to Banbury Shopping Arcade	16	15	0	(1)	0	Works currently ongoing so costs will continue to be incurred in 25/26 - there is budget available for this purpose
40254	Thorpe Lane Depot - Renewal of Electrical Incoming Main	5	2	0	(3)	(5)	Works are currently designed pending tender of the Electrical supply infrastructure. Works to be coordinated with the District Network Operator to install the new sub station, who are engaged. Waiting for dates from the District Network Operator. Works need to be signed off. Costs will therefore continue to be incurred into 25/26 and there is budget available for this purpose
40249	Retained Land	0	(4)	0	(4)		Derecognise retained land staff costs which were incorrectly capitalised in 23/24
40255	Installation of Photovoltaic at CDC Property	8	8	0	0	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26, in line with next years budget

40264	Sunshine Centre	182	270	0	88	85	Pressure occurred as result of previously unknown but essential works identified during the course of the works.
40279	Spiceball Sports Centre - Solar PV Car Ports	3	0	0	(3)	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40280	Kidlington Sports Centre - Solar PV Car Ports	2	0	0	(2)	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. Work cannot start until electrical mains installed (dependant on DNO). All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40281	North Oxfordshire Academy - Solar Panels	0	0	0	0	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40282	Community Centre Solar Panels	2	0	0	(2)	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26. Part of EPC work, community centres will need to agree.
40283	Thorpe Lane - Solar Panels	0	0	0	0	1	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40284	Thorpe Lane - Heater Replacement (Gas to Electric)	0	0	0	0	1	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40278	Development of New Land Bicester Depot	85	148	0	63	63	The designers are appointed and Consultation on proposed layouts for the new depot are taking place with user groups. A Planning application is being submitted in June 25 upon completing of ecological survey and protected species survey.

40317	Cope Road, Banbury	29	36	0	7	5	Design work completed pending tendering. Contractor now appointed. Issues regarding planning and protected trees. Investigation works on going
40316	CDC Office Relocation to Castle Quay	5,146	5,213	0	67	66	Delivered in 24/25. A review of staff costs has resulted in an overspend which is partly offset by underspends across the project
40327	Thorpe Place Roofing Works	12	10	0	(2)	0	Design has been completed,.
Property		7,326	7,179	0	(147)	18	
40256	Processing Card Payments & Direct Debits	20	0	0	(20)	(20)	This project will be a revenue cost and therefore the budget is not required
Finance		20	0	0	(20)	(20)	
40285	Digital Strategy	0	(19)	0	(19)	0	Digital Strategy was the work undertaken to develop the Digital Futures Strategy, underspend is due to staff costs being slightly less than anticipated
40334	Robotic Process Automation Pilot	96	105	0	9	0	The type of work they typically do are boring repetitive, rule-based tasks that can free up our staff resources to deliver services. The pilot will initially deliver 3 processes which have been identified from transformation reviews undertaken within the Council already. The costs incurred so far are for 1) for the supply of Blue Prism Digital workforce software as a service (a cloud-based automation platform) and associated support from OAS to hold workshops to deep dive the process and work with us to build the automations to enable automation of operational and business processes and provide training to enable us to do the same going forward 2) the associated licenses.
ICT		96	86	0	(10)	0	
Resources & Transformation		7,442	7,265	0	(177)	(2)	
40062	East West Railways	30	27		(3)	(3)	The capital fund has been set up to enable the Council's costs to be recharged when responding to enquiries and regulatory applications, involving for example environmental and land drainage matters, made in connection with the East West Railways project. This is in partnership with England's Economic Heartland. The Digital Enhancement Project is an element of CDC's commitment, involving the staged transfer of funds towards Network Rail's delivery of the enhanced digital infrastructure along the new line. Final invoice paid and work completed.

40286	Transforming Market Square Bicester	225	128	96	(0)	(5)	The market square preferred concept design has been chosen with significant input from the local businesses and the Bicester community, with this work coming in below the estimated/projected budget. The next steps are to establish the programme of development including the initial cost analysis, which will be undertaken by our project consultants. This will be completed by May 2025. During the summer 2025 we will begin the procurement process (with continued support from our project consultants), the works aiming to start in Spring 2026, with a 12-month programme the estimated completion is Spring/Summer 2027.
40287	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) Year Three Investment Plan Programme	198	199	0	1	0	All UKSPF capital projects have completed and all capital grant monies spent.
40288	UKSPF Rural Fund	408	397	11	0	(0)	All Rural England Prosperity fund capital projects have completed and £0.011m will be reprofiled into 2025-26 due to unspent grant.
Growth & Economy		861	751	107	(3)	(8)	
40028	Vehicle Replacement Programme	726	674	52	(0)	0	£0.052m required to be reprofiled in to 2025/26 .Delivery times have been slipped for the vehicles currently on order. Budget re-profiling is required as a result.
40187	On Street Recycling Bins	18	18	0	0	0	Project completed in 2024/25.
40220	Horsefair Public Conveniences	0	3	0	3		Final retention payment of £0.003m paid in 2024/25.
40222	Burnehyll- Bicester Country Park	21	19	0	(2)	0	Project ongoing so costs will continue to be incurred in 2025/26 - there is budget available for this purpose.
40259	Market Equipment Replacement	5	5	0	(0)	0	Project ongoing so costs will continue to be incurred in 2025/26 - there is budget available for this purpose.
40291	New Commercial Waste IT System	25	18	0	(7)	(7)	Project completed in 2024/25.
40331	Additional Commercial Waste Containers	29	29	0	0	0	Project completed in 2024/25.
Environmental Services		824	766	52	(6)	(7)	
40083	Disabled Facilities Grants	1,200	1,204	0	4	0	Budget appears slightly overspent, but budget of £0.184m was reprofiled earlier in the year. Overall spend within budget envelope.

40084	Discretionary Grants Domestic Properties	150	0	0	(150)	(150)	Budget no longer required as spend took place via revenue.
40160	Housing Services - capital	168	168	0	0	1	Retention payment made. Now complete
40262	Town Centre House Purchase and Repair	2,937	2,512	0	(425)	(356)	Town Centre House progressed well but issues with electricity metering and supply caused some delay to the completion of the project. These were resolved in the main by the end of March, with only minor changes needed in April.
40297	S106 - Ardley & Fewcott Play Area Project	7	0	0	(7)	0	Project delivered through revenue S106
40298	S106 - Ardley & Fewcott Village Hall Project	3	0	0	(3)	0	Project delivered through revenue S106
40303	S106 - Hanwell Fields Community Centre Projects	20	16	4	0	0	Initial project work, Royal Institute of British Architects stages 1 & 2, completed. Moving to Royal Institute of British Architects stages 3 - 6.
40312	S106 - Whitelands Farm Sports Ground (Pedestrian crossing and various works)	99	99	0	0	0	Floodlight project completed.
40313	S106 - Woodgreen Leisure Centre Improvements	23	23	0	0	0	Project ongoing in to 2025-26 with associated budget reprofiled
40314	S106 - Deddington Parish Council Projects	67	66	0	(1)	0	Two play ground projects at Wimborn Close and Welford Piece completed. Car park lighting installed at the Windmill Community Centre.
40315	S106 - Longford Park Sport Pitches	10	0	0	(10)	(10)	Project delivered through revenue S106

40318	S106 - Steeple Aston Parish Council Village Hall Sports and Recreation Centre	0	(1)	0	(1)	0	Improvement projects at Steeple Aston Village Hall and Sport & Recreation Centre completed.
40319	Local Authority Housing Fund R2	304	297	7	0	0	Homes under Local Authority Housing Fund R2 have been delivered. Any remaining budget will be used to finalise refurbishments, decorate, furnish, or otherwise prepare any remaining unlet properties for rent.
40324	Development of Activity Play Zones	7	4	3	(0)	0	Planning has now been approved for two Playzones at Princess Diana Park and Chandos Close, subject to the discharge of Biodiversity Net Gain condition, expected commencement May 2025.
40328	S106 – Windmill Community and Sports Centre Tennis Courts	51	35	16	0	0	Mini Tennis Courts complete, awaiting painting of the new tennis court lines. Work due to take place Spring 2025.
40329	Spiceball Leisure Centre Structural Beams	30	13	17	0	0	This is the project consultant costs for drafting of the tender documents relating to the project, produced by Gleeds. This been re-profiled into 2025/25 to coincide with commencement of works in June.
40330	Replacement of the Sports Hall Roof at Bicester Leisure Centre	15	15	0	0	(16)	Works completed as per the revised scope
40332	S106 - grant funded Affordable Accommodation	560	560	0	0	0	The grant funding has now been passed to our delivery partner in line with the grant agreement to commence delivery.
40335	S106 - Launton Village Hall Roofing Contribution	10	11	0	1	0	Project completed.
Wellbeing & Housing		5,660	5,022	47	(591)	(531)	
Communities		7,345	6,539	206	(599)	(546)	

Capital	14,787	13,804	206	(776)	(549)	
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CHERWELL TOTAL CAPITAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE

CODE	DESCRIPTION	Total 24/25 Project Budget	Year End March 2025 Outturn	RE-PROFILED BEYOND 2024/25	24/25 Variance	Future Years Budget	Project Total Budget	Project Total forecast	Project Total Variance	Narrative
40139	Banbury Health Centre - Refurbishment of Ventilation, Heating & Cooling Systems	84	87	0	3	0	84	87	3	Works complete
40141	Castle Quay Waterfront	0	37	0	37	0	0	37	37	Contractors are managing the defects on Castle Quay. Time of rectification has exceeded the standard 12 months. Repairs are on going
40144	Castle Quay	940	567	0	(373)	0	940	567	(373)	As part of the Castle Quay Development and the regeneration of Banbury, the Council is working closely and in partnership with a number of public and private organisations to repurpose parts of Castle Quay Shopping Centre to deliver a number of complimentary uses enabling the regeneration of Banbury. The majority of the underspend results from a cash flow and technical accounting adjustment per the requirements of the CIPFA code on Local Authority Accounting. These costs will instead be recognised as Revenue costs, spread over the life of the project
40167	Horsefair, Banbury	20	(0)	0	(20)	0	20	(0)	(20)	Works complete
40219	Community Centre - Works	94	21	0	(73)	0	94	21	(73)	Design works are complete.
40224	Fairway Flats Refurbishment	13	17	0	4	325	338	342	4	Planning approval has been approved. Designers are completing the detail design and specification for the solar panels and roof works. We will then need to tender these works as they are over £0.100m. There is budget available in 25/26 for this purpose
40227	Banbury Museum - Decarbonisation Works	0	(20)	0	(20)	0	0	(20)	(20)	Retention payment will not be paid as the defects in the system still need to be resolved and the contractor has gone into liquidation.
40232	Kidlington Leisure Centre - Decarbonisation Works	0	4	0	4	0	0	4	4	Small overspend for retention payment (offset elsewhere)
40239	Bicester East Community Centre	685	769	0	84	0	685	769	84	Overspend due to additional works needed on resolving public sewers (from a third party) .These works delayed works on site thus incurring further costs from the main contract works.
40242	H&S Works to Banbury Shopping Arcade	16	15	0	(1)	105	121	120	(1)	Works currently ongoing so costs will continue to be incurred in 25/26 - there is budget available for this purpose
40254	Thorpe Lane Depot - Renewal of Electrical Incoming Main	5	2	0	(3)	164	169	166	(3)	Derecognise retained land staff costs which were incorrectly capitalised in 23/24
40255	Installation of Photovoltaic at CDC Property	8	8	0	0	71	79	79	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26, in line with next years budget
40263	Kidlington Leisure New Electrical Main	0	0	0	0	20	20	20	0	0
40264	Sunshine Centre	182	270	0	88	0	182	270	88	Pressure occurred as result of previously unknown but essential works identified during the course of the works.
40279	Spiceball Sports Centre - Solar PV Car Ports	3	0	0	(3)	170	173	170	(3)	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26

40280	Kidlington Sports Centre - Solar PV Car Ports	2	0	0	(2)	135	137	135	(2)	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. Work cannot start until electrical mains installed (dependant on DNO). All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40281	North Oxfordshire Academy - Solar Panels	0	0	0	0	18	18	18	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40282	Community Centre Solar Panels	2	0	0	(2)	106	108	106	(2)	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26. Part of EPC work, community centres will need to agree.
40283	Thorpe Lane - Solar Panels	0	0	0	0	34	34	34	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40284	Thorpe Lane - Heater Replacement (Gas to Electric)	0	0	0	0	24	24	24	0	Preparing scope so that feasibilities can be carried out to maximise potential PV to the site. All PV projects will be completed in conjunction with one another and due to time and resources this work is rescheduled for completion in 25/26
40278	Development of New Land Bicester Depot	85	148	0	63	3,874	3,959	4,022	63	The designers are appointed and Consultation on proposed layouts for the new depot are taking place with user groups. A Planning application is being submitted in June 25 upon completing of ecological survey and protected species survey.
40316	CDC Office Relocation to Castle Quay	5,146	5,213	0	67	0	5,146	5,213	67	Design work completed pending tendering. Contractor now appointed. Issues regarding planning and protected trees. Investigation works on going
40317	Cope Road, Banbury	29	36	0	7	0	29	36	7	Delivered in 24/25. A review of staff costs has resulted in an overspend which is partly offset by underspends across the project
40327	Thorpe Place Roofing Works	12	10	0	(2)	97	109	107	(2)	Design has been completed..
Property		7,326	7,179	0	(147)	5,143	12,469	12,322	(147)	
40256	Processing Card Payments & Direct Debits	20	0	0	(20)	0	20	0	(20)	This project will be a revenue cost and therefore the budget is not required
Finance Total		20	0	0	(20)	0	20	0	(20)	
40237	Council Website & Digital Service	0	0	0	0	122	122	122	0	Work underway to select a product to form basis of Unified CRM Platform.
40285	Digital Strategy	0	(19)	0	(19)	0	0	(19)	(19)	
40334	Robotic Process Automation Pilot	96	105	0	9	36	132	141	9	
40326	Digital Futures Programme (Business Cases Required)	0	0	0	0	200	200	200	0	New digital futures budget
ICT		96	86	0	(10)	358	454	444	(10)	
Resources & Transformation		7,442	7,265	0	(177)	5,501	12,943	12,766	(177)	
40062	East West Railways	30	27	0	(3)	4,248	4,278	4,275	(3)	The capital fund has been set up to enable the Council's costs to be recharged when responding to enquiries and regulatory applications, involving for example environmental and land drainage matters, made in connection with the East West Railways project. This is in partnership with England's Economic Heartland. The Digital Enhancement Project is an element of CDC's commitment, involving the staged transfer of funds towards Network Rail's delivery of the enhanced digital infrastructure along the new line. Final invoice paid and work completed.
40286	Transforming Market Square Bicester	225	128	96	(0)	4,055	4,280	4,279	(0)	The market square preferred concept design has been chosen with significant input from the local businesses and the Bicester community, with this work coming in below the estimated/projected budget. The next steps are to establish the programme of development including the initial cost analysis, which will be undertaken by WSP our project consultants. This will be completed by May 2025. During the summer 2025 we will begin the procurement process (with continued support from WSP), the works aiming to start in Spring 2026, with a 12-month programme the estimated completion is Spring/Summer 2027.

40287	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) Year Two Investment Plan Programme	198	199	0	1
40288	UKSPF Rural Fund	408	397	11	0
Growth & Economy		861	751	107	(3)
40028	Vehicle Replacement Programme	726	674	52	(0)
40187	On Street Recycling Bins	18	18	0	0
40216	Street Scene Furniture and Fencing project	0	0	0	0
40218	Depot Fuel System Renewal	0	0	0	0
40220	Horsefair Conveniences	0	3	0	3
40222	Burnehyll- Bicester Country Park	21	19	0	(2)
40258	Kidlington Public Convenience Refurbishment	0	0	0	0
40259	Market Equipment Replacement	5	5	0	(0)
40291	New Commercial Waste IT System	25	18	0	(7)
40320	Net Zero	0	0	0	0
40321	Landscape Software Upgrade	0	0	0	0
40322	Street Cleansing IT System	0	0	0	0
40331	Additional Commercial Waste Containers	29	29	0	0
Environmental		824	766	52	(6)
40019	Bicester Leisure Centre Extension	0	0	0	0
40083	Disabled Facilities Grants	1,200	1,204	0	4
40084	Discretionary Grants Domestic Properties	150	0	0	(150)
40160	Housing Services - capital	168	168	0	0
40251	Longford Park Art	0	0	0	0
40262	Town Centre House Purchase and Repair	2,937	2,512	0	(425)
40294	S106 - Ambrosden Community Facility Project	0	0	0	0
40295	S106 - Ambrosden Indoor Sport Project	0	0	0	0
40296	S106 - Ambrosden Outdoor Sports	0	0	0	0
40297	S106 - Ardley & Fewcott Play Area Project	7	0	0	(7)
40298	S106 - Ardley & Fewcott Village Hall Project	3	0	0	(3)
40300	S106 - Bicester Leisure Centre Extension	0	0	0	0
40301	S106 - Graven Hill Outdoor Sport Project	0	0	0	0
40303	S106 - Hanwell Fields Community Centre Projects	20	16	4	0

0	198	199	1	All UKSPF capital projects have completed and all capital grant monies spent.
0	408	408	0	All REPF capital projects have completed and £0.011m will be reprofiled into 2025-26 due to unspent grant.
8,303	9,164	9,161	(3)	
5,678	6,404	6,404	(0)	Full spend anticipated by March 2029.
0	18	18	0	Project completed in 2024/25.
15	15	15	0	Project to be completed in 2025/26.
35	35	35	0	This project is under review and linked to the progression of the Graven Hill depot.
0	0	3	3	Final retention payment of £0.003m paid in 2024/25.
121	142	140	(2)	Project ongoing so costs will need to be incurred in 2025/26 - there is budget available for this purpose. A review of the project is required and as a result the budget may require reprofiling in to 2026/27.
90	90	90	0	An evaluation of requirements and a retender is required.
10	15	15	(0)	Project to be completed in 2025/26.
0	25	18	(7)	Project completed in 2024/25.
625	625	625	0	Project to be completed in 2026/27.
25	25	25	0	This project is under review.
25	25	25	0	Project to be completed in 2025/26.
25	54	54	0	Project to be completed in 2025/26.
6,649	7,473	7,467	(6)	
79	79	79	0	The current budget is for preparatory works to identify the business case for operation ahead of S106 monies coming in from developments. Budget requires reprofiling as scheme is outlined for build in 2027/28
5,140	6,340	6,344	4	Budget appears slightly overspent, but budget of £0.184m was reprofiled earlier in the year. Overall spend within budget envelope.
0	150	0	(150)	Revenue budget now in place created through Policy Contingency.
0	168	168	0	Retention payment made. Now complete.
45	45	45	0	The budget was reprofiled from 2023/24 because of delays in transfer of land from the developer to new ownership. Therefore no public art is to be constructed until this process has been completed. Contracted Artists are aware of the delay and that it is out of our control. Needs to be carried forward and reprofiled as we are no nearer transferring the land
0	2,937	2,512	(425)	Town Centre House progressed well but issues with electricity metering and supply caused some delay to the completion of the project. These were resolved in the main by the end of March, with only minor changes needed in April.
20	20	20	0	At present there is no specific project identified for these funds, due to a change in the Parish Clerk. I am waiting for details of projects linked to enhancements at the Village Hall. Discussions are now taking place with regards to the use of the S106 monies.
65	65	65	0	Awaiting new project details as original project is no longer possible.
130	130	130	0	Site to be confirmed before project can move forward.
8	15	8	(7)	Project delivered through revenue S106
0	3	0	(3)	Project delivered through revenue S106
1,154	1,154	1,154	0	Initial stages of feasibility have been completed with high level costings received to deliver the project. Further stages required including detailed business case. Re-profiled to when S106 funding is received and fully available.
52	52	52	0	Re-profiled into 2025/26 as negotiations/discussions continue around the land being transferred to the District Council from Graven Hill Development Company for the provision of the Community Centre and Sports Pitches. Unlikely to be any spend until the land has transferred
340	360	360	0	S106 funding is allocated to Hanwell Fields Community Centre to enhance the existing facility with the intention of increasing opportunities for residents to take part in activities. This project is centred around the options for putting in a mezzanine floor in the current main hall area to give a split level facility. Initial project work, RIBA stages 1 & 2 completed. Moving to RIBA stages 3-6

