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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday 11 November 2025

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

Membership

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Barry Wood

Councillor Phil Chapman (Vice-Chair)

Councillor John Broad
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Dom Vaitkus

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. **Appointment of Chair**

To appoint a Chair for the remainder of the 2025/26 municipal year.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair (if required)**

In the event of the Vice-Chair being appointed as Chair, the committee will be required to appoint a new Vice-Chair.

3. **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

4. 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.

5. Minutes (Pages 7 - 12)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2025.

6. Chair's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chair.

7. Urgent Business

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

8. Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2025 - 2026 (Pages 13 - 34)

Report of Assistant Director of Finance.

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position at the end of Quarter 2 2025-26.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's performance Quarter 2 report.

9. Cherwell District Council Safeguarding Self-Assessment (Pages 35 - 74)

Report of Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services.

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the progress made on safeguarding measures and activity across Cherwell District Council, highlighting areas that have progressed through training and briefings. Identifying the themes of safeguarding concerns from the internal reporting mechanism, our partnership working with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board and District Councils.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse the multiagency collaboration for safeguarding.
- 1.2 Consider actions for future safeguarding briefings for Members

10. Kerbside Glass Collection Service (Pages 75 - 86)

Report of the Assistant Director Environmental Services and Corporate Director Communities.

Purpose of report

This report sets out the options for the Kerbside glass collection, and other new requirements driven by the Environment Act. It provides the necessary details to enable an informed decision.

Recommendations

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.2 Support the proposed changes to the service, introducing kerbside glass collections in January 2026.
- 1.2 Note the potential impacts of the Environment Act on the waste collection service and that a further report on other elements of Simpler Recycling will come forward to Executive in the near future

11. Flytipping Presentation

To receive a presentation from Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety.

Please note the presentation will be to follow

12. Work Programme Update (Pages 87 - 92)

An update on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

Recommendation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme update.

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 at 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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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 3 November 2025

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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 9 September 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Phil Chapman (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke

Substitute Members:

Councillor David Rogers (In place of Councillor Zoe McLernon)
Councillor Amanda Watkins (In place of Councillor Lynne Parsons)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Barry Wood

Also Present:

Adrian Unitt, Managing Director - Graven Hill Village Development Company
Phillip Kassiram, Finance Director - Graven Hill Village Development Company
Terry Fuller, Chair of the Board - Graven Hill Village Development Company

Officers:

Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources and Transformation
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

22 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

24 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

25 **Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2025 - 2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director – Customer Focus that detailed the council's performance position at the end of quarter 1 2025-2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration advised that the Council was performing well against its quarter 1 objectives, with 82% of measures on target or within tolerance.

Out of 38 total measures 0 were red, 7 were amber, and 31 were green. On the annual delivery plan there were 23 milestones to deliver in quarter 1, 20 of which had been achieved or were within the agreed tolerance, and 3 slightly behind target. The actions with milestones behind target were Strengthen community cohesion - Produce Annual EDI General Duty Compliance report; Deliver Planning Service Improvement - establish performance improvement indicators, targets and resource needs; and Create vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages - complete an asset register and agree future plan for each, with focus on those that are underutilised or suitable for community transfer.

Members were advised that work had begun on the milestones but was not yet completed.

Members were also advised that of the nine targeted corporate key performance indicators, five achieved their Q1 target or reported within the agreed tolerance, and four reported slightly behind target.

Officers then responded to a series of pre-submitted questions from members.

In response to a question regarding indicator BP2.2.03 the Q1 Climate Actions, and elaboration on the red status of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) within the report, the Climate Action Manager had provided a detailed written response, stating that since the publication of the agenda some of the action points had achieved a green status., The remaining were in progress and a comprehensive detailed response on the status of the remaining KPI's would be published after the meeting.

In response to a question regarding membership of the Climate Change Programme Board (CCPB), and were others able join it, the Corporate Director Communities explained that the CCPB was a closed officer led board, comprising of a number of assistant directors, heads of service and senior officers, used to monitor the progress of the climate action programme. Members were also advised that a Climate Action Working Group was due to be formed, at which appointed members would receive updates and have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Climate Change Programme.

In response to a question regarding educating public facing officers in British Sign Language (BSL) as part of EDI General Duty Compliance, the Performance Team Leader relayed a response from the Assistant Director of Human Resources stating that the Council's language bank had been launched and internal resources had been identified. Information had also been sought for sign language courses, including the associated costs.