40304	S106 - Hook Norton Sport And Social Club Project	0	0	0	0	80	80	80	0	The scale and scope of the project is yet to be confirmed and therefore reprofiled.
40305	S106 - Horley Cricket Club Pavilion Project	0	0	0	0	110	110	110	0	The project is for improvements and enhancements to the Horley Cricket Club Pavilion. There have been contractors on site to price up the works.
40307	S106 - Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre	0	0	0	0	20	20	20	0	No detailed projects as yet therefore S106 funding to be reprofiled.
40308	S106 - Milton Road Community Facility and Sports Pitch Project	0	0	0	0	471	471	471	0	CDC hold the £471k of s106 for the Parish Council who are seeking additional grant funding from other sources to increase what they are aiming to deliver on.
40310	S106 - Spiceball Leisure Centre Improvements	0	0	0	0	14	14	14	0	Options are still being considered. Requested to reprofile £0.014m to 2025-26.
40311	S106 - The Hill Improvements Project	0	0	0	0	50	50	50	0	Awaiting details of projects funded by S106 funding already received, therefore budget requested to be reprofiled.
40312	S106 - Whitelands Farm Sports Ground (Pedestrian crossing and various works)	99	99	0	0	33	132	132	0	Remaining budget to be spent on delivery of the zebra crossing in 25/26.
40313	S106 - Woodgreen Leisure Centre Improvements	23	23	0	0	138	161	161	0	Project ongoing in to 2025-26 with associated budget reprofiled
40314	S106 - Deddington Parish Council Projects	67	66	0	(1)	0	67	66	(1)	Two play ground projects at Wimborn Close and Welford Piece completed. Car park lighting installed at the Windmill Community Centre.
40315	S106 - Longford Park Sport Pitches	10	0	0	(10)	0	10	0	(10)	Project delivered through revenue S106
40318	S106 - Steeple Aston Parish Council Village Hall Sports and Recreation Centre	0	(1)	0	(1)	0	0	(1)	(1)	Improvement projects at Steeple Aston Village Hall and Sport & Recreation Centre completed.
40319	Local Authority Housing Fund R2	304	297	7	0	0	304	304	0	Homes under LAHF R2 have been delivered. Any remaining buget will be used to finalise refurbishments, decorate, furnish, or otherwise prepare any remaining unlet properties for rent.
40323	NOA 3G Pitch Development	0	0	0	0	1,600	1,600	1,600	0	Due to proposed alternative location of 3G Pitch, the progression to delivery will be dependent on a number of factors.
40324	Development of Activity Play Zones	7	4	3	(0)	155	162	162	(0)	Planning has now been approved for two Playzones at Princess Diana Park and Chandos Close, subject to the discharge of BNG condition, expected commencement May 2025.
40325	Graven Hill Community and Infrastructure Projects	0	0	0	0	80	80	80	0	Re-profiled into 2025/26 as negotiations/discussions continue around the land being transferred to the District Council from Graven Hill Development Company for the provision of the Community Centre and Sports Pitches. Unlikely to be any spend until the land has transferred
40328	S106 – Windmill Community and Sports Centre Tennis Courts	51	35	16	0	0	51	51	0	Mini Tennis Courts complete, awaiting painting of the new tennis court lines. Work due to take place Spring 2025.
40329	Spiceball Leisure Centre Structural Beams	30	13	17	0	100	130	130	0	This is the project consultant costs for drafting of the tender documents relating to the project, produced by Gleeds. This been re-profiled into 2025/25 to coincide with commencement of works in June.
40330	Replacement of the Sports Hall Roof at Bicester Leisure Centre	15	15	0	0	0	15	15	0	After receiving the condition survey report into the roof that gave options to extend the lifespan by 5 to 10 years it was agreed to take this option which fell within the budget allocation, rather than a new complete roof which would require a request for additional funding. Tender returns required for 30th October. Works now anticipated November/December 2024. Contract awarded for the works - completion expected Jan 25
40332	S106 - grant funded Affordable Accommodation	560	560	0	0	0	560	560	0	The grant funding has now been passed to our delivery partner in line with the grant agreement to commence delivery.
40335	S106 - Launton Village Hall Roofing Contribution	10	11	0	1	0	10	11	1	New roofing project at Launton Village Hall underway.
Wellbeing & Housing		5,660	5,022	47	(591)	9,884	15,544	14,953	(591)	
40245	Enable Agile Working	0	0	0	0	15	15	15	0	
40333	CCTV Thames Valley Project	0	0	0	0	250	250	250	0	
Regulatory Services		0	0	0	0	265	265	265	0	
Communities		7,345	6,539	206	(599)	25,101	32,446	31,847	(599)	
Capital Total		14,787	13,804	206	(776)	30,602	45,389	44,613	(776)	

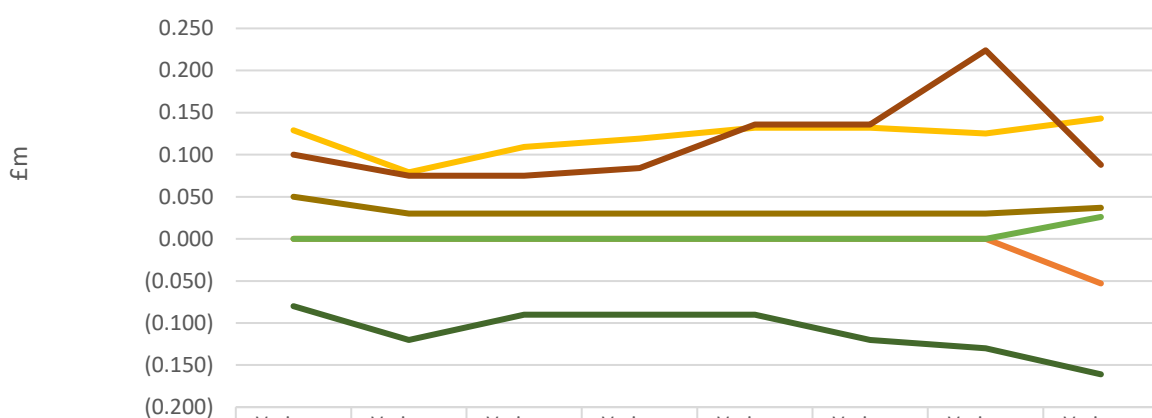
Appendix 2 - Report Details – Additional Revenue narrative

Resources & Transformation

Revenue:

Resources & Transformation are reporting an overspend of £0.080m against a budget of £8.571m (0.9%). The services worked hard to mitigate any overspending across the area. However, areas where agency staffing were needed to fulfil our statutory obligations meant that whilst an overspend occurred, this was managed and mitigated throughout the year.

Forecast Variance - Resources & Transformation



	Variance June 2024 £m	Variance August 2024 £m	Variance September 2024	Variance October 2024	Variance November 2024	Variance December 2024	Variance January 2025	Variance March 2025
Finance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	(0.053)
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	0.129	0.079	0.109	0.119	0.132	0.132	0.125	0.143
ICT	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026
Property	0.100	0.075	0.075	0.084	0.136	0.136	0.224	0.088
HR & OD	0.050	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.037
Customer Focus	(0.080)	(0.120)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.090)	(0.120)	(0.130)	(0.161)

Finance

Variation
(£0.053m) Underspend

Overall position is a net underspend of (£0.053m). There were a number of changes between P10 and the outturn position which have been summarised below.

Revenues and Benefits

There is an overall overspend of £0.003m across the service. Within this there was additional one-off income of (£0.250m) from the final settlement following the winding up of the council's jointly owned company CSN Resources, which had previously been the vehicle through which the council provided its revenues and benefits service.

There was an under recovery of budgeted income from Court Costs added to the bills of those who failed to pay their council tax of £0.111m. This was due to a reduction in the number of bills which were required to go to court/OR a reduction in processing of new Court Costs in March due to focussing on the Annual Billing Process. This will be monitored closely in 2025/26 and if this appears to be a permanent adjustment in the base position then will need to be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget process.

The council also budgets for a new cost of Housing Benefit payments of £0.183m. However, at outturn the final position was a net cost of £0.556m – an overspend of £0.373m. This is normally managed across other areas of the budget but will be kept under review in 2025/26 to consider whether it needs to be addressed in the 2026/27 budget process.

Furthermore, there was an under recovery on Housing Benefit Overpayments compared to budget of £0.083m. This is due to improved team performance in processing Housing Benefit meaning there was less to recover and the caseload reducing with the rollout of Universal Credit.

Variation to January's
Forecast
(£0.053m)

Other mitigations were identified across Revenues and Benefits, primarily from reductions in staffing costs.

Finance

Finance had relatively small underspend of (£0.101m), primarily driven by a one-off (£0.025m) income stream for processing a loan arrangement and underspend on staffing costs and overachievement of grant income.

Insurance

There was an overspend on the overall corporate insurance budget of £0.014m, primarily due to an increase in claims and resultant increase in premiums.

Bank Charges

There was an overspend of £0.031m on bank charges – this is the corporate cost of processing card payments and making payments

Legal, Democratic,
Elections &
Procurement

Variation
£0.143m overspend

There are several areas within Law & Governance including procurement that rely on engaging experienced

locum staff (lawyers and other professional). The service is covering and providing support in critical areas such planning, litigation, procurement to minimise risk to the Council. The service is also covering maternity leave and case load accumulated due to key staff being on leave. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for securing appropriate staff and suitable legal advice, investigating and reporting on anything the Council does that has the potential to be an illegal action or investigating and reporting on any action that might count as maladministration. There remains a continued need to provide legal advice to officers and members in relation to litigation, information governance, planning and general case load.

The service is undertaking recruitment to permanent positions as well as training new member of staff as swiftly as possible. We fully recognise the needs to operate within budget however, a point of note in regard to this areas budget is that there is a high element of unpredictability to costs which arise in dealing with legal instructions in regard to unforeseen matters arising, for which no 'ongoing' forecast and provision can be made. Whilst our risk management can seek to reduce this, it is unrealistic to assume this unplanned element can be completely eliminated.

Variation to January's
Forecast
(£0.018m)

A permanent recruitment campaign has been implemented and legal fees have been increased in line with the law society suggested rates.

ICT

Variation
£0.026m overspend

£0.010m can be attributed to revenue expenditure on Castle Quay ahead of the move meaning we were paying some infrastructure costs on both Bodicote House and Castle Quay concurrently during quarter 4. The remainder is a result of small overspends across the service.

Variation to January's
Forecast
£0.026m

Property

Variation
£0.088m overspend

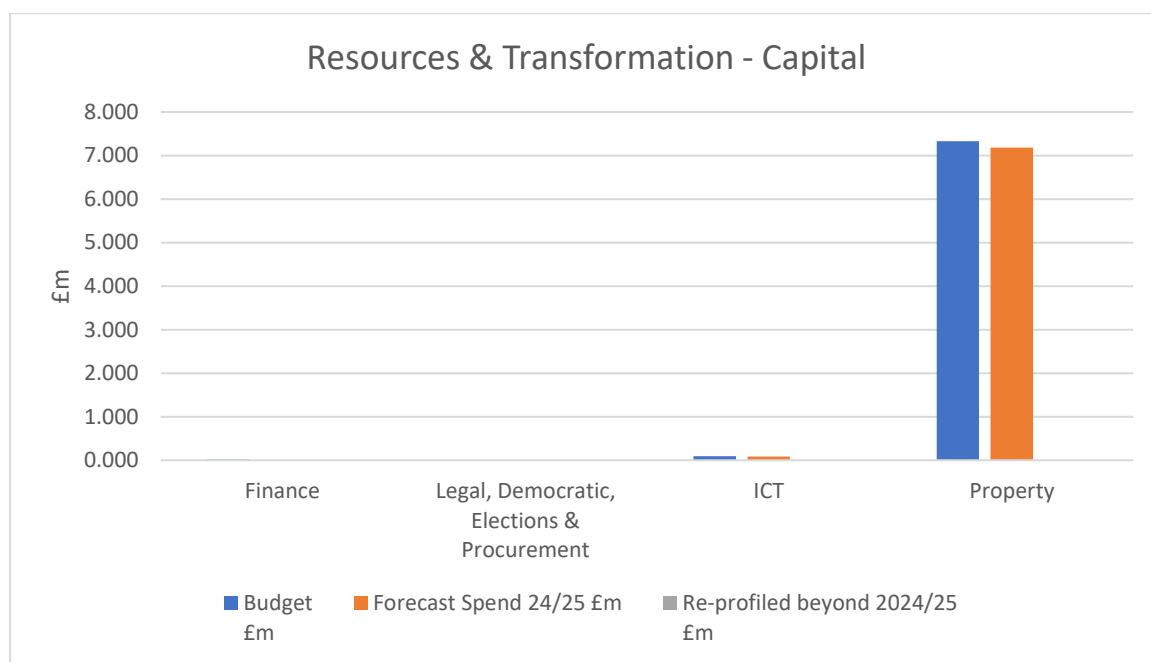
1) £0.088m overspend at CQ is due to void costs of holding vacant units and unscheduled necessary expenditure for car park lighting and other maintenance costs. Work to

	<p>review contracts and market void units is continuing with the impact of reducing the overspend as the year progresses. There have been some positive movements achieved through the reduction of utility expenditure forecasts.</p> <p>2) (£0.065m) underspend in Property is due to vacancies that were not filled until October, admin charges generating an income, improved income from rent reviews and lease renewals and reduced repair and maintenance costs. This underspend has been largely offset by an overspend in repair and maintenance across the service in particular at Banbury Museum where it is necessary to replace a lift which is no longer capable of economic repair.</p> <p>3) £0.065m overspend in car parks (due to various small overspends across the service, including electricity and insurance expenses) and a pressure arising from bus station income being lower than anticipated.</p>
Variation to January's Forecast (£0.136m)	<p>£0.100m reduction at CQ is due work to review contracts and reduce market void units impacting reduction of overspend, and further positive movements achieved through the reduction of utility expenditure forecasts and Council offices opening in previously vacant space.</p> <p>£0.036m reduction in Property due to vacancies that were part way through the year, admin charges generating an income, improved income from rent reviews and lease renewals and reduced repair and maintenance costs Bodicote House, Franklins House and Banbury Museum.</p>
Customer Focus	
Variation (£0.161m) underspend	Customer Focus has a final outturn of £0.161m underspend because of long-term vacancies within the service combined with greater recovery of land charges income than anticipated.
Variation to January's Forecast (£0.031m)	
HR & OD	
Variations £0.037m Overspend	HR has a final outturn of £0.037m overspend as a result of the implementation of the payroll system. The service has

managed to partially mitigate this overspend with efficiencies within the HR budget.

Variation to January's
Forecast
£0.007m

Capital:



Service	Budget £m	Forecast Spend 24/25 £m	Re- profiled beyond 2024/25 £m	Variance to Budget £m	Prior Month Variance to Budget £m
Finance	0.020	0.000	0.000	(0.020)	(0.020)
Legal, Democratic, Elections & Procurement	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
ICT	0.096	0.086	0.000	(0.010)	0.000
Property	7.326	7.179	0.000	(0.147)	0.018
Total	7.442	7.265	0.000	(0.177)	(0.002)

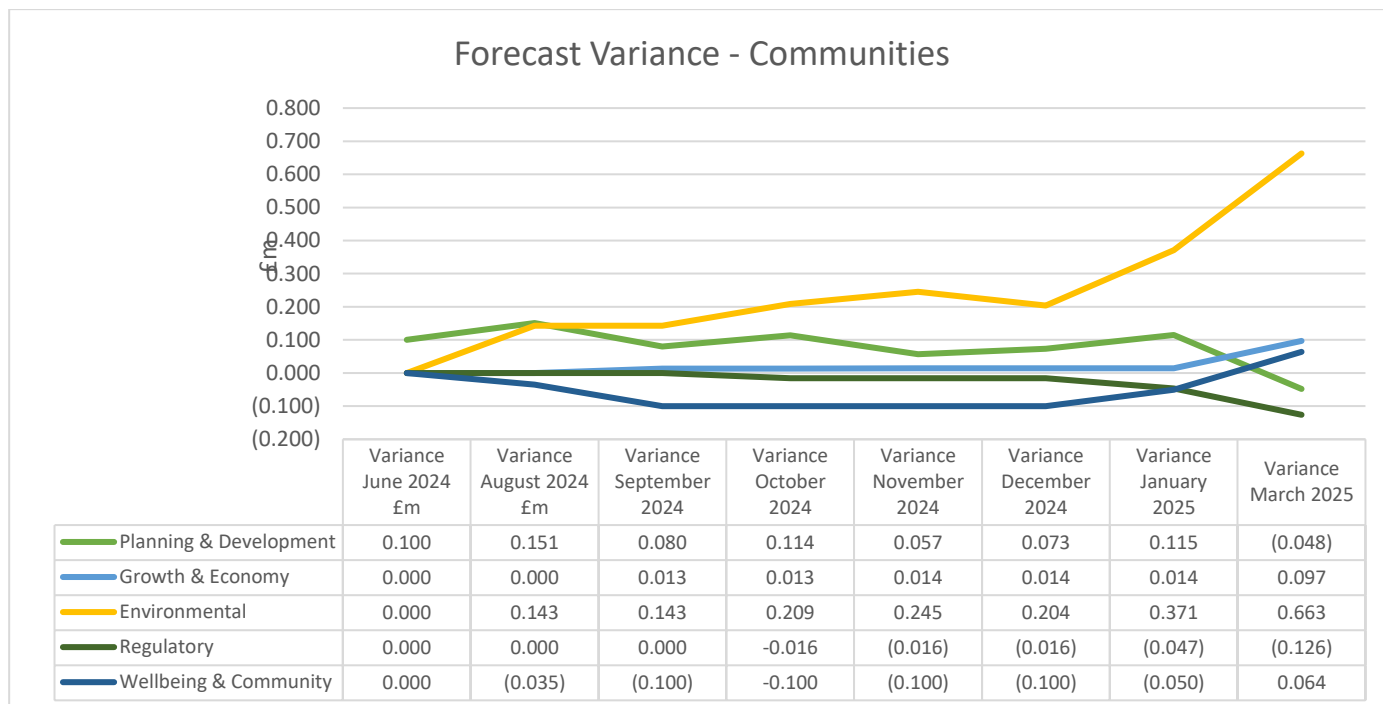
For detailed explanation and variances please see appendix 1.

Communities

Revenue:

Communities are reporting an overspend of £0.650m against a budget of £12.739m, (5.1%).

With a number of pressures emerging in the forecast to year end, the directorate leadership team has carried out a review of pressures and mitigations to contain across the Communities directorate in so far as possible. This substantially reduced the forecast pressures to year end however a number of pressures and external market factors have not been able to be contained including increased waste disposal fees, agency staff pressures and vehicle maintenance pressures.



Planning & Development

Variation
(£0.048m)
underspend

Planning and Development ended the financial year with a (£0.048m) underspend.

There was a relatively small overspend of £0.007m in Building Control. An unexpected increase in planning application income in March, together with the receipt of developer contribution funds for compliance monitoring, had a significantly positive impact on the Development Management outturn with overspend being reduced to £0.020m. However, appeal costs were high in 2024/25.

The overall departmental position was assisted by an underspend (£0.077m) in Planning Policy due to legal and consultancy fees being lower than anticipated.

Variation to January's
Forecast
(£0.163m)

The most notable changes were the end-of-year increase in planning application fee receipts, the receipt of compliance monitoring fees and the last month's appeal costs being less than anticipated – a total change of (£0.163m).

There has been active monitoring of costs relative to income over the course of the year. Costs have been affected by the number of appeals submitted by developers which is not fully within the Council's control. Planning appeals are being closely monitored to control costs and in the interest of achieving a higher percentage of successful outcomes.

Growth & Economy

Variation
£0.097m overspend

The year end outturn reflects a number of small pressures together with a one-off structural change pressure to the service.

Variation to January's
Forecast
£0.083m

Environmental

Variation
£0.663m overspend

The pressure of £0.663m within Environmental Services is primarily due to staffing pressures and agency costs within Waste and Recycling. Changes in the global market for recycled materials fell more than anticipated and this resulted in the recycling processing costs increasing.

A delay to implementing revised working patterns for the street cleansing operational team and an increase in general vehicle maintenance expenses and an ageing fleet have also contributed to the pressure.

These pressures are part offset by non-recruitment to vacant posts, higher than forecasted income received for S106 contributions for wheeled bins, garden waste subscriptions and business waste.

Variation to January's Forecast £0.292m	<p>The movement of £0.292m is partially a result of a lower than predicted take up for garden waste subscriptions for 2025/26, in addition to this the gate fee increase was higher than anticipated for the final quarter.</p> <p>Increased vehicle maintenance costs due to an ageing fleet are part offset by other additional income streams across the services.</p> <p>Non recruitment to vacant posts and delaying spend in less critical, front-line services within Landscaping Services has helped mitigate this overspend.</p> <p>Additional income streams have been generated by the Waste and Recycling Service as a result of closer joint working and contracts with other Oxfordshire councils.</p>
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Regulatory

Variation (£0.126m) underspend	Regulatory Services and Community Safety have an outturn of (£0.126m) underspend – this is due to savings in staffing costs as some posts remain unfilled following the dept. restructure and minor variations across the service.
Variation to January's Forecast (£0.079m)	An additional (£0.08m) saving on the previous forecast position, this is largely due to the reduced costs incurred against our CCTV monitoring staff contributions being less than expected, additional savings from staffing costs and the Idox separation costs that had been earmarked for 2024/25 not being incurred prior to year end. There are a number of smaller savings including a reduced cost of contractors.

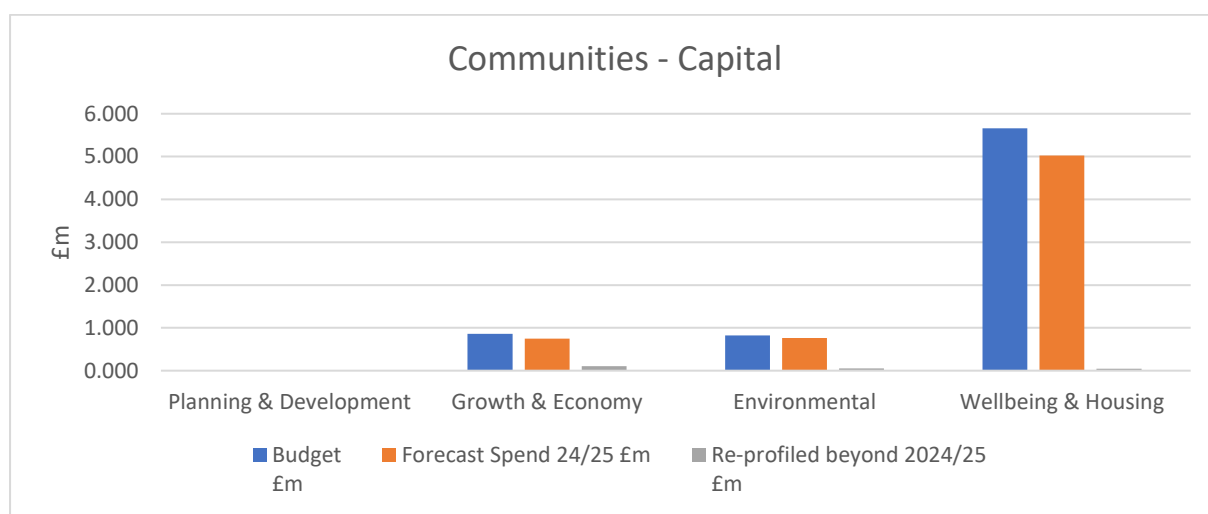
Wellbeing & Housing

Variation £0.064m overspend	The services actively managed the pressures that arose during 2024-25 from operating front line services and flexing programme delivery, however unavoidable maintenance costs and slower occupation of new accommodation, that adversely impacted on rental income, has resulted in the services finishing the financial year with a £0.064m overspend.
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Variation to January's Forecast
£0.114m

Pressures have been defrayed through operational efficiency and effective use of grants.

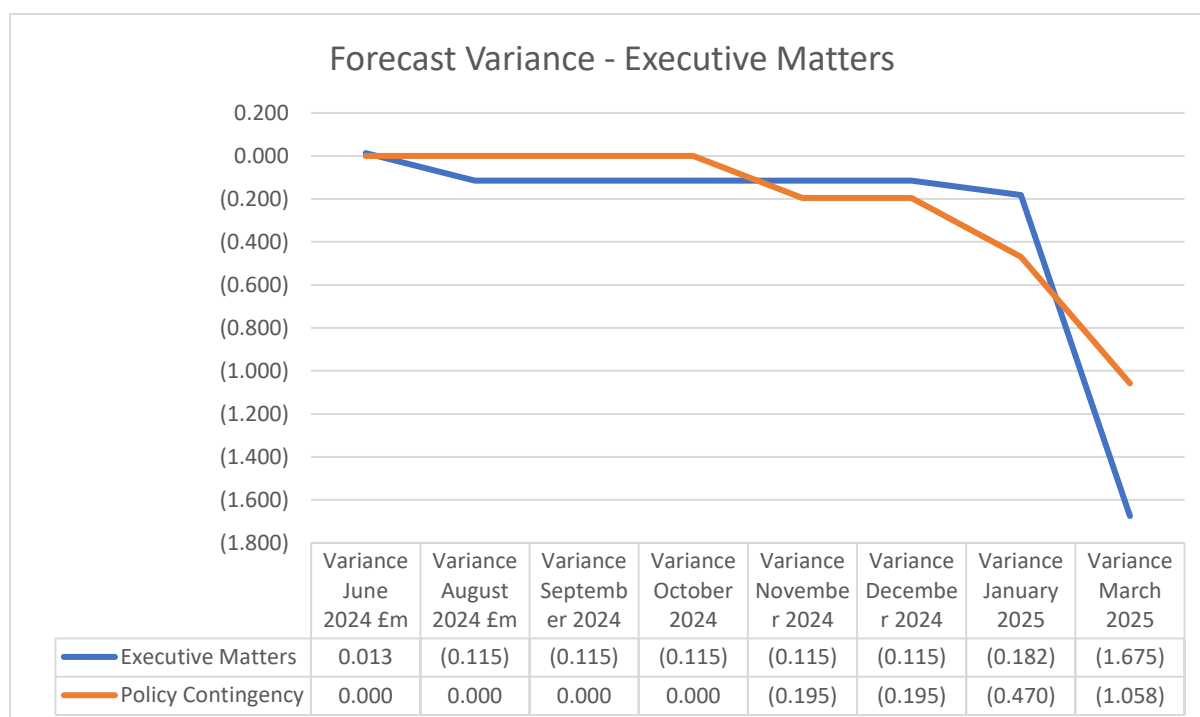
Capital:



For detailed explanation and variances please see appendix 1.

Service	Budget £m	Forecast Spend 24/25 £m	Re- profiled beyond 2024/25 £m	Variance to Budget £m	Prior Month Variance to Budget £m
Planning & Development	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Growth & Economy	0.861	0.751	0.107	(0.003)	(0.008)
Environmental	0.824	0.766	0.052	(0.006)	(0.007)
Wellbeing & Housing	5.660	5.022	0.047	(0.591)	(0.531)
Total	7.345	6.539	0.206	(0.599)	(0.546)

Executive Matters



Revenue:

Executive Matters is reporting a (£1.675m) underspend against the budget of £4.400m (-38.1%).

Executive Matters

Variation
(£1.675m) underspend

Executive Matters are reporting an outturn of (£1.675m) which is mainly due to over-recovery of interest totalling (£1.070m).

The council has also received a (£0.500m) dividend payment from Graven Hill as a result of the profits the company has generated. The council had not budgeted to receive this income and other minor variations across the service.

Variation to January's
Forecast
(£1.493m)

The main reason for the variation is detailed above.

Policy Contingency

Policy Contingency is reporting an underspend of (£1.058m) against a budget of £1.277m, (-82.9%), the movement in Policy Contingency is shown in the table below: -

Policy Contingency	Budget	Expenditure	Notes
Original Budget	(3.978)		
Inflation Contingency	1.099		24/25 Pay Award
Commercial Risk	0.017		Support for Finance System Migration to the Cloud
Commercial Risk	0.200		Gate Fee Mitigation
Commercial Risk	0.435		Cost of Appeals
Commercial Risk	0.005		Carbon Budgeting Challenge
Commercial Risk	0.050		Legal Agency Costs
Commercial Risk	0.036		Climate Change Net Zero
Commercial Risk	0.010		Climate Change Energy Audits
Commercial Risk	0.120		Castle Quay Fit Out works for office move
Commercial Risk	0.130		HIA Grant Correction - Transfer from PC
General Contingency	0.080		Fund Graduate Trainees
General Contingency	0.070		Town Centre House Under-recovery of Rent
General Contingency	0.020		Vertitau One Off Membership
General Contingency	0.002		UK Visa & Immigration Sponsorship
General Contingency	0.190		IT Redundancy Costs
General Contingency	0.085		Environmental Services Redundancy Costs
General Contingency	0.045		Procurement Interim Costs
General Contingency	0.025	0.263	UKRS Funding
General Contingency	0.033		Pension Strain costs
General Contingency	0.050		Additional Procurement Support
		(0.047)	Release of Banbury Bowls Club & Engineering Services Provision
		0.003	Other Minor income adjustments
	(1.277)	0.219	

Funding

Funding is reporting a (£0.179m) underspend against the budget of (£26.987) (0.7%).

Funding

Variation
(£0.179m) underspend

Funding is reporting a (£0.179m) underspend, the main reason for this is the business rates levy payment payable on NNDR growth above baseline is less than the budget for 2024-25.

Variation to January's
Forecast
(£0.179m)

The main reason for the variation is detailed above.

Appendix 3 - Virement Summary

Virement Movement

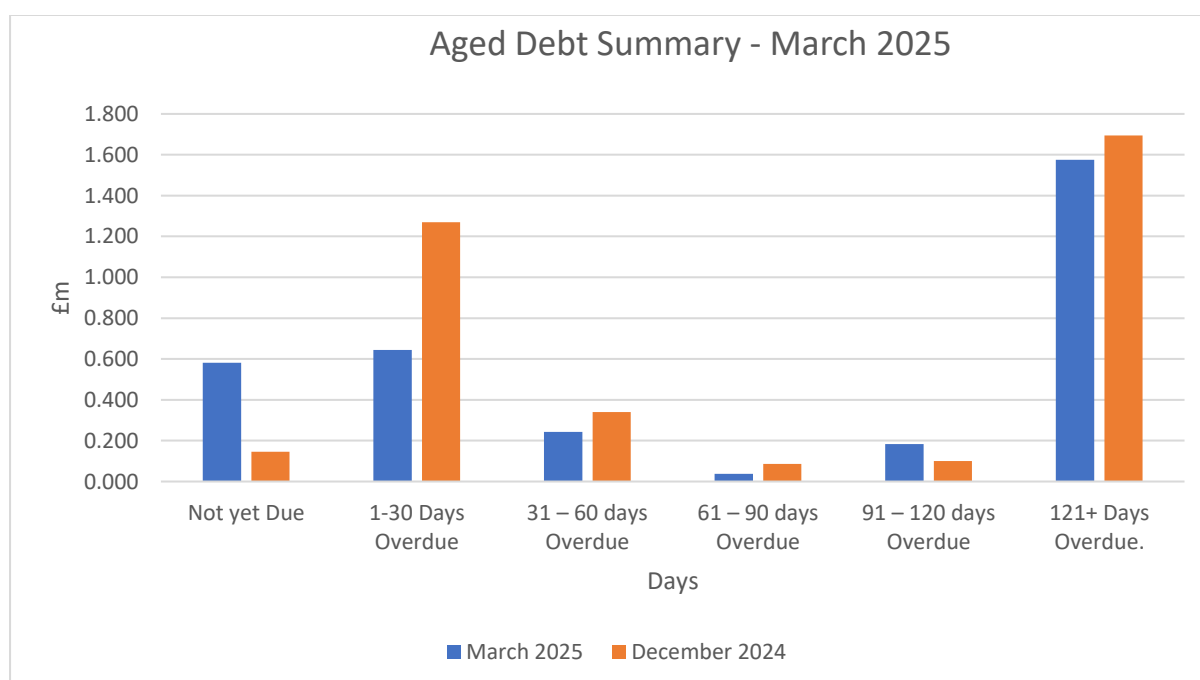
This table shows the movement in Net Budget from January 2025 to March 2025.

Virements - Movement in Net Budget	£m
Directorate Net Budget - January 2025	21.146
Directorate Net Budget - March2025	21.310
Movement	0.164

Breakdown of Movements	£m
Policy Contingency:	
Funding UKRS	£0.025
Castle Quay Office Move	£0.108
Return Unspent PC from Planning Legal costs	(£0.065)
Procurement Support	£0.050
Project Manager costs for CQ Move	£0.014
Pension Fund Strain	£0.032
Total	0.164

Aged Debt Summary

The below graph shows the movement in sundry aged debt for the year ending 31 March 2025.



The financial regulations make provision for writing off debts that are bad, uneconomical to collect or irrecoverable. The Council maintains a number of bad debt provisions in the anticipation that debts will become bad and these once agreed are charged to the relevant provision or cost centre.

There is a provision within the council for sundry bad debt totalling £0.520m that is sufficient and by writing off the amount of debt mentioned in this report will not cause the provision to be exceeded. This provision is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that we have sufficient within it.

Aged Debt Write Off Summary:

	£m
Sundry Debts previously written off	0.415
Sundry Debts written off in March 2025 under £0.005m details in Appendix 6	0.002
Total write offs in financial year 2024/25	0.417

Housing Benefit Write off Summary:

	£m
Housing Benefit previously written off	0.055
Total write offs in financial year 2024/2025	0.055

Council Tax Write off Summary:

	£m
Council Tax previously written off	0.311
Council Tax due to written off in March 2025 under S151 Delegation	0.001
Total write offs in financial year 2024/2025	0.312

Non-Domestic Rates Write off Summary:

	£m
Non-Domestic Rates previously written off	0.341
Total write offs in financial year 2024/2025	0.00

Appendix 4 - Funding for 2024/25

Specific Funding received since budget was set:

Dept.	Grant Name	Funding
		£
DLUHC	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(£0.658)
DLUHC	Homelessness Prevention Grant	(£0.763)
DLUHC	Electoral Integrity Programme New Burdens Funding	(£0.050)
DLUHC	Rough Sleeping Initiative	(£0.176)
DLUHC	New Burdens Funding for Accommodation-based Domestic Abuse	(£0.037)
DLUHC	Redmond Review Implementation	(£0.024)
DLUHC	Tenant Satisfaction Measures New Burdens	(£0.005)
DLUHC	Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3	(£0.005)
DLUHC	Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme	(£0.035)
DLUHC	Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures Funding	(£0.033)
DLUHC	Transparency Code New Burdens	(£0.008)
DLUHC	Garden Communities Capacity Funding	(£0.117)
DLUHC	Planning Skills Delivery Fund	(£0.050)
DLUHC	Social Housing New Burdens	(£0.002)
DLUHC	Business Rates Relief New Burdens	(£0.009)
DLUHC	Local Council Tax Support Scheme Grant	(£0.008)
Home Office	Syrian Resettlement Scheme	(£0.139)
Home Office	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy	(£2.419)
Home Office	Asylum Dispersal Grant	(£0.116)
Home Office	Young Women and Girls Funding	(£0.042)
DSIT	Innovate UK	(£0.037)
DEFRA	Biodiversity Net Gain Grant	(£0.105)
DEFRA	Air Quality Grant	(£0.005)
DEFRA	Food Waste Collection Grant	(£0.028)
DEFRA	LG Cyber - Get Cyber Assessment Framework Ready	(£0.015)
DESNZ	Fleet Decarbonisation	(£0.027)
HM Land Registry	HM Land Registry - Transition Payment	(£0.003)
		(£4.916)

Grants included as part of Budget setting:

Grant Name	£m
Homeless Prevention Grant	(0.517)
Afghan Resettlement Scheme	(0.244)
Syrian Refugee Initiative	(0.183)
Ukrainian Refugees Resettling in the UK	(0.417)
Asylum Seeker Dispersal Grant	(0.029)
Chief Executive Total	(1.391)
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(0.829)
Communities Total	(0.829)
NNDR Cost of Collection Allowance	(0.231)
Rent Allowances	(25.004)
Resources Total	(25.235)
	(27.455)
Funding Guarantee Grant	(2.839)
Services Grant	(0.154)
Corporate Total	(2.993)
	(30.448)
Business Rates Retained Scheme	(9.647)
New Homes Bonus	(1.375)
Revenue Support Grant	(0.328)
Funding Total	(11.350)
Government Grants Grand Total	(41.798)

Appendix 5 - Reserves and Grant Funding

Uses of/ (Contributions to) Reserves

Specific requests

Directorate	Type	Description	Reason	Amount £m
Communities	Reserve	Cherwell Lottery	To fund awards to organisations	(0.004)
Communities	Reserve	Housing & Planning Reserve	Return unspent Local plan reserve (legal fees)	(0.139)
Communities	Reserve	Project Reserve	Return of unspent Kidlington budget	(0.051)
Communities	Reserve	Project Reserve	Return of unspent Banbury Regeneration	(0.041)
Resources	Reserve	Banbury Health Centre Sinking Fund	A sinking fund from service charges for Banbury health centre for major repairs and maintenance	(0.040)
Resources	Reserve	Dilapidations, Garage Project and Canalside	To ensure funds are available to continue with the garage site project and Canalside regeneration master planning in conjunction with LCR.	(0.089)
Communities	Reserve	Licensing	Return to Licensing Reserve	(0.070)
Resources	Reserve Timing	Non-Ringfenced Timing	Non-Ringfenced Timing - Revenue support grant for 2025-26 period 1, received on 31-03-2025	(0.033)
Resources	Reserve	Interest Reserve	Over-recovery of Interest	(1.070)
Resources	Reserve	Market Risk Reserve	To be used to manage the in-year budget if market pressures arise.	(0.200)
Resources	Reserve	Elections Reserve	Top Up Elections Reserve	(0.250)
Resources	Reserve	Local Government Reform	Creation of LGR Reserve	(0.250)
Resources	Reserve	Planning Reserve	Top-up Planning Reserve	(0.250)
Total Earmarked Reserves				(2.487)
Communities	Grant	Bicester Garden Town	Return unspent funding of Bicester Garden Town.	(0.075)
Communities	Earmarked Grant	UKRS Resettlement	Draw on reserve to fund in-year expenditure	(0.259)
Communities	Grant	S106 Monitoring Fees	Transfer S106 monitoring charges to reserves	(0.023)
Communities	Grant	Domestic Abuse New Burdens	No clauses in the grant agreement so transfer to reserves rather than year-end RIA. Will need to be released in 2025-26 to fund Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator post	(0.024)
Communities	Grant	S106 Revenue Contributions	S106 contributions received in year or unspent that do not have a clawback clause	(0.181)
Total Grants				(0.562)

Appendix 7 - Savings Not Delivered 2024/25

Communities							
Reference	Existing, New or Efficiency	Service	Title	Description	2024/25 (£m)	Savings achieved in 24/25	Reason for non-achievement
SBICR231	Existing	Bicester Regeneration	Gradual reduction in grant to Bicester Vision	We currently contribute £15k towards the work on Bicester Vision, which is the only contribution we make to organisations leading similar projects across the district. By tapering this contribution off over three years as a saving we can ensure we are treating these organisations equally and provide resilience for Bicester Vision to adapt its funding streams.	(0.010)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SBCON221	Existing	Building Control	Building Control fees	Increase Building Control fees	(0.001)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SCSAF241	New	Community Safety	Reducing CCTV coverage to reduce costs with the maintenance and monitoring of the CCTV network.	Reducing expenditure on CCTV across Cherwell District by reducing number of cameras, monitoring and maintenance costs.	(0.030)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SDMAN242 8	Efficiency Savings	Development Management	National agreed increase in planning fees	National agreed increase in planning fees	(0.300)	Partially Achieved	An additional £300k of planning application fee income had been anticipated as a consequence of higher national planning fees. Whilst an additional -£0.097m has been received, it suggests that in comparison to the previous year, overall fee generating activity has fallen.
SDMAN243	Efficiency Savings	Development Management	Removal of vacant Techncial Support Officer post from establishment	Removal of vacant Technical Support Officer post from the establishment as no longer needed	(0.021)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SECON233	Existing	Economic Growth	Cutting grant to Experience Oxfordshire	Continuation of phased reduction of grant to Experience Oxfordshire.	(0.006)	Partially Achieved	Of the £6k saving, £3k not achieved. This was due to member decision to continue to fund Experience Oxfordshire in 2024-25.
SECON234	Efficiency Savings	Economic Growth	One Year delay of Economic Prosperity Strategy	The proposal is to delay the Economic Prosperity Strategy for one year.	(0.042)	Partially Achieved	Of the £42k saving £9k not achieved. This was due to a reduction in town centre businesses over the rateable threshold for contributions towards the Business Improvement District levy.
SECON242	Efficiency Savings	Economic Growth	Officer time recharged to projects	Selected and proportionate recharging of revenue costs to one off grants (Bicester Garden Town Capacity fund and UKSPF)	(0.127)	Partially Achieved	Of the £127k saving £17k not achieved. This is due to not being able to legitimately recharge officers to capital and Bicester Garden Town revenue funding
SSCEN240	New	Environmental Services	Street Scene	Providing playground inspections internally	(0.025)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SADGE241	Efficiency Savings	Growth & Economy	Recharge staff time to projects	A proportion of staff time will be recharged, for the relevant financial year, to externally funded projects.	(0.017)	Partially Achieved	Of the £17k saving £9k not achieved. This is due to not being able to legitimately recharge officers to capital and Bicester Garden Town revenue funding
SPCON242	New	Public Conveniences	Public Conveniences	Only retain and maintain CDC owned public conveniences that are fully accessible. This would mean keeping the Changing Places facilities in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington and closing the public conveniences at Banbury Bus Station that do not meet these standards.	(0.021)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SSAFE241	Efficiency Savings	Public Safety	Regulatory Services and Community Safety Restructure post-decoupling from Oxfordshire County Council	A new management structure for the department following the end of the shared working arrangements with Oxfordshire County Council.	(0.038)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SCLEA242	New	Street Cleansing	Street Cleansing Service	Changing the working pattern of our street cleansing service to ensure we maintain high standards but reduce operational costs.	(0.070)	Partially Achieved	Part achieved. £0.040m to be achieved in 2025/26 - This is a result of delays to implementing revised working patterns for the street cleansing operational team.
SCLEA241	Efficiency Savings	Street Cleansing	Street Cleansing and Street Scene alignment	Bring the two teams under one manager.	(0.040)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SCLEA244	Efficiency Savings	Street Cleansing	Removal of Banksman role at Banbury Bus Station	Removal of need for Banksman role at Banbury Bus Station by encouraging bus companies to use mirrors and in built cameras and increased signage.	(0.026)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SVEHM241	New	Vehicle Maintenance	Vehicle Maintenance	Generate additional income from inspecting Taxis by widening the MOT offer	(0.010)	Not Achieved	Not achieved. Delayed by Licensing as Taxi policy required updating before implementation. Should see this achieved in 2025/26.