In response to a question relating to indicator BP2.2.05 total greenhouse gas emissions for the year, and whether the report took into account changes made to residential properties by householders to reduce emissions as well as any retrofitting to commercial buildings, the Assistant Director Communities explained that the council monitored two distinct sets of emissions., Organisational emissions, which were those directly linked to council operations, and District-wide emissions; which included emissions from homes, businesses, transport, and other sectors across Cherwell Any changes to residential and commercial were not tracked at an individual property level, they were captured indirectly via the cumulative effect becoming visible in national and regional emissions data.

In response to a question regarding the delivery of Planning Service improvements, and whether this would diminish residents and parish council input into the planning process, and if it would also include improvements to external input from such bodies as Oxfordshire County Council Highways, the Assistant Director - Planning and Development advised that there would be no reduction in parish or resident input to the planning process. It was the responsibility of said bodies to provide their input, but the action plan for the management of strategic planning applications included more structured tracking and chasing of consultation responses in the interest of avoiding unnecessary delays.

In response to a question regarding the implementation of the Parish Liaison Flood Toolkit, the Corporate Director Communities explained that a parish flooding workshop was due to be held which would help with the creation of the toolkit.

In response to a comment from the Committee regarding the collection of council tax and business rates, the Chair agreed to record the thanks given from the committee to officers for their efforts in achieving such high collection rates.

In response to a question regarding indicator BP1.2.10, % of major planning applications overturned at appeal, and whether the Councils position had fluctuated or remained close to the stated 16% and how that effected the risk of designation from the Planning Inspectorate, the Assistant Director – Planning and Development explained that the council had been contacted regarding its previously high percentage of 10.4% over a two year period for major applications overturned at appeal., Officers subsequently submitted an exceptional circumstances case to government, which resulted in no designation being made, as recognition was given to the councils' commitment and efforts to rectifying the situation. Members were then advised that due to an error in the recording of the data the Councils' Q1 total was not 16% and was below 10%., One of the two applications overturned at appeal had been minor and not major.

In response to a question relating to the amber designation of the production of the Annual EDI General Duty Compliance Report and whether the report would be produced in time, the Performance Team Leader explained that despite a slight delay, work on the report had begun, and officers were confident that the report would be ready in time.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Council's Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2025 - 2026 performance be noted, and no comments be submitted for Executive consideration.

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Work Programme Update

The Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead provided an update on the Committee's Work Programme 2025 – 2026.

Due to the impact of external factors, items due for the October meeting had had to be rescheduled, and other items from the work programme were unable to be brought forward. Therefore, the Chairman and Monitoring Officer had discussed and agreed to cancel the meeting of the committee due to be held on the 14 October 2025.

Members were advised that due to the Executive considering Simpler Recycling at their October meeting, that item and the linked Flytipping item

had been moved from the October meeting to the November meeting of the committee.

Members were informed that the Transformation programme had been renamed the Cherwell Futures Programme and would be brought to the December meeting of the committee.

Members were also advised that the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley will join our December meeting to give their annual updates. As usual, all Members would be invited to attend this meeting.

Members sought assurance and it was agreed by the Chair that the scheduled item on the performance of Section 106 (S106) delivery would be expanded to include an analysis of S106 payments for the expansion and delivery of primary care, and that officers would endeavour to ensure the report be brought to Committee during this 2025-26 municipal year.

In response to a question regarding the status of the update to the Community Safety Partnership Plan, the Corporate Director Communities advised that the action plan was produced and owned by the Community Safety Partnership, to which the Council was a member. He confirmed that an updated plan was in existence and officers were working on bringing an update to the committee as soon as practicable.

Members thanked the Corporate Director Communities for the update, and the Chair highlighted that as the CSCP action plan tied in with the police, it would be useful if the update to Committee could be scheduled to coincide with the attendance of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police in December.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Work Programme 2025 – 2026 be noted.

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Exclusion of the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Graven Hill Village Development Company Update

The Corporate Director – Resources and Transformation submitted an exempt report detailing the Graven Hill Development Company (GHVDC) Phase 2 progress, performance in 2024/25, and governance arrangements.