Appendix 7 - Savings Not Delivered 2024/25

SAV2145	Existing	Waste & Recycling	Garden Waste Service	Continued impact of introduction of the food waste collection service giving residents the opportunity to recycle their food waste on a weekly basis. This will reduce the amount of residual waste and increase CDC's recycling rate. Residents will still be able to subscribe to our current well used garden waste collection service, which will incur a charge.	(0.077)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SWAST241	New	Waste & Recycling	Bulky Waste Service	To introduce a premium charge for collecting bulky waste.	(0.010)	Partially Achieved	Part achieved. £0.005m to be achieved in 2025/26 - Introduced part way through the year.
SWAST248	New	Waste & Recycling	Waste Collection Service	Ensuring those currently receiving weekly waste collections have the appropriate containers to move to fortnightly collections and in line with the rest of the district. This would reduce our operational costs, improve overall efficiency, and also encourage households to reduce the amount of waste they produce.	(0.035)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SWAST242	Efficiency Savings	Waste & Recycling	Rebalancing Food Waste Rounds	To direct deliver more food waste from the Banbury area to the processing plant at Cassington rather than utilising the transfer station in Banbury.	(0.028)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SWAST244	Efficiency Savings	Waste & Recycling	Contracts & Inflation	Generating savings as contracts are renewed	(0.050)	Partially Achieved	Part achieved. £0.045m to be achieved in 2025/26 - Working with procurement on a number of expired contracts and closer working with other Oxfordshire councils should see this saving achieved in 2025/26.
SWAST246	Efficiency Savings	Waste & Recycling	Increasing Marketing & Promotion on side of Waste Collection collection vehicles	Utilising the panels on the side of our Waste Collection Vehicles for advertising for third parties.	(0.010)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SWAST247	Efficiency Savings	Waste & Recycling	Development of inhouse pool of staff to reduce reliance on agency staff	Increase the number of staff on the establishment to reduce the need for agency staff	(0.035)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SWAST249	Efficiency Savings	Waste & Recycling	Further development of digitilisation of key service areas	Increasing level of services available online to residents to reduce quantity of offline administration required.	(0.015)	Achieved	Saving fully achieved in 2024/25.
SWAST250	Efficiency Savings	Waste & Recycling	Further development of digitilisation of key service areas	Increasing level of services available online to residents to reduce quantity of offline administration required.	(0.010)	Partially Achieved	Part achieved. £0.003m to be achieved in 2025/26 - Introduced part way through the year.
SMUSE221	Existing	Banbury Museum	Reduction in Banbury Museum grant	Reduce the grant funding to the Banbury Museum Trust - delayed by 1 year to 2025/26	(0.012)	Not Achieved	This saving will be realised in 2025-26 with a £0.070m reduction in grant
SMUSE231	Existing	Banbury Museum	Gradual reduction in support to Banbury Museum	We are proposing a gradual reduction in the funding we give to Banbury Museum - delayed by 1 year to 2025/26	(0.013)	Not Achieved	This saving will be realised in 2025-26 with a £0.070m reduction in grant
SAFFH232	Existing	Affordable Housing	Bringing Rent Collection in house	Savings by collecting the rent from council properties ourselves, instead of through a housing association.	(0.015)	Achieved	
SHOSD241	New	Housing Standards	Housing Standards additional income	To better reflect the service we provide, and changes in the housing market, increase the license fees for Houses in Multiple Occupation by 10%	(0.002)	Achieved	
SAFFH241	Efficiency Savings	Housing Assets	Bringing aspcts of responsive repairs in house	The existing small repairs service within the Grants Team, which completes private works as part of the Home Improvement Agency, is going to be used to carry out some minor repairs within the small housing stock portfolio of the Council. These are currently all contracted out to outside suppliers.	(0.007)	Not Achieved	Whilst we have been more efficient and if the levels of repair had been at previous levels, the saving would have been achieved. However the rate of repair has warranted greater expenditure than planned but still less than if we used external contractors.
SHIA241	Efficiency Savings	Home Improvement Agency	Changing the administration process for Discretionary Grants	Changing the administration process for Discretionary Grants	(0.062)	Achieved	
SHIA242	Efficiency Savings	Home Improvement Agency	Reducing consultancy budget	The grants team use specialist outside consultants for complex works, such as architects for house extensions. The nature of works completed by the team and the surveying skills within the team has meant a reduction in reliance on consultancy.	(0.012)	Achieved	
SHIA243	Efficiency Savings	Home Improvement Agency	Increased grant contribution from Oxfordshire County Council for the Home Improvement Agency	Oxfordshire County Council have agreed to pay a grant contribution to Cherwell DC for the delivery of this service. A inflationary increase was not factored in, which is part of the contract terms	(0.009)	Partially Achieved	Of the £0.009m saving we achieved £0.005m. The shortfall was due to lower than anticipated indexation than budgeted.
SHOAD241	Efficiency Savings	Housing Advice	Reduction in cost of Housing Advice contract	The amount in budget was set on a year one contract cost, this cost is not reflective of the ongoing years costs within the contract. The year one cost was higher than the remaining years. The budget can be profiled accordingly	(0.015)	Partially Achieved	Of the £0.015m saving we achieved £0.008m. This is due to us paying a larger invoice this year to enable the new contract to align with the financial year.

Appendix 7 - Savings Not Delivered 2024/25

SLEIS241	Efficiency Savings	Leisure Contracts and Community Sports Sites	Insure our Leisure Centres through a group insurance policy	Make use of the contractors group insurance on all sites in the contract rather than procuring independently for each Leisure Centre	(0.060)	Partially Achieved	Of the £0.060m saving we achieved £0.045m. This is due to the saving level being estimated before the premium was confirmed by the Operators insurers.
				Total	(1.261)		




Appendix 7 - Savings Not Delivered 2024/25

Resources							
Reference	Existing, New or Efficiency		Title	Description	2024/25 (£m)	Savings achieved in 24/25	Reason for non-achievement
SHUMR233	Existing	Human Resources	Back office efficiencies in HR	Full year impact of reviewing our back-office HR processes in 2023/24.	(0.050)	Not Achieved	The £0.050m saving was a budgeting error that was included in the MTFS for 2024-25. When the initial saving was declared, it related to staff savings but it was misunderstood that this was a 'one-off saving' and not a year-on-year saving. This has been corrected for 2025-26.
SAV025 & SC	Existing	Car Parking	Car park fees	Increase annual car parking charge of no more than 10p per hour	(0.145)	Achieved	
SELEC221	Existing	Elections	Parish Election Charges	Review of recharges to Parishes for CDC running Parish Elections	(0.001)	Not Achieved	
SFCOS231	Existing	Finance	Ensure services funded through external grants reflect the costs of support services required	Through adopting a new approach to allocating any grants we receive towards services we can deliver savings on existing and future grants by ensuring they take into account all the costs of providing the services	(0.040)	Achieved	
SFSUP241	Efficiency Savings	Finance - Corporate Support	Staff Budget Realignment	Realignment in staffing budgets following a review	(0.008)	Achieved	
SFREV241	Efficiency Savings	Finance - Revenues & Benefits	Increase overall court costs for Council Tax recovery action	We will increase the overall court costs incurred by the customer for the issuing of Council Tax Summons and Liability Orders	(0.161)	Not Achieved	The saving has not been achieved and was due to a reduction in the number of cases which were required to get to court/OR a reduction in processing of new Court Costs in March due to focussing on the Annual Billing Process. This will be monitored closely in 2025/26 and if this appears to be a permanent adjustment in the base position then will need to be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget process.
SFREV243	Efficiency Savings	Finance - Revenues & Benefits	Vacant Inspections Officer post deleted from establishment	Removing a vacant inspection officer post from the structure	(0.033)	Achieved	
SFREV245	Efficiency Savings	Finance - Revenues & Benefits	Increase overall court costs for Non-Domestic Rates recovery action	We will increase the overall court costs incurred by the business for the issue of Non Domestic Rates summons and Liability Orders.	(0.016)	Not Achieved	The saving has not been achieved and was due to a reduction in the number of cases which were required to get to court/OR a reduction in processing of new Court Costs in March due to focussing on the Annual Billing Process. This will be monitored closely in 2025/26 and if this appears to be a permanent adjustment in the base position then will need to be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget process.
SITBS241	Efficiency Savings	IT - Business Systems , Support & Infrastructure	Operational Efficiencies	By leveraging automation and enhancing vendor support, we can deliver revenue savings associated with back-end IT operations.	(0.070)	Achieved	
SINVP221	Existing	Property	Commercial Rents	Change in rental income from commercial council properties through contractual lease reviews	0.074	Achieved	
SPERF241	Efficiency Savings	Customer Focus	Non renewal of Performance System	As part of the transformation programme is possible that we would not renew our current performance system, which is due to be renew next year (two-year contract until Nov 2024). This proposal will depend on the proof of concept currently being undertaken as part of the digital transformation programme.	(0.009)	Achieved	
SPERF231	Existing	Performance	Performance System Contract	Our performance system contract needs to be renewed every other year	0.010	Achieved	
				Total	(0.449)		
				Total Existing Savings	(0.286)		
				Total New Savings	(0.203)		
				Total Efficiency Savings	(1.221)		
				Total Savings	(1.710)		

Housing that meets your needs - KPI's 2024-2025

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.01 Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation (TA)	Cllr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Smaller Is Better	80	45	▲
YTD Commentary The number of households in temporary accommodation has been consistently high and above target throughout the year. This has increased again through Q4, as it did similarly in Q4 of 2023-24. The service has been increasing the numbers of self contained accommodation to try and reduce the number of hotel placements that are made to accommodate this growing client group. The waiting list for permanent housing has increased 10% in the last year, and most of these households are in housing need, so the numbers across the service suggest a significant demand for housing.						
BP1.2.04 No of affordable homes delivered	Cllr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Bigger Is Better	267	200	★
YTD Commentary The total of 267 affordable homes delivered this year is ahead of the YTD target of 200. Of the 267 homes delivered this year, 57 were Social Rent homes, 134 Affordable Rent, 73 were Shared Ownership and 3 were Discount Market Sale.						
BP1.2.05 % of Homelessness cases successfully prevented rather than relief/main duty being applied	Cllr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Richard Smith 	Bigger Is Better	63.75%	60.00%	★
YTD Commentary For the last financial year (01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025) we successfully prevented homelessness in 213 cases of which 58 households were assisted into private rental sector accommodation. Whilst our prevention rates have decreased over this last quarter they still remain above the national and regional average.						

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.06 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims and council tax reduction (Days)	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Furness Stephen Hinds 	Smaller Is Better	11	18	★
YTD Commentary During the year 2024/25 we have continued to monitor this work and have achieved throughout the year a rate higher than our target.						
BP1.2.07 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit Change Events & council tax reduction (Days)	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Furness Stephen Hinds 	Smaller Is Better	2	8	★
YTD Commentary During the year 2024/25 we have continued to monitor this work and have achieved throughout the year a rate higher than our target.						
BP1.2.08 % of Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Bigger Is Better	84.0%	60.0%	★
YTD Commentary The national target for the speed of determination of major planning applications is to determine at least 60% of applications within the relevant national target period (13 or 16 weeks) unless an extended period has been agreed with the applicant. In Q4, the Council achieved 77.8% (7 out of 9 applications). Against the national target for the 2024/25 the Council has achieved a YTD result of 84% (48 out of 56 applications).						
BP1.2.09 % of Non-Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Bigger Is Better	86.2%	70.0%	★
YTD Commentary The national target for the speed of determination of non-major planning applications is to determine at least 70% of applications within the relevant national target period (8 weeks) unless an extended period has been agreed with the applicant. In Q4, the Council achieved 84.9% (146 out of 172 applications). Against the national target for 2024/25 the Council has achieved a YTD result of 86.2% (846 out of 981 applications).						

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.10 % of Major Applications overturned at appeal	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Smaller Is Better	11.0%	10.0%	
YTD Commentary The national target is to ensure that less than 10% of major planning application decisions are overturned at appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. During 24/25 10.71% of decisions were overturned (6 out of 56 decisions). National monitoring takes place over a prescribed two year period and allows an additional period for appeal decisions to follow. Over the period April 2022 to March 2024, and allowing for appeal decisions to December 2024, 10.4% of decisions on major applications were overturned at appeal (12 out of 115 decisions). Consequently, the Council is under review for potential designation for the quality of its decisions on applications for major development. Officers are engaging with the Planning Advisory Service about a review of decision-making to support improvement. Had one application fewer been overturned, the Council would have been under the 10% threshold.						
BP1.2.11 % of Non-Major Applications overturned at appeal	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Smaller Is Better	1.9%	10.0%	
YTD Commentary Against the national target YTD was 1.9% overturned during 24/25.						
BP1.2.12 Average time taken for new applications to be responded to within 15 working days	Cllr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Richard Smith 	Smaller Is Better	10	15	
YTD Commentary The average time to respond to new housing register applications has consistently been within the 15 working day target throughout 2024-25.						

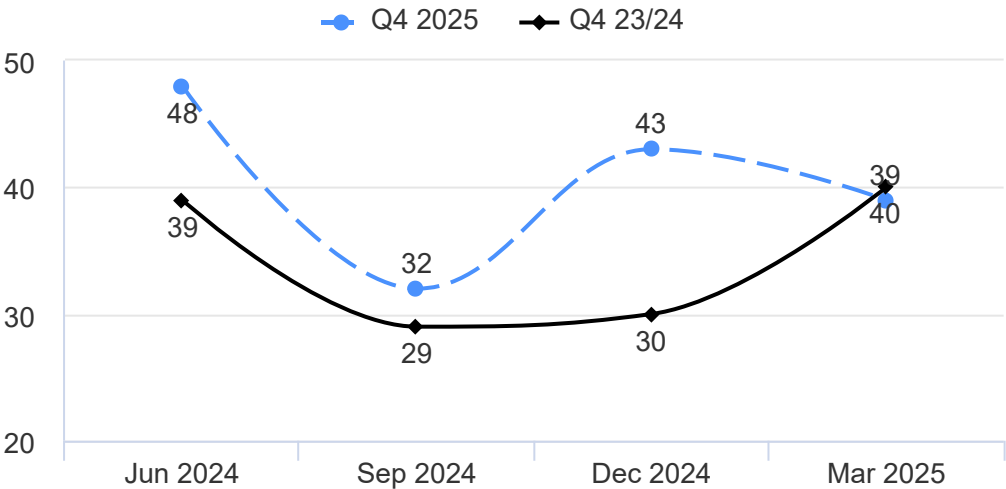
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP1.2.13 Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Bigger Is Better	783	1,142	▲
YTD Commentary The reasons for the under delivery are many and varied. These include national economic factors, high interest rates, uncertainty around changes to the planning system, and inflation. However, there are also local factors including slow delivery at Bicester and Kidlington due to significant infrastructure issues. The Council is preparing a Housing Delivery Action Plan with the aim of improving delivery rates.						
BP1.2.14 % of BC full plans assessed within 5 weeks (or longer with applicant's agreement)	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Tony Brummell 	Bigger Is Better	90.43%	95.00%	●
YTD Commentary The cumulative full-year percentage is 90.43%. Although the stretch 95% target has not been met there have been no instances where a development has proceeded without approval. We were unable to recover the position from the missed target in the early year but have maintained > 90% against a stretch target of 95%. Lessons have been learned from the early year failings and are implemented.						

Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2023-24




BP1.2.03 Homes improved through enforcement action

162 homes improved through enforcement action in 2024-25 compared to last years total of 138.

YTD Commentary



Supporting environmental sustainability - KPIs 2024-2025

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP2.2.01 % Waste Recycled & Composted	Cllr I Middleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ed Potter Ian Boll 	Bigger Is Better	50.82%	54.00%	
YTD Commentary Recycling rate will end the year down 1% due to the reduction in garden waste of 1,000 tonnes. This was due to the poor weather in the summertime.						
BP2.2.02 % Reduction in fuel consumption	Cllr I Middleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Stuart Cruickshank 	Smaller Is Better	0.994%	1.000%	
YTD Commentary No change in the fleet profile from previous year but a slight reduction in fuel usage.						
BP2.2.03 % of Climate Action Plan delivering to target	Cllr D Hingley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Jo Miskin 	Bigger Is Better	58.47%	66.00%	
YTD Commentary At the end of 2024/25 the position of the Climate Action plan is of the 126 Climate Actions, 103 were Ongoing, 13 On-hold, and 10 Completed. RAG ratings showed 56 actions in Green, 54 in Amber, and 16 in Red. Work on the Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) is progressing in partnership with OCC, ARUP, and neighbouring authorities. Phase 1 began with a mobilisation meeting in January, and we're advancing the baseline report and stakeholder engagement plan. The Climate Action Working Group concluded its work this municipal year, recommending seven priority actions, which were taken to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. A briefing on the Solar Strategy study was held with councillors, and the final report will be available early next quarter (April'25). We hosted a Climate Community event with around 30 attendees from 14 community groups and organizations. Draft reports for the district's carbon baseline, and a fleet study were received, reviewed, and shared with the consultants for further refinements. Draft report for business and industrial emissions was received and is under review.						

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP2.2.05 Reduction in total Greenhouse gas emissions for the year	Cllr I Middleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Jo Miskin 	Smaller Is Better	4,119.00	3,900.00	▲
<p>YTD Commentary</p> <p>"During 2023/24 Cherwell District Council (CDC) total emissions increased by 1.2% (49 tonnes CO2e), from 4,071 tonnes CO2e in 2022/23 to 4,119 tonnes CO2e in 2023/24. Comparison for 2024/25 is not yet available.</p> <p>The main reason for the increment in emissions in 2023/24 is related to decarbonisation equipment installed in 2022/23 not realizing reductions in gas demand, particularly in the leisure property portfolio.</p> <p>Emissions increased in areas namely Corporate Electricity, Leisure Electricity, Leisure Gas, Business Travel, Water emissions. One third of emissions increase is directly related to a 5% increase in the carbon intensity of the UK electricity grid. Also, For the first time, CDC is reporting emissions from water supply, water treatment and waste disposal."</p>						

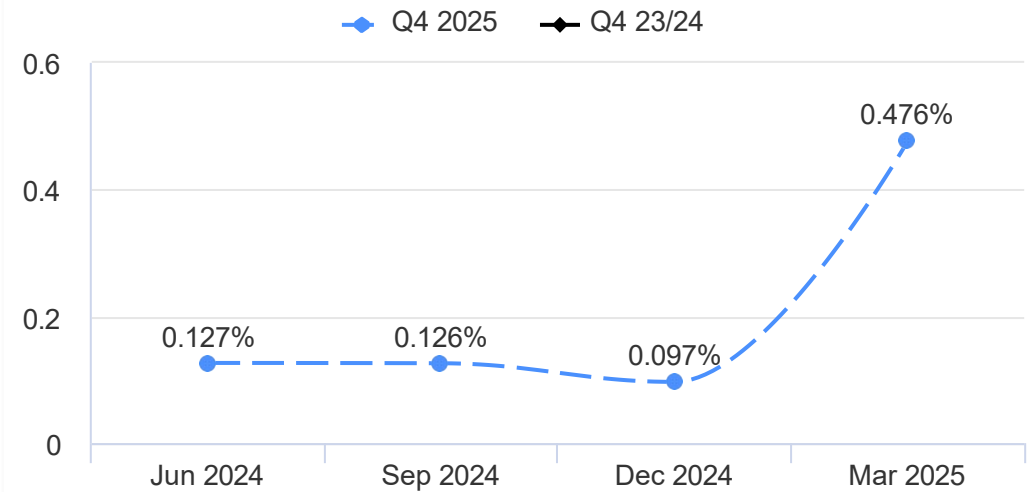
Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2023-24

BP2.2.04 % of missed waste containers

Average 110 missed bins per 100,000 collections is comparable with high performing councils.

YTD Commentary

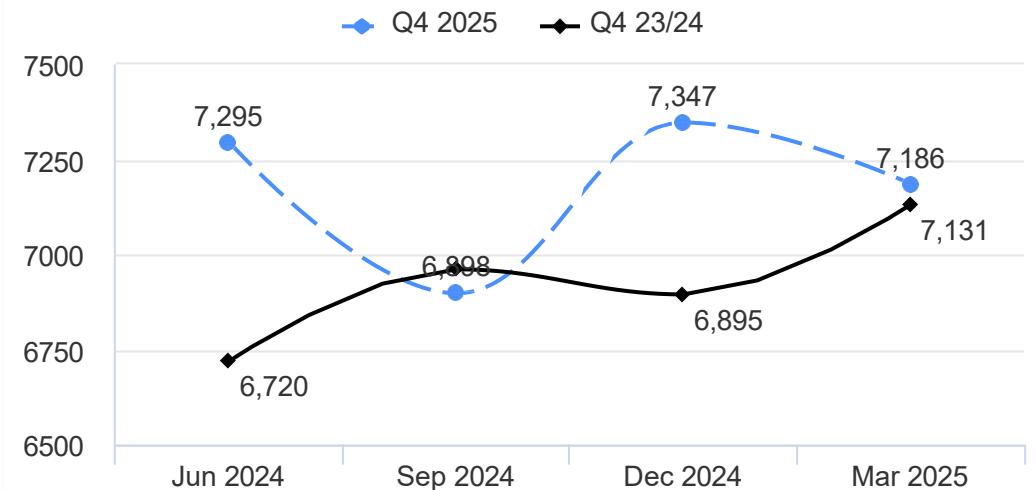
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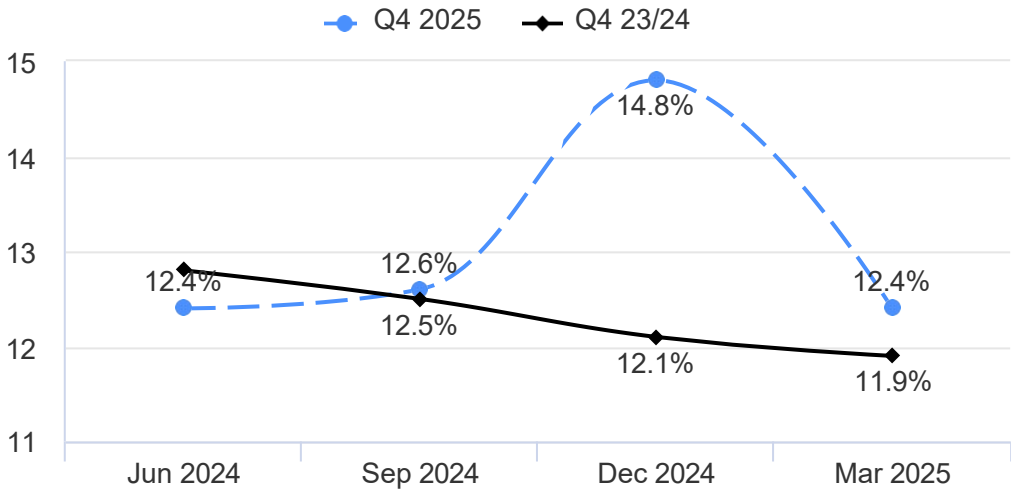
BP2.2.01d Tonnes residual household waste collected

Residual waste up by 300 tonnes in line with property growth within the district.

YTD Commentary



	BP2.2.07 % of Recycling Contamination rate
YTD Commentary	Contamination rate for 2024/25 has been slightly higher than previous years due to the fire at the Materials Recovery Facility causing damage to the testing station. In the final quarter of the year contamination rate has started to reduce due to the work the service development team have carried out.



An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres - KPIs 2024-2025

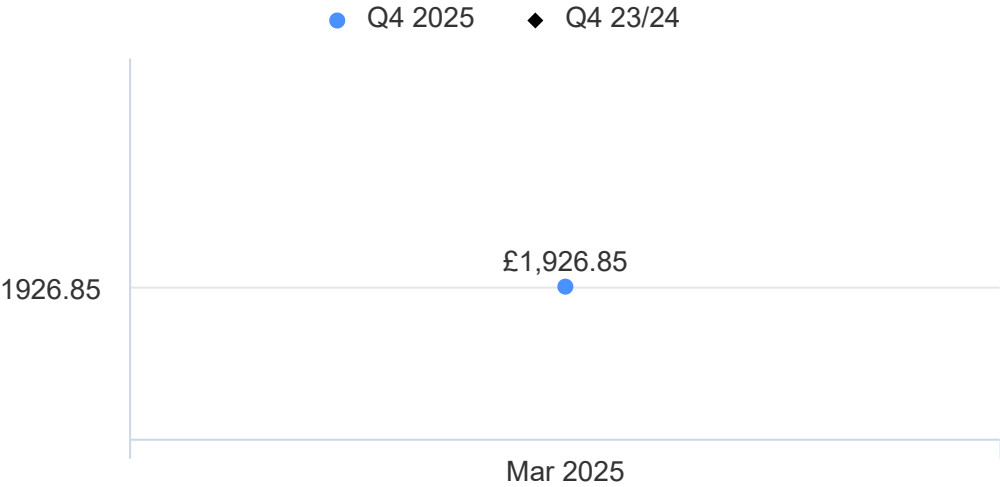
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP3.2.01 % of Council Tax collected, increase Council Tax Base	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Furness Stephen Hinds 	Bigger Is Better	98.02%	97.50%	★
YTD Commentary The end of year collection rate was 98.02% which exceeded the end of year target of 97.50%. The Revenues Services team collected in over £139.3m in respect of 2024/25 which is distributed to the preceptors who provide vital services to our residents. The Revenue Services team will continue to pursue any outstanding balances. Achieving a high in-year collection rate benefits the Council's overall cash flow. Minimising the level of arrears also benefits council tax payers generally by reducing the allowance made for non-collection allowed in determining the council tax base for future bills.						
BP3.2.02 % of Business Rates collected, increasing NNDR Base	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Furness Stephen Hinds 	Bigger Is Better	98.83%	98.50%	★
YTD Commentary The end of year collection rate was 98.83% which exceeded the end of year target of 98.50%. The Revenues Services team collected in over £113.6m in respect of Business Rates due in 2024/25. The Revenue Services team will continue to pursue any outstanding balances. The residents of Cherwell benefit by the Business Rates collected as these funds are used to contribute to the overall budget for Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.						

Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2023-24

BP3.2.03 Council Tax revenue per dwelling

YTD Commentary

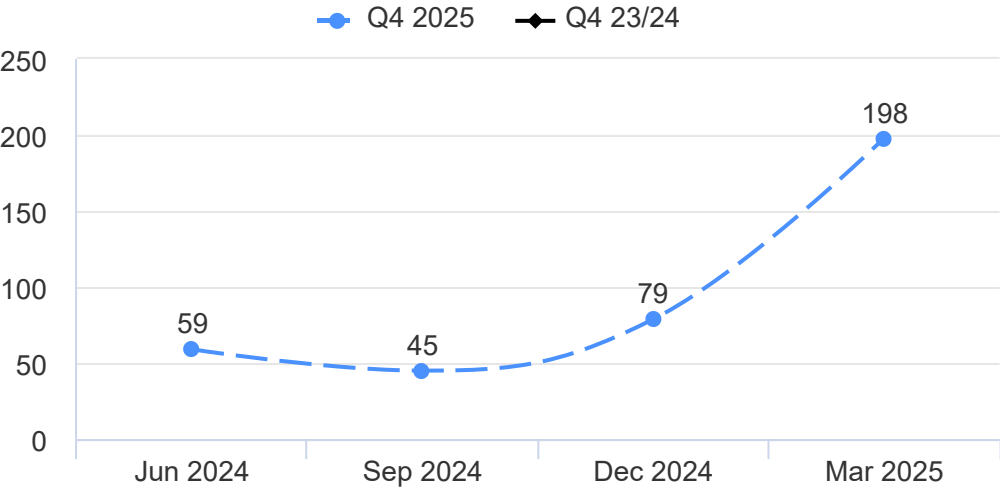
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BP3.2.04 No. of businesses engaged through UKSPF and REPF funded programmes

YTD Commentary

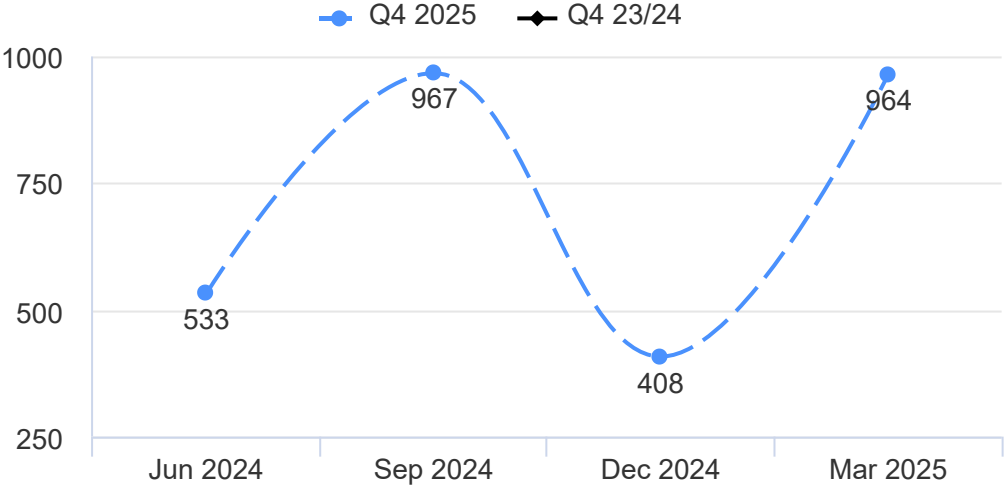
In 2024/25 a total of 381 businesses were provided with support, with the final quarter being the highest for the year at 198 businesses engaged, benefitting from *over 1140 hours of business support for start-up and growing businesses *free Green Skills courses *small grants for businesses based in rural Cherwell *25 Carbon Emission Assessments and Decarbonisation Plans *participation in the 2025 Cherwell Economic Forum *Support to the Cherwell Business Awards, to recognise and showcase the achievements of Cherwell businesses *exhibiting at the Banbury Job Fair



BP3.2.05 No. of residents engaged through UKSPF and REPF funded programmes

YTD Commentary

In 2024/25 a total of 2,872 residents were engaged through UKSPF and REPF funded programmes. In final quarter of the Year 964 residents were engaged, benefitting from *free Green Skills courses *employability support sessions *enterprise activity in secondary schools in partnership with Young Enterprise *widened participation in cultural activities and attendances at performances at a theatre and arts centre *widened access to an existing community garden through new events to bring communities together *attendance at the Banbury Job Fair



Healthy, resilient and engaged communities - KPIs 2024-2025

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G
BP4.2.04 % of due food hygiene inspections of premises rated A-D completed	Cllr R Parkinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Tim Hughes 	Bigger Is Better	97.43%	95.00%	★
YTD Commentary In 2024/25 a total of 110 Inspections were successfully completed and we have achieved being on target throughout the year. We have achieved a YTD result of 97.43% against the target of 95%.						

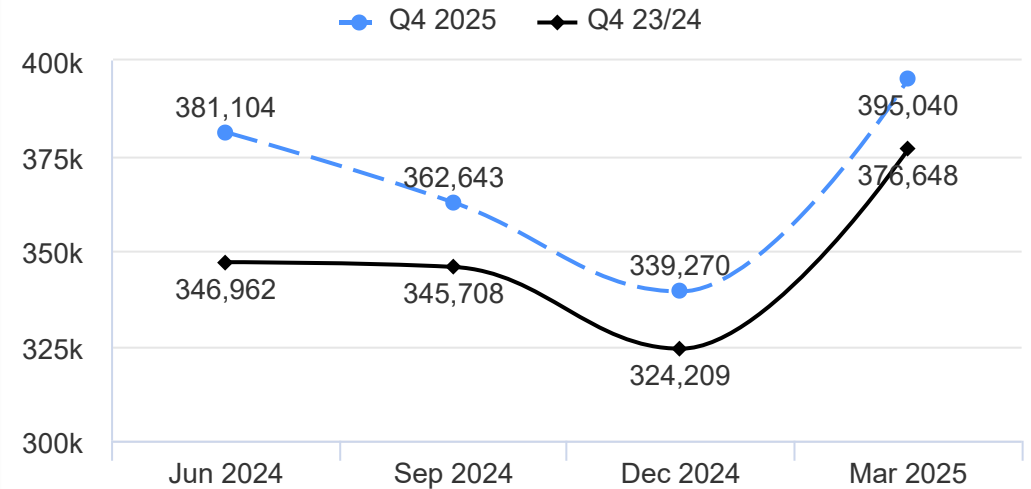
Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2023-24

BP4.2.01 Number of Visits/Usage of all Leisure Facilities within the District

Usage Figures for all 3 main leisure centres have increased against the 2023/24 totals. Spiceball Leisure Centre evidenced the largest increase of circa 45,000 with a total of 559,000 visits against 514,000 visits. Bicester Leisure Centre followed closely with a 35,000 increase going from 416,000 visits to 451,000. The increase at Kidlington against 2023/24 was 18,000 with total number of unique visits being 308,000

YTD Commentary

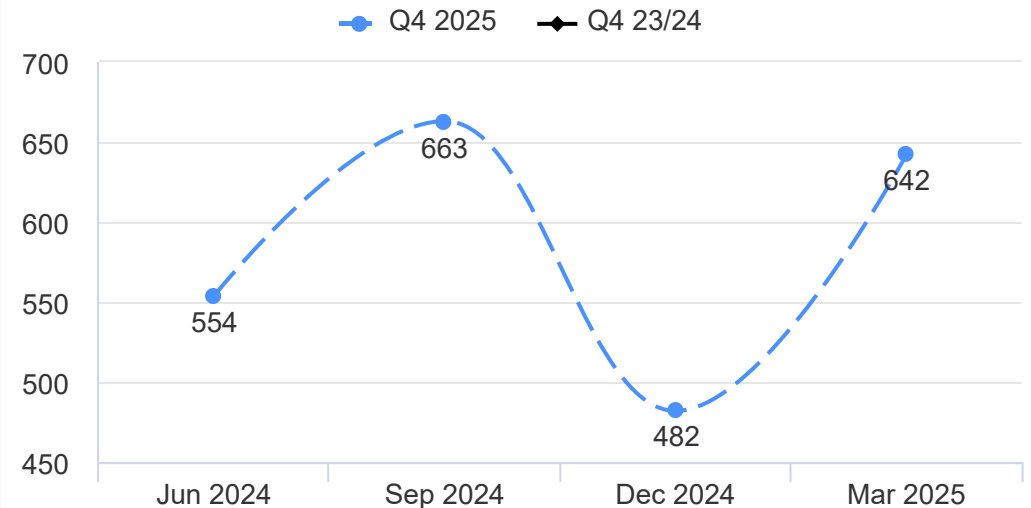
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BP4.2.02 Residents who have taken part in programmes contributing to improving health inequalities

Highly successful year with a large number of residents benefitting from health intervention programmes You Move (3,659 residents on programme) and Move Together (3,252 residents on programme). You Move offers families in receipt of free school meals reduced and free opportunities has seen clear increases in Physical Activity with a 48% increase in Children's activity levels from being part of You Move. You Moves impact features in Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health report as having a positive impact on Mental Wellbeing. Move Together which offers a bespoke physical activity pathway for residents with long term conditions has seen excellent results with 84% of residents reporting an improvement in pain management, 23% fewer falls and 4.5 GP appointments saved per participant per year.

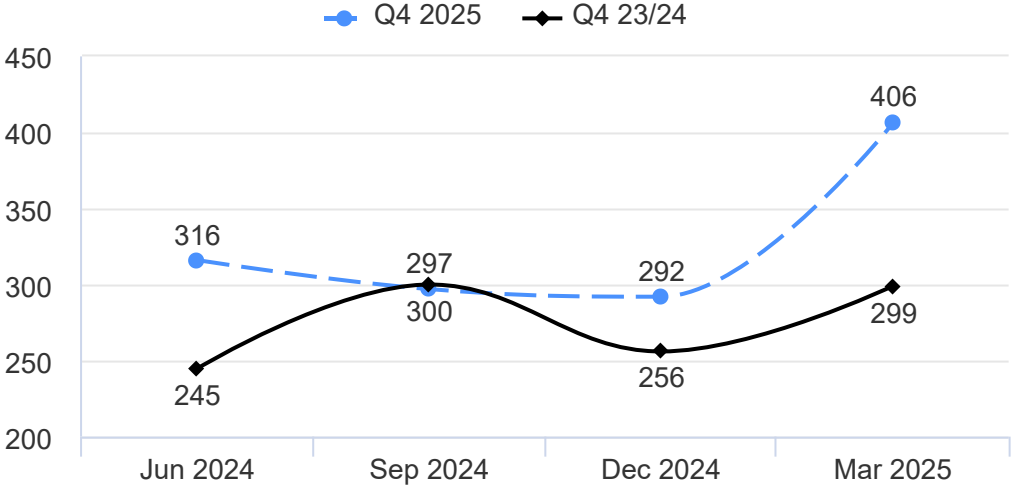
YTD Commentary



BP4.2.05 Number of Illegal Fly Tips

The total number of reports received in 2024/25 was an increase of 211 on the number received in 2023/24

YTD Commentary



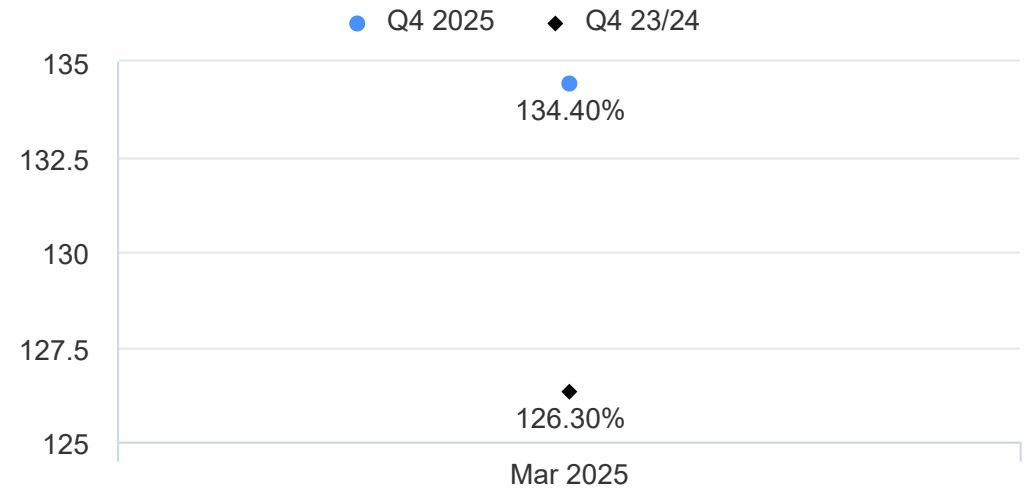
Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2023-24

BP5.1.01 Non-ringfenced reserves as percentage of net revenue expenditure

This an increase of 8.1% from 126.3% for 2023/24. This is primarily due to a 10% increase in reserves compared to 23/24.

YTD Commentary

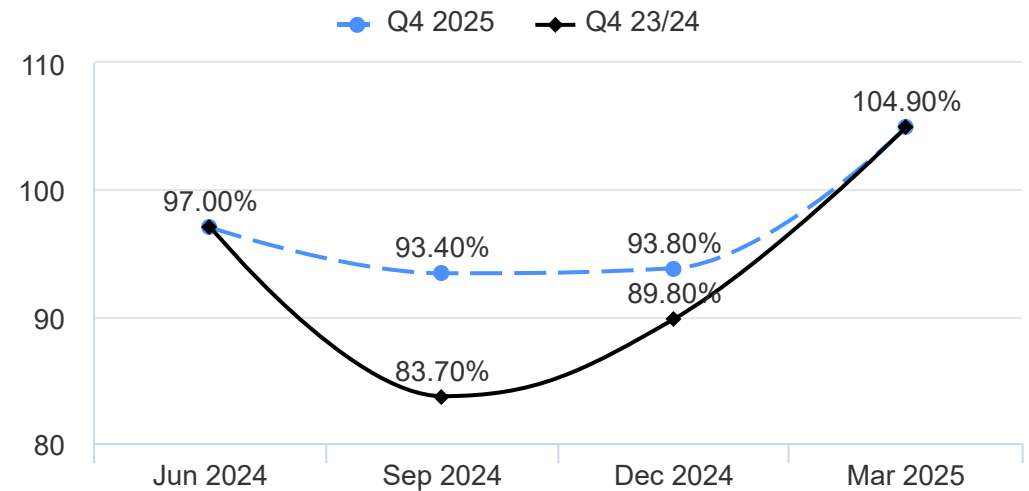
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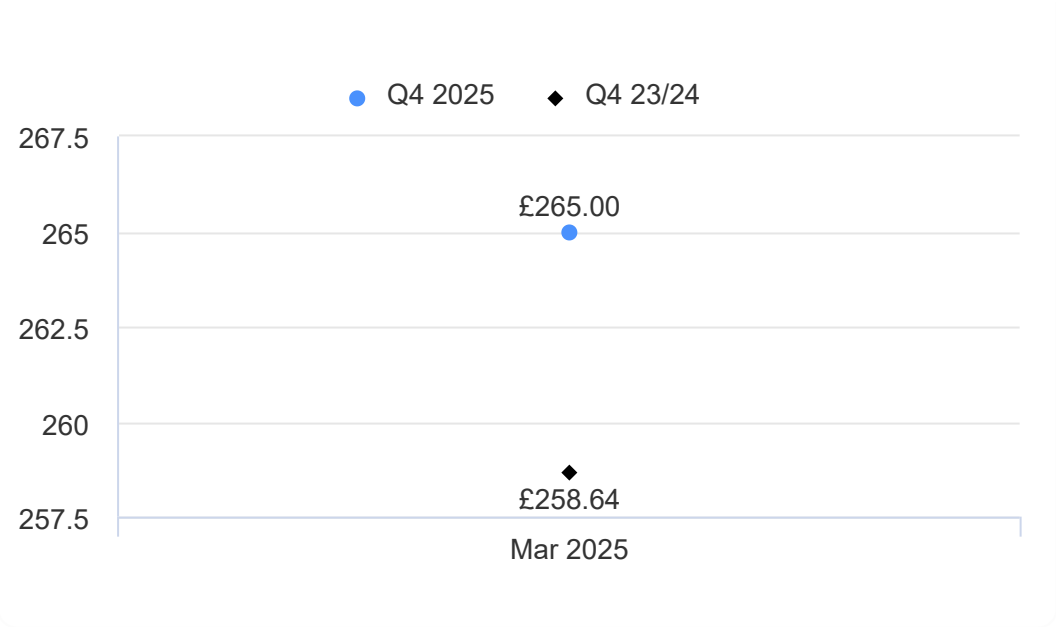
BP5.1.02 Non-ringfenced reserves as percentage of service spend

This is an increase of 11.1% from 93.8% in Q3, but when comparing to Q4 of 2023/24 there is no change. The increase from Q3 to Q4 is due to increased contributions to reserves than that forecast at Q3.

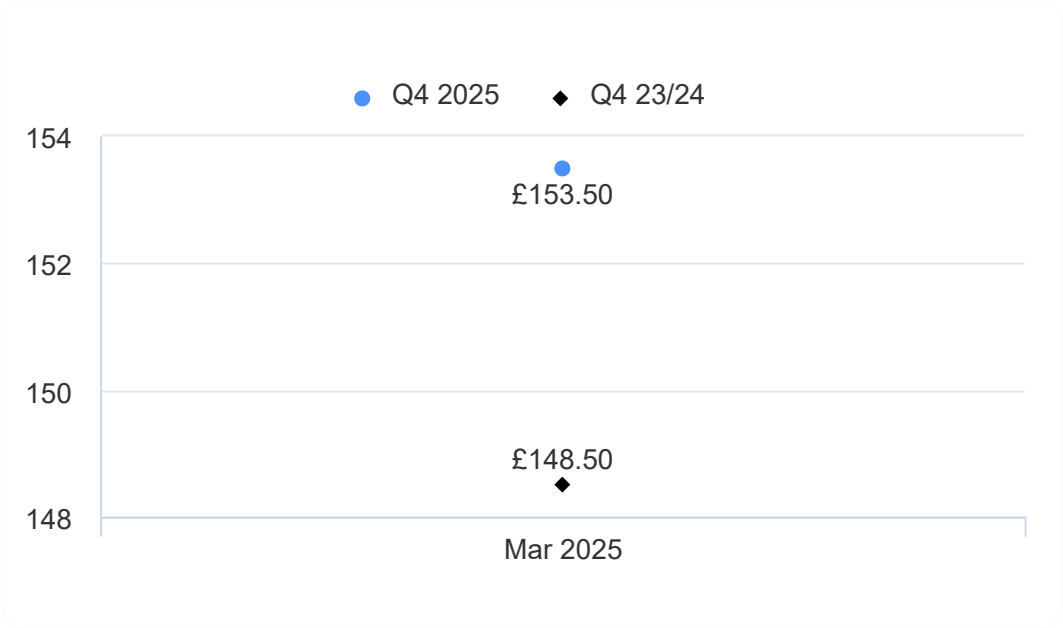
YTD Commentary



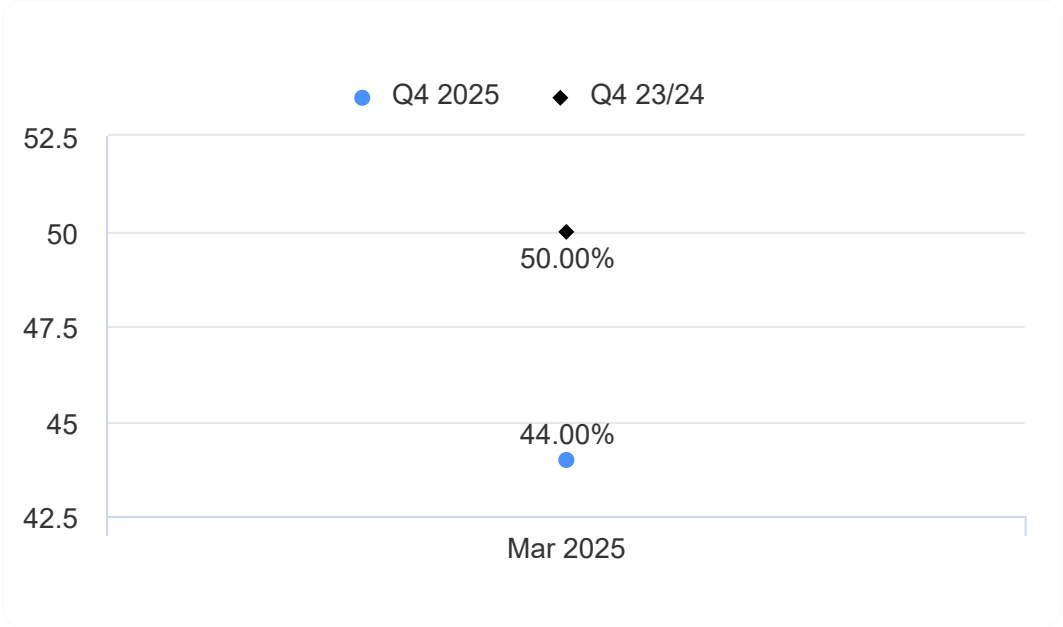
	BP5.1.03 Total core spending power per dwelling
YTD Commentary	<p>The figure is being calculated by Core Spending Power £19.2m / Actual dwelling numbers from Revenues 72,296</p>



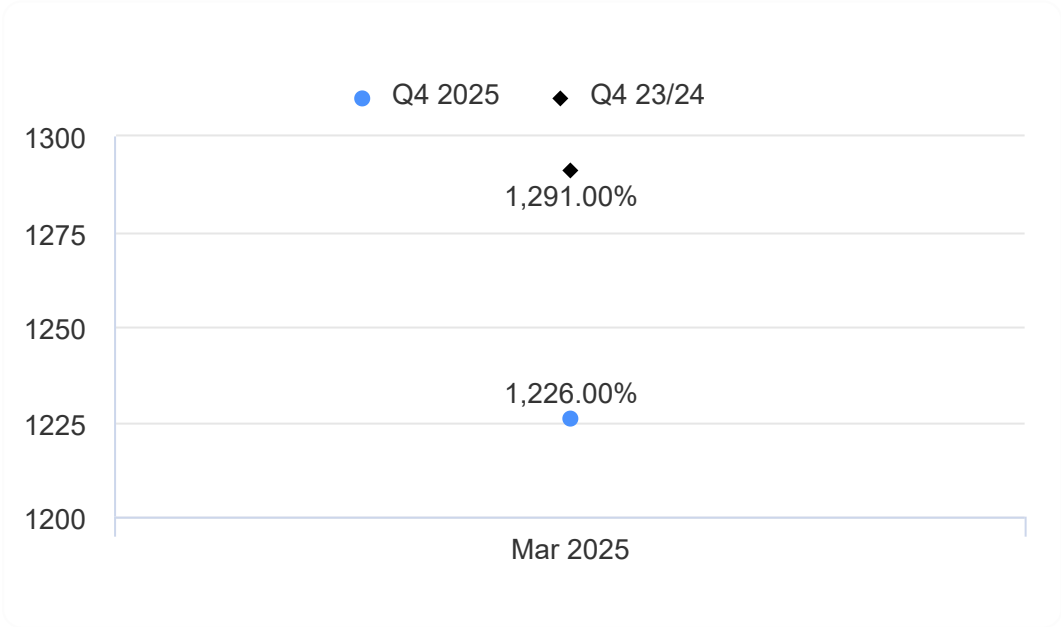
	BP5.1.04 Level of band D council tax rates
	CDC Band D Council Tax as agreed at Council February 2024
YTD Commentary	



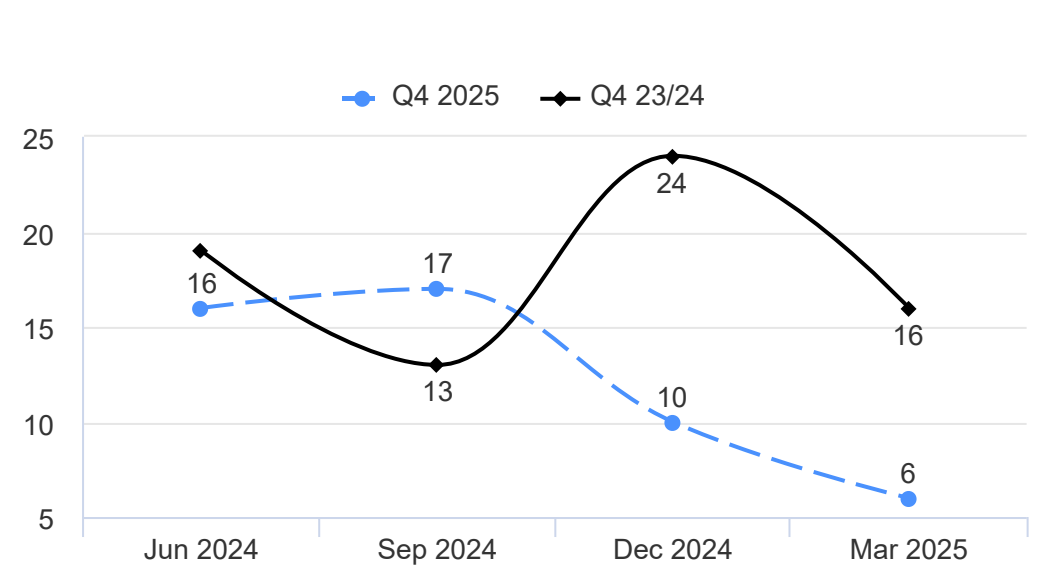
	BP5.1.05 Debt servicing as percentage of core spending power
	This is a decrease of 6% from 50% in 2023/24. This is mainly due to the cut in interest rates during 2024/25.
YTD Commentary	



	BP5.1.06 Total debt as percentage of core spending power
YTD Commentary	This is a decrease of 65% from 1291% in 2023/24. Total debt per the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is estimated to increase by approximately £1m, this is lower than anticipated due to the application of additional financial resources to the capital adjustment account following a balance sheet review. The Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 provided extra funding which increased Core Spending Power (CSP) by £1m (5%). As a proportion of the CFR, the CSP increased by more, resulting in an overall decrease in the ratio.



	BP5.1.07 Number of upheld complaints
YTD Commentary	Compared to the previous year, accumulating 72 upheld complaints, 2024 accumulated 49, a decrease of nearly 32%. Actions contributing to this improvement were, the implementation of a New Policy and simpler administration methods.



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Annual Delivery Plan - Housing that meets your needs

Appendix 9

Priorities & Milestones	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	Start Date	Due Date	YTD R.A.G.	YTD Priority update
HMN1 Work with partners and landlords to settle refugees into suitable accommodation in Cherwell through a Migration Moving Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Cllr N Cotter	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	The use of Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2 funding has brought void properties back into use allowing families in the Afghan Resettlement Programme to be settled well in properties managed by Registered Providers. There has also been a continuation of private sector tenancies sourced for Refugees on the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme.
HMN2 To continue delivering on our Housing that meets our needs priority through the development of a new housing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Richard Smith 	Cllr N Cotter	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Completed	The Housing Strategy was developed, consulted on, agreed by Executive in 2025. The agreed action plan within, and thus its implementation, is ongoing and will continue through the life of the strategy document.
HMN3 Identify the Housing and Infrastructure our communities need in the future to create a healthy, thriving and sustainable Cherwell through developing our new Local Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Cllr J Conway	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	Significant progress was made on a new Local Plan over the course of 24/25 with evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, Plan preparation and statutory consultation. Consultation was undertaken from December 2024 to February 2025. Officers then commenced review of the responses received and the preparation of documents for presentation to the Executive and Council. In the coming months, Councillors will be invited to consider the results of consultation and to decide whether to submit the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for independent Examination.

Annual Delivery Plan - Supporting environmental sustainability

Priorities & Milestones	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	Start Date	Due Date	YTD R.A.G.	YTD Priority update
SES1 As part of our climate action commitments, we will review and update our Air Quality Management Action plan to ensure its effectiveness and suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Tim Hughes 	Cllr R Parkinson	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Completed	The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was reviewed and updated in consultation with partners. The revised AQAP was submitted to Executive and the approved document forwarded to Defra who have also approved the plan. We are currently working on the 2025 Annual Status Report (ASR), reporting on the monitoring undertaken in 2024, for submission to Defra by the 30 June 2025 deadline. As part of this process we will re-consult partners on the actions in the AQAP and include any further updates in the ASR.
SES2 To progress activity within Climate Action Plan to support communities to develop and implement plans to make all of the district a more sustainable place to live and work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Jo Miskin 	Cllr D Hingley	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	The year end position of the Climate Action plan is as follows - 103 actions were Ongoing, 13 On-hold, and 10 Completed. RAG ratings showed 56 actions in Green, 54 in Amber, and 16 in Red. The Climate Action Plan progress will continue to be reported in the 2025/26 ADP plan.
SES3 Move to a smaller, greener HQ with better public transport, walking and cycling opportunities to reduce costs and reliance on cars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mona Walsh Stephen Hinds 	Cllr L McLean	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	Move from Bodicote House to the new Offices at Castle Quay has been successfully completed.

Annual Delivery Plan - An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

Priorities & Milestones	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	Start Date	Due Date	YTD R.A.G.	YTD Priority update
EEV1 To deliver key projects within the third year of the UK Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Julia Harrington 	Cllr L McLean	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Completed	The UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund programmes were completed by 31 March 2025.
EEV2 To continue the development of the Banbury Vision 2050, which will identify short and long terms measures to regenerate the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Julia Harrington 	Cllr L McLean	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	The Banbury Vision 2050 report was published in March 2025. Work on the principles of the Banbury Area Priority Plan has been progressed. The initial version of the Priority Plan will be discussed at the first AOG meeting which has been rescheduled to May 2025 in order to engage further with a wider range of stakeholders.
EEV3 To develop a plan for reimaging Bicester and ensure existing and new communities benefit from short and long-term measures of the Garden Town principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Julia Harrington 	Cllr L McLean	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	The Market Square final concept design was agreed with the Portfolio Holder in February 2025 as required. The Bicester Area Priority Plan was progressed and presented at the first AOG meeting held on 02 April 2025 (due to availability of required attendees, it was not possible to hold this meeting earlier).
EEV4 Developing a Kidlington Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Julia Harrington 	Cllr L McLean	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	The Area Priority Plan was progressed and presented at the first AOG meeting held on 27 March 2025.

Annual Delivery Plan - Healthy, Resilient and engaged communities

Priorities & Milestones	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	Start Date	Due Date	YTD R.A.G.	YTD Priority update
HRE1 To develop a framework that determines the effectiveness and positive impact of the wellbeing strategy on our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Cllr R Pattenden	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	Wellbeing Strategy Outcome framework developed to demonstrate and monitor impact relating to the seven goals along with shaping service delivery going forward.
HRE2 To respond to the Food Insecurity Emergency and improve outcomes for our residents through delivery of the Cherwell Food Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Cllr R Parkinson	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	The food action plan has been delivered and reviewed for year 1. Next steps will be looking at next years outcomes and ensuring we have a plan to achieve those.
HRE3 To work with partners on delivering against agreed actions to protect women and girls from violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Tim Hughes 	Cllr R Parkinson	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	<p>During 2024/25 we have:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 referrals have been received, predominately from social care and early help. 19 young people have been supported with 187 one- to-one sessions have been delivered. We delivered an eight-week programme of 'Escape the Trap' (a teenage relationship abuse programme) to a group of 8 year 11 students in a local secondary school, with all students completing the programme. 372 professionals were trained through our exploitation training, which was designed and delivered in partnership with the Violence Prevention Partnership.

Priorities & Milestones	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	Start Date	Due Date	YTD R.A.G.	YTD Priority update
HRE4 To consider and deliver actions that will improve the experience of residents in relation to the cost of living by enabling voluntary and community groups to deliver services through the redistribution of central government grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Cllr R Pattenden	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Completed	The cost of living plan has been delivered and HSF 6 has been spent and evidenced.

Annual Delivery Plan - Organisational Health

Priorities & Milestones	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	Start Date	Due Date	YTD R.A.G.	YTD Priority update
<p>QOR1 Identifying future services delivery options, to ensure efficiency, best use of resources and continuous improvement through Transformation Programme and Balanced MTFS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shona Ware Stephen Hinds 	Cllr D Hingley	01 Apr 2024	31 Mar 2025	Delivering to Plan	Transformation programme has been approved by Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Committees. Initiatives will be incorporated into the Annual Planning process 2025/26.

ED11.01 Engage with, and support local community groups and organisations

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
ED11.01.01 Evaluate the quality of council's existing relationships with community groups and organisations which further the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion	Jon Wild	Delivering to plan	Through different grant schemes offered the range of constituted organisations has broadened during the year. An evaluation of partnerships shows a growing number of stakeholders have been identified across the district. This work is ongoing
ED11.01.02 Establish new relationships with community groups focused on ethnicity or national identity with priority given to those with the largest number of members in need in the district	Jon Wild	Delivering to plan	The range of constituted organisations known to the council and participating in community development activity has expanded during the last year.
ED11.01.03 Establish a Language Bank where Cherwell staff proficient in community languages can opt-in to assist with outreach efforts to further the Council's EDI objectives	Claire Cox	Delivering to plan	Since our quarter 3 update, we have now had 17 responses with 15 languages covered. We have not yet identified any staff fluent in British sign language but will continue to promote the language bank to existing staff and new starters in the hope of further building on volunteers to call upon should a need arise.

ED11.02 Promote inclusive behaviour with residents and service users

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
ED11.02.01 Promote externally the Council's work to promote inclusivity	Julian Cotton	Delivering to plan	We regularly consider suitable events and awareness days throughout the year that we can support or engage with through external communications. We maintain an awareness calendar to assist with this. We will continue these types of communications in the upcoming year. This measure could serve as a reference or be seen as business as usual.
ED11.02.02 Add additional pro-forma text on accessibility to the committee meetings pages of the council's website and agenda reports pack	Natasha Clark	Ahead of schedule	This Action was completed in Q1.

EDI1.03 Work directly with communities to identify inequality and tackle disadvantage

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI1.03.01 Work with partners to promote an ethnically diverse representation at our voluntary sector forum	Nicola Riley	Delivering to plan	The voluntary sector forum is not yet as diverse as the district and more effort is being made to consider how to remove barriers to participation.

EDI1.04 Promote equality, diversity & inclusion through our supply chain and strategic partnerships

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI1.4.01 Make sure EDI implications and clauses are included in all our procurement processes as stated in our contracts and evaluation process guidelines	Shiraz Sheikh	Ahead of schedule	This action was completed in Q3.

EDI1.05 Promote and encourage inclusive behaviour for future generations

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI1.05.01 Collaborate with partner organisations to involve young people in volunteering activities and engage with them to undertake active participation in their local communities	Nicola Riley	Delivering to plan	There are multiple factors in securing ongoing volunteer opportunities for young people that are outside the control of the District Council, but efforts have been made to offer sports leaders courses and work with voluntary organisations to improve the access to volunteering opportunities.
EDI1.05.02 Raise awareness of the role of a councillor from an EDI perspective within political leaders	Shiraz Sheikh	Ahead of schedule	This action was completed in Q3.
EDI1.05.03 Raise awareness of the role of councillors and routes to be becoming a councillor targeted at underrepresented group	Natasha Clark Nicola Riley	Delivering to plan	Elections to Cherwell District Council will take place in 2026

EDI1.06 Work with all partner organisations to understand diverse needs & create incl. communities

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI1.06.01 Implement the recommendations proposed by the strategic review of partnerships	Nicola Riley	Ahead of schedule	This action was completed in Q2.

Inclusive Services

EDI2.01 Ensure information, website and digital services are accessible to all incl. digitally excl

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI2.01.01 Agree, implement, and publicise the new translations and alternative formats policy	Celia Prado-Teeling	Delivering to plan	The implementation plans are in progress and will continue through the new FY.
EDI2.01.02 Complete an Equalities Impact Assessment on the website (including the terms and conditions)	Celia Prado-Teeling	Slightly behind schedule	We have now completed the draft assessment. There may be work arising from the EIA; therefore, an action reflecting the support work undertaken to improve our website accessibility should be considered going forward.

EDI2.02 Take action to make our buildings accessible to all residents

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI2.02.01 Conduct an access audit on Castle Quay and other major council buildings, unless up to date audits are already available	Mona Walsh	Ahead of schedule	This action has been successfully completed for 2024/25.
EDI2.02.02 Consider and if appropriate, implement the recommendations of the access audit	Mona Walsh	Delivering to plan	Main tasks for this action was completed in 2024/25 any remaining actions will be completed as Business as usual.

EDI2.03 Better understand those using services & their needs by collecting information & feedback

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI2.03.01 Implement the recommendations of the review of data from customer contact	Celia Prado-Teeling	Delivering to plan	Recommendations will be included in the Annual planning process.

EDI2.04 Engage residents, those using services and community groups when planning services

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI2.04.01 When officer review is completed, bring the draft consultation and engagement framework to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion working group for consideration	Celia Prado-Teeling	Delivering to plan	Draft has been amended taken into consideration the recently approved corporate vision and strategy, and will be circulated as soon as final version is completed.

EDI2.05 Plan and deliver services that promote inclusion

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI2.05.01 Complete an Equalities Impact Assessments on all services and contracts	Celia Prado-Teeling	Delivering to plan	Work is progressing well, making sure all new policies, activities and proposals have the correspondent Equalities Impact Assessment. This is an established Business as Usual activity.

Inclusive Workplaces

EDI3.01 Improve diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI3.01.01 Introduce a yearly report to Personnel Committee, which splits the demographic information on the Council's workforce by grade and department	Claire Cox	Delivering to plan	Workforce Statistics continue to be provided to Personnel Committee on a quarterly basis, outlining quarterly turnover and sickness absence rates, starters and leavers information, agency usage, and demographics by grade and department with additional statistics provided at the financial year end.

EDI3.02 Celebrate and promote diversity in our workforce

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI 3.02.01 Within the annual report referenced in EDI3.01, include a short update on networks & virtual social groups for employees interested in particular causes	Julian Cotton	Delivering to plan	This was completed as part of the annual report. We anticipate it will be updated naturally each year and may not require dedicated action moving forward.

EDI3.03 Provide a supportive environment so all staff can reach their potential

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI3.03.01 Deliver new communication plan which promotes development opportunities for the Council's workforce	Julian Cotton	Delivering to plan	We have been promoting training and events in a dedicated section of Sway, our weekly staff newsletter throughout the year. We will not need a new communications plan for next year. This will be an ongoing activity and may not need a dedicated measure.
EDI 3.03.02 Conduct an access audit on Castle Quay and other major council buildings (internal)	Mona Walsh	Slightly behind schedule	Main tasks for this action was completed in 2024/25 any remaining actions will be completed in the following as Business as Usual.

EDI3.04 Identify and tackle discrimination in all its forms

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI3.04.01 Complete the review and approval by Personnel Committee of the remaining HR policies	Claire Cox	Delivering to plan	Work on updating policies has continued with 2 policies remaining for review. This will happen in June 2025 and all policies will then be on a rolling 3 year review programme.

EDI3.05 Provide managers with the skills to support employees with different needs

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI3.05.01 Integrate additional inclusion training for manager into the mandatory e-learning suite	Teresa Reed	Delivering to plan	Managers must complete mandatory e-learning in both EDI and Recruitment. We are also in the process of identifying neurodiversity awareness training following a full council motion for members and employees to be trained.

EDI3.06 Train our staff to identify and avoid unconscious bias and deliver inclusive services.

Action	Owner	Actual	YTD Comments
EDI3.06.01 Provide an update on the roll out of unconscious bias training & to what extent the Council has been able to gauge its effectiveness	Teresa Reed	Delivering to plan	HR are running regular Recruitment Training for new and existing managers where unconscious bias is covered in detail.

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Cherwell District Council Overview and Scrutiny Process.

This document is designed to be used as a reference guide alongside the detailed section of the Constitution Part 4a.

It builds upon the Cherwell Council Scrutiny Guide February 2025.

May 2025

By Michael Carr

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 - Single item on a committee agenda
 - A single meeting - 'Spotlight Review'
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- 7. Scrutiny Working Groups**
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Role Profiles

- OSC Chairman
- OSC Vice Chairman
- Scrutiny Members

Appendix 2 - Criteria for selecting scrutiny topics

Appendix 3 - Scrutiny Working Group Inquiry Scoping Document

1. Introduction

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- 1.1. Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of local authority decision making governance arrangements. It was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 which created separate Executive and Overview and Scrutiny functions within local authorities, with an Executive making executive Key Decisions, Overview and Scrutiny Committees to provide a check and accountability and provide an opportunity for non-Executive Members to make reports and recommendations to the Executive and a full Council that sets the overall policy and budgetary framework.
- 1.2. Councils operating executive decision making arrangements are required to create one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees made up of councillors who are not members of the Executive,
- 1.3. Cherwell District Council operates an Executive/Cabinet and scrutiny decision making model, which is broadly, conceptually, based on the Westminster Parliamentary model, which has a government Cabinet executive and parliamentary select committees.
- 1.4. The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny is to ensure that decision-making in local government is transparent, accountable and provides an opportunity for non-executive Members of the Council to contribute to policy making and review. The scrutiny process should help to ensure that all decisions are taken in the interests of the residents of Cherwell.
- 1.5. Scrutiny committees are led by elected Members of the Council, which provides them with a particular democratic mandate and legitimacy.
- 1.6. Scrutiny committees are independent and hold the Executive to account by acting as a “critical friend”, as well as providing a vehicle for the wider membership of the Council to contribute to policy development and review.
- 1.7. Overview and Scrutiny committees have the power to consider any issue which “affects the area or the area’s inhabitants” and to examine cross-cutting issues and context to local decision making, including local partnerships and community wellbeing.
- 1.8. Overview and Scrutiny committees may:
 - require information that is held by the Council (with councillors sitting on overview and scrutiny committees having particular rights to access certain information - for example, information that might be commercially confidential),
 - require attendance at committee meetings by Executive members and Council officers,
 - require from the Executive responses to recommendations made by scrutiny committees.

What are the aims of scrutiny?

- 1.9. At Cherwell District Council the aims of scrutiny are:
- To contribute to ongoing service improvement
 - To hold the Executive to account on behalf of local residents
 - To contribute to policy development and review through scrutiny reports and recommendations to the Executive.
- 1.10. Scrutiny meets these aims by carrying out independent scrutiny inquiries and reviews of Council and community policies and services. These are carried out either as a full Committee or by a small group of Members in a time-limited scrutiny working group.

What are the benefits of scrutiny?

- 1.11. Overview and Scrutiny should help to drive improvement and accountability in local government through the democratic and governance process. It can also help to build a more inclusive decision making process by involving non-executive members, as well as community partner organisations and local people.

How does scrutiny work at Cherwell?

- 1.12. Every local authority is required to put in place arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny; however the particular arrangements for this is for the individual authority to decide. In Cherwell, scrutiny undertakes the majority of its scrutiny inquiries through the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but also via a combination of scrutiny working groups and spotlight reviews.
- 1.13. Cherwell Council has one Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), established by the Council, to carry out the Overview and Scrutiny function.
- 1.14. The OSC is politically proportionate and meets roughly six times a year. The Committee may consider any policy issue across the range of Council services or which affect the wellbeing of the local community. This includes services provided by, or on behalf of the Council; or by external agencies. Scrutiny can consider the impact of Council policies and decisions and outcomes for residents.
- 1.15. It may consider issues before the Executive makes a decision (“pre-decision scrutiny”) and also has the power to Call In any Executive Decision made by the Executive or delegated to an officer, for review.
- 1.16. Regulatory decisions, i.e. those relating to planning or licensing applications, are not within the remit of OSC.
- 1.17. Section 5 of the OSC Constitution provides more detail on the specific functions of Committee.

2. Advice and Support to Scrutiny Committees

- 2.1. Scrutiny committees also receive professional advice from council chief officers and directorates according to their purview. In particular scrutiny committees may draw upon the advice and support of the Council's statutory officers, including the Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive.
- 2.2. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny committees receive advice and administrative support from the Democracy and Elections Team.
- 2.3. Scrutiny committees may also be allocated with support from one or more Scrutiny Officers, to provide specialist advice and support on the scrutiny process and provide practical support in drafting scrutiny reports and recommendations, preparing briefings, drafting report requests and acting as an interlocutor between scrutiny committees, the Executive and council departments.

The Monitoring Officer

- 2.4. The Monitoring Officer is the statutory officer responsible for the legal governance of a local authority. As such, this includes providing advice and support on the Council's Constitution, governance and decision making arrangements and relationships, including Overview and Scrutiny.

Scrutiny Officers

- 2.5. Scrutiny officers provide professional impartial advice and support to members of the scrutiny committees leading up to a scrutiny meeting, during the meeting itself and subsequently. They can advise on the scrutiny process, as well as support with analysis and desk research on items being considered by scrutiny and assist in developing questions to witnesses, scrutiny reports and scrutiny recommendations for agreement by the committee.

Democratic Services Officers

- 2.6. The scrutiny committees may also be allocated committee support from the Democracy and Elections Team. Democratic Service Officers provide specialist committee advice and support on committee procedures and provide the committee administration, including agenda preparation, agenda and reports publication, drafting and publishing committee minutes and following up on matters arising from committee meetings. Democratic Service Officers work closely with scrutiny officers to ensure the smooth running of the committee and scrutiny processes.

Departmental Officers

- 2.7. Senior Council officers for each department provide expert advice and support on Council services within their purview, this includes advice and support to Overview and Scrutiny Committees when scrutiny committees are considering matters within their departmental and service area.

- 2.8. Council departmental officers provide advice and information on issues being considered by Scrutiny to ensure that Scrutiny Members have access to the information and expert advice they need to understand issues they are considering. In the scrutiny process they are the key “expert witnesses”, being responsible for the delivery of Council policy and services and also being experts in their respective areas.
- 2.9. Council departments provide information reports to scrutiny committees and other information requested, for matters being considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Scrutiny Working Groups. In addition to information requests made ahead of or during a committee, senior officers should review the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme to anticipate reports requested to be provided to scrutiny committees and the deadlines for reports.
- 2.10. Because Council officers also advise and support the Executive and because senior officers also manage services and make decisions (including Key Decisions where delegated to them), their role is also part of supporting Executive accountability by answering questions in committee, along with the Executive.

3. Appointing the Chairman and Vice-Chairman

- 3.1. A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be scheduled as soon as possible after the Annual Council Meeting, when committee appointments have been approved, to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider any proposals for the appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman from among its members. Any member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may stand to be elected for these positions and any member may propose (and second a proposal) for any other member for to make their case for being appointment as Chairman and Vice Chairman, so long as those persons accept the nomination.
- 3.2. Prior to the meeting, those wishing to stand for Chairman Vice Chairman will have an opportunity address fellow committee members, explaining their reasons for being considered for the role(s). This is also an opportunity for any member wishing to propose another member of the Committee to explain their reasons for the proposal. The expectation is that an informal session will take place shortly before the formal Committee meeting to facilitate discussions between members who wish to be considered for the role of Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- 3.3. The Chairman of OSC has a responsibility for establishing the profile of the committee, its influence across the council and its ways of working, as well as ensuring that the scrutiny process is managed in a fair and balanced environment, is free from political point scoring and allows for effective scrutiny of all issues presented for consideration. Members putting themselves forward for the role may wish to use these points as guidance for the basis of their discussions with the committee.
- 3.4. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the prospective chairs and vice-chairs before the formal meeting.

- 3.5. The appointment of Chairman will normally take place at the first formal meeting of the Committee in the usual way.
- 3.6. The Monitoring Officer or his representative will call for nominations to the position of Chairman of the Committee, with seconders as appropriate. Voting will take place for each nominated candidate, via a show of hands, in line with section 4, paragraph 4.26 of the Constitution, with steps repeated as necessary until one candidate is successful.
- 3.7. The newly appointed Chairman will then take the Chair, and preside over the appointment of the Vice Chairman, which will follow the same process. Once the Vice Chairman has been appointed, the meeting will be brought to a close.
- 3.8. *Note – those wishing to stand as Chairman/Vice Chairman will be expected to attend in person.*

4. Work Planning

- 4.1. Scrutiny committees should plan their work carefully throughout the year to ensure that the scrutiny process can be effective. At Cherwell Council this includes development of an Annual Scrutiny Work Programme of issues that will be considered throughout the year through its main committee and through commissioned scrutiny working groups, as well as planning ahead of scrutiny committee meetings to plan out the objectives, key information required, key lines of enquiry and possible outcomes for each scrutiny topic.
- 4.2. There are normally six formal committee meetings scheduled throughout the year. In addition, OSC can appoint working groups to carry out detailed research and inquiries on behalf of the formal Committee (as detailed in Constitution section 4a)

The Annual Scrutiny Work Programme

- 4.3. Each year the scrutiny committees consider and agree a programme of work for the municipal year ahead, after considering what the key issues facing the Council and local community where consideration by a scrutiny committee might add value are. Usually, the work programme is for the municipal year period following the Annual Council Meeting, from June to May the following year.
- 4.4. Each year, in drawing up the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme, there is held an informal planning session, where members of the scrutiny committees may consider and discuss proposed topics for inclusion on the work programmes.
- 4.5. This informal session with members of the scrutiny committee allows for the committee to consider key background information and to consult the relevant Council directorates and other stakeholders on the key issues for the Council and community partners that may usefully be considered by the scrutiny committees and to identify:
 - the main topics for consideration throughout the year,
 - the purpose and scope of each topic
 - when each topic should be considered, and

- which departments, external agencies and expert witnesses should be called as witnesses to provide evidence.
- 4.6. The identified topics can then be developed into a work programme for the scrutiny committee that can be agreed by the next formal meeting of the committee, reported to full Council and used to plan the meetings of the committees throughout the year ahead.

Topic Selection and Prioritisation

- 4.7. Initial subjects for consideration will be requested from members of the Committee at a work programme planning session, with committee members given the opportunity to suggest subjects for inclusion on the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme.
- 4.8. Scrutiny members should consider key background information for the Council and the District to help prioritise and scope its Work Programme topics. This includes key strategic documents such as:
- Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan
 - the Annual Delivery Plan priorities,
 - Cherwell District Council Residents' Survey
 - Annual Corporate Performance reports
 - Budget Performance reports
 - The Executive Forward Plan.
- 4.9. An important document the Committee may wish to refer to during the planning session is the Executive Forward Plan (also known as the Executive work programme), the statutory document that is published on a monthly basis covering a rolling four-month period. More detailed information on the requirements of the Forward Plan can be found in section 6 of the Constitution, paragraph 6.1.
- 4.10. OSC may find it useful to refer to the latest version of the Forward Plan throughout the year, as well as during the work programme planning session, to consider upcoming items for the Executive and whether they would benefit from detailed discussion by OSC.
- 4.11. The OSC should prioritise possible issues carefully to ensure that only a manageable amount of issues are selected for consideration throughout the year; eg no more than twelve substantive issues and ensure that the issues selected are of significance to the Council and local residents and where consideration by the scrutiny committee can add value to the decision making process.
- 4.12. The OSC should be clear on the purpose of consideration by the scrutiny committee. Broadly there are two main rationales for scrutiny review, either:
- To provide accountability – eg performance reports and reviews,
 - Policy development and review – considering policy and service areas before a decision by the Executive – eg “pre-decision scrutiny”.
- 4.13. The proposed Work Programme needs to balance issues throughout the year and ensure that these are timely, appropriate and when scrutiny review can be effective, eg when a policy or service review reaches maturation, when information becomes

available and ahead of when the Executive will make a decision on the issue (so that the Executive may receive recommendations from the OSC).

- 4.14. The OSC should review proposed issues for the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme to ensure that work of the Committee remains timely, adds value and does not duplicate activity already underway or undertaken by external regulators.
- 4.15. After the planning session, the Chairman and Vice Chairman will meet with officers from the Democratic and Elections Team to consider which subjects will be taken forward for the formal Annual Scrutiny Work Programme and what style of scrutiny (see the options below) would best suit each subject. The proposed Annual Scrutiny Work Programme will be presented to OSC at the next meeting for approval.
- 4.16. The OSC should review the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme throughout the year to ensure that work of the Committee remains timely, adds value and does not duplicate activity already underway or undertaken by external regulators. The working group scoping document ensures that the key questions that members want to address are listed.
- 4.17. The Chairman of the Committee will be responsible for allocating the Committee's time to each work programme item, to ensure the best approach to each subject.

"Scrutiny members should accept that shortlisting can be difficult; scrutiny committees have finite resources and deciding how these are best allocated is tough. They should understand that if work programming is robust and effective there might well be issues that they want to look at that nonetheless are not selected."

Statutory Scrutiny Guidance 2024

How do Committees choose what to scrutinise?

- 4.18. The OSC should ensure that it consults key stakeholders in developing its Annual Scrutiny Work Programme, particularly the main departments and chief officers of the Council and the Executive. Additionally, suggestions can be received from partner organisations or the public.
- 4.19. Effective scrutiny requires a balanced work programme, which examines the most important challenges facing the district and responds to the concerns of residents.
- 4.20. It is important to remember that scrutiny is an independent member-led process and it is ultimately the responsibility of the Chairman and the committee to determine what is scrutinised and when. This should, however, be based upon officer advice.
- 4.21. Appendix 1 explains some of the key factors in determining whether an issue should be scrutinised.
- 4.22. Here are a few key points to remember when choosing subjects to scrutinise:
 - It is not possible to scrutinise everything that might be suggested. Therefore, a rigorous approach should be taken to prioritising which topics are to be scrutinised.

- thinking about the work of commissioned organisations and the monitoring other public bodies, and how scrutiny inquiries should involve and engage external witnesses and partner organisations
- The Committees have to be realistic about what can effectively be scrutinised and needs to be prepared to say 'No' to some suggestions and be able to explain why they will not be scrutinised.
- It is also important to consider what the best method to deal with any given scrutiny topic is. The choice may depend on the nature of the activity and the capacity of members and officers to conduct further topic groups within the suggested timeframe.
- If necessary, further items can be added to the work programme during the year, with additional meetings between the Chairman, Vice Chairman and officers being scheduled as necessary.

What methods are there to conducting scrutiny?

- 4.23. Overview and Scrutiny can use a range of different approaches depending on the issue being scrutinised. An important part of the work planning process is deciding on how a topic will be examined. Using the full range of methods open to it, scrutiny will be able to mix in-depth and searching inquiries with concise and effective reviews.
- 4.24. Here are some examples of different methods open to committee, some of which are discussed in more detail below:
- Whole committee scrutiny working groups
 - Scrutiny working groups with other non-executive Members of the Council
 - Single issue meetings ("Spotlight Reviews")
 - Calling witnesses or experts to provide specific information to members at committee
 - Site visits.

5. Scrutiny Pre-Meetings and Agenda Planning

- 5.1. There are normally six meetings of the OSC in each municipal year. Ahead of the main meeting, but after the formal agenda and reports have been published, an informal meeting of the committee members may be held with the scrutiny officer to plan the key lines of enquiry, questions and possible outcomes for each item, which may include considering possible draft conclusions and recommendations from the committee.

Scrutiny Planning Meetings

- 5.2. Before the start of each formal meeting, an informal meeting of the committee may also be held to organise the key questions and possible outcomes for each item.
- 5.3. The agenda for the informal pre-meetings should include:
- Introduction by the Chairman (setting out the purpose of the meeting)

- Briefing on the Meeting Plan – including main agenda items, key witnesses for each item, proposed agenda timetable etc
- Key Questions in Committee – prioritisation, rationalisation and allocation of questions for each agenda item.
- Possible Outcomes – including key consultation and scrutiny recommendations. Key questions need to be included for these to ensure that they are evidence based.

- 5.4. These informal meetings can be important to making the scrutiny process effective, as they provide an opportunity for members of the committee to get organised in considering the key information they need to find out, organising their questions for the main meeting and considering possible outcomes from the meeting, such as proposed key conclusions and recommendations. Attendance and participation in these meetings is therefore highly encouraged.
- 5.5. There should be a clear rationale and agenda for the pre-meetings so that it is clear to members what the meetings are for. The meeting also provide an important opportunity for the Chairman and scrutiny officers to discuss the approaches, meeting plan and outcomes with the members of the committee.
- 5.6. These meetings should pay particular attention to the possible key conclusions, observations and recommendations to the Executive which may arise in the main meeting. It can be very challenging to develop appropriate conclusions and scrutiny recommendations in the formal meeting, so this is an important opportunity to consider how these might be framed and worded.
- 5.7. Scrutiny recommendations should be clearly addressed to the relevant decision maker (eg the Executive), and SMART (specific measurable, achievable, realistic and time based). They also need to be clearly linked to evidence received in the report and in questions, so links back to planning the key questions. This usually requires some consideration and forethought.

“Good preparation is a vital part of conducting effective evidence sessions. Members should have a clear idea of what the committee hopes to get out of each session and appreciate that success will depend on their ability to work together on the day.”

Statutory Scrutiny Guidance 2024

Scrutiny Briefing Plans

- 5.8. Ahead of each meeting, the scrutiny officer will normally provide a short briefing on the meeting, including the expected participants, the items being considered, along with any suggested considerations for the committee. The scrutiny officer will normally provide a specific briefing for the Chair of the committee to provide additional guidance on the main stages and directives from the chair.
- 5.9. The scrutiny officer may also provide advice on suggested key lines of enquiry and suggested questions to witnesses, which may discussed in committee.

6. Options and Approaches for Scrutiny Reviews

Single item on a committee agenda

- 6.1. This may offer limited opportunity for effective scrutiny, but may be appropriate for some issues or where the committee wants to maintain a formal watching brief over a given issue.

At a single meeting - ‘Spotlight Review’

- 6.2. Either a formal committee meeting or an informal working group or briefing session. This could provide an opportunity to have a single public meeting about a given subject, or to have a meeting at which evidence is taken from a number of appropriate officers or subject matter experts.

A Scrutiny Working Group - ‘light touch’ review (eg two or three meetings)

- 6.3. A shorter scrutiny review may be most effective even for complex subjects. Properly planned and focused, they allow members to swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations, over a short time period such as a couple of months.

A Scrutiny Working Group - longer-term - ‘full length’ review

- 6.4. Multiple meetings spread over a number of months. This is most appropriate when scrutiny needs to dig into a complex topic in significant detail. This may be suited to the most complex subjects, due to the length of time and wider resource implications for a long review.

7. Scrutiny Working Groups

- 7.1. Working groups involve a small number of councillors looking at an issue in greater detail, in some cases over a day. This process is more time consuming for councillors and officers than other scrutiny activities. Consequently, issues for topic groups are carefully prioritised. In order to make sure that the review is as effective as possible, it is vital that the scope of the review is well-defined.
- 7.2. For this reason each review starts with the completion of a scoping template (see appendix 3) which outlines the key lines of enquiry,, outcomes and constraints, time-scale, key sources of information and principal witnesses.
- 7.3. At its meeting, the working group will hear from a range of witnesses and the lead officer. Depending on the topic, this may include expert witnesses and stakeholders, service users, managers and the relevant executive member/s.

- 7.4. Councillor questioning skills are a significant element of scrutiny and the quality of the questions is instrumental to achieving clear outcomes and strong recommendations.
- 7.5. A short report on the scrutiny inquiry undertaken, its findings, key witnesses and evidence considered and scrutiny recommendations (and the evidence to substantiate those recommendations) is referred to the OSC for ratification and agreement and then published.. The relevant Executive member is required to respond to the report and its recommendations within two months. Six months following the scrutiny, the OSC will monitor implementation of the recommendations.

8. 'Call In' of Executive Decisions

- 8.1. The Local Government Act 2000 allows Overview and Scrutiny Committees to Call In any Executive Key Decision for review (these are Key Decisions taken by the Executive or a key decision made by officers, but not yet implemented).
- 8.2. Unless it meets exemption criteria (detailed in paragraph 13.1 of Part 4a the Constitution), any Executive or officer Key Decision can be called in by noon within four working days of publication of a Key Decision made by the Executive or by an officer (Executive decisions will be published as soon as practicable after the Executive meeting). A key decision can be called in for scrutiny by five Non-Executive members specifying the reason or reasons for the proposed Call In review.
- 8.3. A meeting of OSC will be held within 10 working days. Implementation of the decisions will be delayed while OSC meets and considers the decision.
- 8.4. One of the councillors who submitted the Call In notice are expected to address the committee and, for Key Decisions made by Executive, the relevant Executive Member will respond on behalf of the Executive.
- 8.5. Having reviewed the decision, OSC can:
 - a) Let the decision stand (take no further action).
 - b) Refer the decision back to the Executive or officer (as the case may be) for re-consideration, stating its concerns and the decision that the Committee wish the decision taker to make.
 - c) Determine if the reviewed decision is contrary to the policy framework or to the budget; and in which case refer the matter to Full Council for consideration. Decisions referred for further consideration remain suspended until redetermined.
- 8.6. Call In should not be used on a subject that has previously been considered by OSC.
- 8.7. *Sections 13 to 17 of the OSC Constitution give more detailed information and guidance on the call-in process at Cherwell.*

9. Access to Information and Reports

- 9.1. A scrutiny committee needs access to relevant information the authority holds and to receive it in good time, if it is to do its job effectively. This need is recognised in law, with members of scrutiny committees enjoying powers to access information¹
- 9.2. Scrutiny committees normally access information through requesting officer reports to committee for items on the agenda and may also request information at a meeting of the committee.
- 9.3. Where the committee makes requests for information in committee, this is normally made available to all members of the committee thereafter. This should be done before or at the next meeting of the committee.

Report Requests

- 9.4. There is a general expectation that officers will provide a written report for items on a scrutiny committee agenda. There is a standard format for this, which should provide the main information pertinent to the matter under consideration. Scrutiny members should expect this standard report be made available to the committee and not simply a PowerPoint presentation slides.
- 9.5. The general expectation is that reports will be made available to a committee upon request with a reasonable notice period, sometimes at relatively short notice. However, scrutiny members should also be aware of the time it can take to prepare a formal report and also the Council's operational report clearance processes and make report request in good time to allow for this.
- 9.6. The report also needs to be available at least five "clear days" ahead of the meeting as a minimum to meet the statutory publication deadlines. Deadlines for reports should normally be provided with the report requests. The deadline for final reports will usually be at least ten days ahead of a meeting to allow time for compilation and publication within the statutory deadlines.
- 9.7. As far as practicable, five to six weeks before a meeting of the committee, a report request is submitted by the scrutiny officer to the relevant department, which provides a still brief but more detailed scope of the topic and the key information to be addressed in the report. This is normally drawn up by the scrutiny officer in consultation with the Chairman of the committee.
- 9.8. This should be used by the department to guide the preparation of any requested reports to the committee.

¹ Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Regulation 17 - Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; article 10 Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017. ↪ [The Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

- 9.9. The report requests should include the subject for consideration, the purpose of the inquiry, the key lines of enquiry being addressed, the relevant Executive Member and directorate, any external witnesses anticipated and the deadline date for submission of any papers for publication with the agenda, (which must be at least 5 “clear days” before the meeting). Normally, a draft copy of the report will be requested for at a week before the final report deadline to allow the Chairperson of the scrutiny committee to review the draft report.

Scrutiny Agenda Publication

- 9.10. Scrutiny agendas and papers must be published five clear days in advance of the meeting and are published on the Council website.

10. Questions in Committee

- 10.1. Members of scrutiny committees will put questions to witnesses in committee, including to Executive Members, council officers and external witnesses. Putting the right questions in a scrutiny committee can be key to ensuring that the scrutiny process is effective in obtaining evidence in support of scrutiny recommendations and in providing focused accountability. Scrutiny Members need to be careful however that questions are focused and strategic towards the objectives of the scrutiny inquiry being undertaken.
- 10.2. Broadly, the purpose of questions in committee is either:
- To hold the executive to account,
 - To better understand the area under consideration,
 - To seek information to inform the development of any proposals (scrutiny recommendations) or conclusions drawn from the matter under consideration.
- 10.3. Questions from the committee may be put in committee without any advance notice and answered in committee.
- 10.4. Questions from members of the committee may be sent to the scrutiny officer or collated ahead of the meeting, and with the permission of the members of the committee, submitted to the department, may provide for a more considered or extensive answers in committee, but such questions are still to be put and answered at the meeting, along with any supplementary information made available in response.

11. Scrutiny Reports and Recommendations

- 11.1. The main statutory role of scrutiny committees is the power to make reports and recommendations to the Executive. Scrutiny recommendations may be made in committee to the Executive or other local decision makers. The Executive has a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny reports and recommendations made.
- 11.2. Scrutiny reports and recommendations may be drawn up in advance, with the advice and support of a scrutiny officer, sometimes through a Scrutiny Working Group. Scrutiny reports and recommendations are agreed by resolution of the committee in committee.

- 11.3. The resolutions of the committee should be put to the committee verbatim by the Chair (or through the clerk or scrutiny officer in assisting the Chair), or tabled in written form (such on an officer report with officer recommendations). Such proposed resolutions may then be debated and amended before being resolved upon. Scrutiny recommendations may also include those made in scrutiny reports agreed in committee (e.g. through Scrutiny Working Groups).
- 11.4. Consideration should be given before and during the meeting as to how scrutiny recommendations should be worded so that they are worded in the most meaningful and effective way. The wording of scrutiny recommendations should be framed in such a way as to provide possible executive decisions if agreed by the Cabinet (or other decision maker).
- 11.5. As far as possible, scrutiny recommendations should be SMART – Strategic, Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Time-based.
- 11.6. What is the best way to make sure our recommendations are implemented?
- 11.7. A scrutiny inquiry will conclude by making recommendations to decision-making bodies, such as the Council's Executive.
- 11.8. The following tips can help ensure that scrutiny recommendations are implemented:
- Recommendations that are specific, strategic, substantive, achievable and few in number.
 - Recommendations based on logical argument drawing on evidence.
 - Ensure those responsible for implementing recommendations are asked about what the feasibility of proposed recommendations and can suggest modifications in evidence if that is going to make it more likely that the recommendation will be implemented.
 - Recommendations will be drawn up and presented clearly by the working group as part of its final report. Executive, via the appropriate Executive member, will provide a response to all recommendations explaining the reasons for accepting or not accepting any of the recommendations.
 - Implementation of recommendations should then be monitored.

12. The Executive Response

- 12.1. Once a scrutiny committee has resolved to make a report and/or recommendations to the Executive, the scrutiny report and/or recommendations are referred to the Executive (or other decision maker) for an Executive Response.
- 12.2. The Scrutiny Officer will prepare an officer cover report to the Executive or Executive Member (as appropriate) to present the scrutiny report or recommendations and once this is authorised for publication by the Monitoring Officer, will be placed upon the agenda of the Executive. This serves as the formal notice to the Executive of a scrutiny report or recommendations. This notice must require the Executive to respond within two months of receiving the report notice.

- 12.3. Where a scrutiny report or recommendations are referred to the Executive, at the relevant meeting of the Executive, the Chairman of the OSC relevant Scrutiny Working Group will be permitted, at the discretion of the Chairman of Executive (the Leader), to briefly address Executive to provide a brief oral summary report on the key findings and scrutiny reports and recommendations being made, requesting an Executive Response to any reports and recommendations made.
- 12.4. It is a statutory duty of the Executive to respond a scrutiny committee:
- (a) to consider the report or recommendations,
 - (b) to respond to the scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take,
 - (c) if the overview and scrutiny committee has published the report or recommendations, to publish the response.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9FE>

- 12.5. The Executive Response is made at a formal meeting of Executive (or other decision making body), by formal resolution.
- 12.6. The draft Executive Response should be drawn up in advance by the relevant department, in consultation with the relevant decision maker. The Executive Response should provide clear executive decisions for each scrutiny recommendation.
- 12.7. The Executive Response should be drafted in such a way as to provide clarity on whether the scrutiny recommendation is agreed or rejected, or if an alternative course will be agreed, the relevant portfolio holder (Executive member), the implementing department and when the agreed actions and decisions will be implemented.
- 12.8. The Executive must respond **within two months** beginning with the date on which it received the notice of the scrutiny report or recommendations.

13. Scrutiny Review of Implementation

13.1. *How are recommendations monitored?*

- 13.2. Six months after the OSC has made recommendations to the Executive, progress on the implementation of those recommendations should be reported to OSC. The format of the monitoring may differ from subject to subject, but may include:
- A table listing each recommendation with a 'progress' column
 - A written report from relevant Executive member/officer
 - A presentation
- 13.3. OSC should evaluate and assess the impact of their previous recommendations, referring back to the initial scoping document and compiling a brief evaluation summary for publication.

14. Scrutiny Co-optees

- 14.1. The constitution allows co-option of external people to assist with specific scrutiny reviews (section 4a, paragraph 6.9). Such co-options can be made to the formal OSC, however it is more likely that committee will want to appoint co-optees to task and finish scrutiny working groups that are established for specific reviews.
- 14.2. Once a scrutiny working group has decided to co-opt members, Expressions of Interest to join the working group may be sought from the desired background, included other non-executive Members of the Council, external organisations, experts in the field, service users.
- 14.3. In considering co-option of people outside of the Council and external organisations particular care should be given to consider appropriate persons, mindful of the fact that people and organisations may have particular political and personal interests in an issue. Elected Members and external cooptees need to bring an objective and independent mindset to the scrutiny process, along with their knowledge and expertise.
- 14.4. In seeking Expressions of Interest the following details need to be defined and communicated to people who may be interested, the following steps may be followed:
 - the subject under review
 - an indicative timeframe for the whole review
 - an estimate as to the number of meetings that the co-optees will be expected to attend
 - the format and anticipated location of the meetings, i.e. online via MS Teams, in person at Council offices, or a hybrid approach
 - how interested parties should make their application, eg. via a CV and covering letter, email or application form
 - the deadline for applications/expressions of interest.
- 14.5. In identifying Expressions of Interest from external people and organisations, an advertisement of the co-option opportunity may be sent out to relevant agencies and advertised through Council media and other available media, providing the details of the role and scrutiny inquiry.
- 14.6. Members of the scrutiny working group may consider expressions of interest received, creating a short list for interview. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a meeting, and the task and finish group will decide who to appoint.
- 14.7. The Scrutiny Working Group will reserve the right to not appoint any co-optees following interview.
- 14.8. Any appointments made will be for a specified time period, likely to coincide with the estimated timeframe for the scrutiny inquiry.

- 14.9. Once the recruitment process has completed, meetings of the scrutiny working group will take place in line with the process detailed at paragraph 6.6 of the Constitution.

15. Scrutiny Training and Development

- 15.1. The Statutory Scrutiny Guidance 2024 says that Local Authorities should ensure committee members are offered induction when they take up their role and ongoing training so they can carry out their responsibilities effectively and that authorities should pay attention to the need to ensure committee members are aware of their legal powers, and how to prepare for and ask relevant questions at scrutiny sessions.
- 15.2. Cherwell District Council draws up an annual programme of scrutiny training and development for members and officers, including training and development for new members of the a scrutiny committee, training and development for all members of the OSC and scrutiny working groups, scrutiny training for all members of the Council, including Members of the Executive, training for council officers involved with Overview and Scrutiny.

16. Further resources and reviewing and updating of this guide

- 16.1. The Monitoring Officer and Democratic and Elections Team will periodically review this guide with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, gathering feedback from OSC as required, to ensure it remains up-to-date and appropriate.
- 16.2. In addition to this guide and the formal CDC Constitution, OSC members may wish to consult further resources, such as the LGA's Councillor Workbook on Scrutiny - <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-workbook-scrutiny> (updated September 2023) which gives more detailed information about possible approaches to Scrutiny.
- 16.3. *This guidance should be read in conjunction with the [Cherwell District Council Constitution](#)² and the [Statutory Scrutiny Guidance](#)³ issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.*

² The Cherwell District Council Constitution
<https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=531&MIId=3982&Ver=4&Info=1>
(Accessed 11 February 2025).

³ Statutory guidance - Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Published 22 April 2024

Appendix 1

Role Profiles

The role profiles shown below highlight the key elements of each role within OSC, to inform members ahead of their involvement with the Committee. They are not exhaustive or prescriptive, and are for guidance only.

OSC Chairman

The OSC Chairman (or Vice Chairman in their absence) may be required to:

- Chair the formal Committee meetings.
- Provide leadership and direction to the Committee.
- Direct the management of meetings in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, impartially and objectively and considering advice from the committee staff and Monitoring Officer.
- Lead the committee in prioritising its work so as to ensure effective scrutiny
- Encourage all members of the Committee to engage with the scrutiny process.
- Develop a constructive relationship with Executive.
- Develop a constructive relationship with the Corporate Leadership Team
- Meet with officers as required to receive agenda briefings, plan scrutiny reviews (as detailed in section 2 above) and to discuss possible future additions to the work programme, i.e. from the Executive Forward Plan.
- Where the Committee has been asked to provide comments or feedback to a decision maker, i.e. Executive or Full Council, the Chairman will be expected to attend the relevant meeting to provide feedback on behalf of the Committee.
- Be prepared to brief their wider political party or group on the business to be considered by the Committee.

OSC Vice Chairman

The OSC Vice-Chairman will be expected to deputise for the Chairman should they be absent or unavailable.

The Vice Chairman is to mirror the Chairman's responsibilities and act as supportive advisor and second set of eyes over the Chairman role.

The Vice-Chairman can Chair in full or parts of a committee meeting as determined by the Chairman.

Where officer meetings/agenda briefings are arranged, the Vice-Chairman will be invited as a matter of course.

The Vice-Chairman should ensure they are familiar with the Chairman role profile above.

Appendix 1

OSC Committee Members

OSC Committee members are expected to:

- Engage and participate in the development of an effective work programme during work programme planning sessions.
- Engage with all stages of the scrutiny process, including informal briefings and work planning meetings
- Consider issues in a non-party political and impartial manner.
- Participate in scrutiny working groups established by the OSC.
- Analyse and if necessary challenge information presented to the Committee.
- Read agendas in advance of meetings and submit questions to officers in advance, to assist them with their pre-meeting preparation.
- Propose and consider observations and recommendations based on the Committee's deliberations.
- Conduct independent research/reading outside formal committee meetings if required.
- Brief their wider political party or group on the business to be considered by the Committee.
- Act as a point of contact for members of the public, external organisations and other members.

Scrutiny Working Group Members

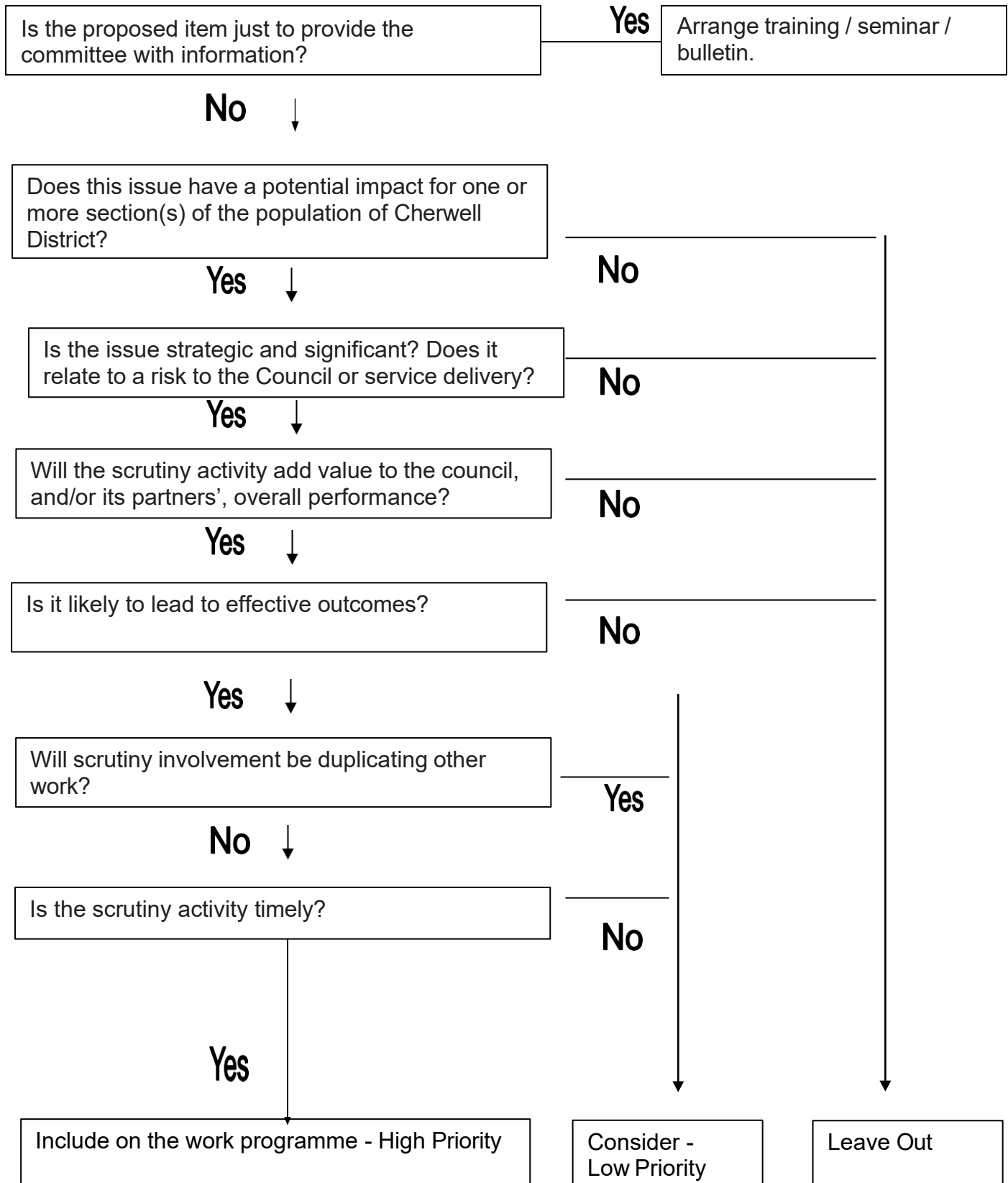
If OSC decide to establish a working group to review a particular subject, any non-executive Member from across the Council can be appointed to sit on that group.

Executive Members are not allowed to sit on OSC or scrutiny working groups and may not vote on scrutiny recommendations, however they can contribute to reviews in their capacity as Portfolio Holders and provide useful background information.

If appointed to a scrutiny working group, members may be required to:

- Contribute to the scoping stage of a review, to help determine the best approach to the subject under review.
- Attend additional meetings to progress work in relation to the review (timetable to be determined by each working group).
- Take responsibility for one or more areas of the agreed scope of the review, conducting independent research/reading/visits/discussions as necessary.
- Contribute to the end of review report and recommendations, and support the presentation to the full Committee at the conclusion of the review.

Criteria for selecting scrutiny topics





TOPIC Review Group Scoping Document

This scoping template is designed to assist councillors and officers in establishing the focus of a scrutiny review group. It emphasises the need for scrutiny review groups to have a clear purpose, rationale and focus for their work, and to make the best use of the resources available within a given time frame.

This document will act as a reference guide throughout the review process to ensure the does not deviate from its intended purpose.

Review Group Overview & Scrutiny Committee Member Lead	<i>The name of the Member(s) suggesting the subject.</i>
Membership	<i>This would be the working group working on the review – not necessary at initial suggestion stage.</i>
Officer Support	<i>Anticipated officer involvement, e.g. departments with knowledge of the subject</i>
Background	<i>What has led to the subject being suggested for review</i>
Rationale	<i>What is the justification for the subject being suggested for review</i>
Indicators of Success	<i>Potential outcome of the review, e.g. a new policy being drafted, a new process being adopted etc.</i>
Out of Scope	<i>What will not be considered during the review</i>
Method / Approach	<i>A brief outline of how the review would be completed</i>
Guest speakers / Witnesses / Experts	<i>Brief outline of any specialists or experts who may be invited to take part in the review</i>
Evidence required and documents	<i>Brief outline of information</i>
Site Visits	<i>Subject to covid restrictions, if any visits are anticipated.</i>
Risks	<i>Availability of councillors and officers to progress the work</i>

Appendix 3

Projected Start Date		Draft Report Deadline	
Meeting Frequency		Projected Completion Date	

Approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date:

Draft Outline of meetings

(Review Group members are reminded that they will be required to undertake evidence gathering and work outside of the meetings detailed below to ensure that the Review completion date is met)

Meeting 1 –
Meeting 2 –
Meeting 3 –
Meeting 4 –
Meeting 5 –

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