The Committee received a presentation from the GHVDC Managing Director detailing the Graven Hill 2024/25 Business Plan & Budget as well as providing an up-to-date position statement. In introducing the presentation, the GHVDC Managing Director advised that it had been a challenging year in the housing market, due to factors such as higher mortgage costs, slowing buyer decisions, lack of government incentive schemes and changes to stamp duty and land tax.

Officers responded to detailed pre-submitted questions from the Committee and agreed to circulate the answers after the meeting.

In response to a question regarding GHVDC's social housing policy, the GHVDC Managing Director advised that levels of Affordable Housing included initially were compliant with national policy at the time of the initial application, and future applications would continue to be compliant with appropriate national policy.

In response to a question as to whether the Integrated Care Board (ICB) could be invited to discuss Primary Care provision at Graven Hill, the Assistant Director Law and Governance, Monitoring Officer explained that health scrutiny was the responsibility of the County Council and therefore questions regarding the ICB would be best placed with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Oxfordshire County Council.

Resolved

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Graven Hill Village Development Company Update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chair:

Date:

This report is public	
Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2025-2026	
Committee	Overview and Scrutiny
Date of Committee	11 November 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Councillor Chris Brant - Portfolio Holder Corporate Services
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	20 October 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Finance

Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position at the end of Quarter 2 2025-26.

1. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's performance Quarter 2 report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Performance report presents how the council has performed against its priorities for 2025-26, which are set out in its Outcomes Framework.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	There are no financial and resource implications arising directly from this report. Michael Furness, Assistant Director – Finance, 23 October 2025
Legal	There are no legal implications arising at this stage. In relation to some of the KPIs which have been missed or not tracked, it is important for the Council to monitor these from a legal perspective to ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligations in relation to these areas. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal, 23 October 2025
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 06 October 2025

Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact		X		There are no direct equalities and inclusion implications as a consequence of this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 06 October 2025
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
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 during Quarter 2 2025-26			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The council actively and regularly monitors its performance to ensure it can deliver its corporate priorities and respond effectively to emerging issues.

- 3.2 This monitoring takes place at least 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 Quarter 2 2025-26.

4. Details

4.1 Performance Summary

- 4.1.1 The council is performing well against its Quarter 2 objectives, which consist of 11 Corporate KPI Measures, seven Directorate KPI Measures and 18 Annual Delivery Plan actions. Reporting as per the table below for this quarter.

Plan	Total number of measures	Red (Behind target)		Amber (Slightly behind target)		Green (Achieved or within tolerance)	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
ADP	18	0	0%	10	44%	8	56%
Corporate KPIs (Targeted)	11	4	36%	2	18%	5	45%
Directorate KPIs (Targeted)	7	0	0%	1	14%	6	86%
Total	36	4	11%	13	36%	19	53%

4.2 Monitoring measures

- 4.2.1 The council monitors 11 key measures to help identify emerging trends that may require early intervention—either by us or in collaboration with our partners. These measures are not target-driven, as they are influenced by external factors beyond our control. Responsibility for monitoring lies with the Performance Team and the relevant Director, with reporting triggered only when a significant trend change is observed.
- 4.2.2 For Quarter 2, one monitoring measure is showing an upward trend, the number of upheld complaints has increased by 12 compared to the previous quarter, and by 13 compared to the same period last year, which could mean a seasonal trend. An in-depth analysis is currently underway to explore the root causes of this increase and to identify potential solutions to address any underlying issues.

4.3 Performance Exceptions

- 4.3.1 Of the 18 Annual Delivery Plan milestones set for Quarter 2, 8 were achieved and 10 reported slightly behind target.

Annual Delivery Plan – Exceptions

Action	Milestone	Status
Support the Marmot Place Partnership for Oxfordshire.	Launch Marmot Place Programme with Partners	Amber
Review of our Local Strategic Partnership to be more effective in delivering co-produced solutions to community issues	Work with key partners to identify and agree key community issues for the partnership to consider in year.	Amber
Develop parish council toolkit to empower communities	Work with parish Councils to identify key components and agree next steps	Amber
Transfer existing community assets to community organisations to support collaboration and resilience	Identify and agree potential assets for transferring to community organisations	Amber
Strengthening community cohesion	Agree new EDI Framework and Supporting actions	Amber
Identify pathways for CDC to reach net zero carbon	Produce new climate change strategy	Amber
Promote environmentally conscious communities	Develop and agree a Civic Pride campaign to promote cleaner communities and open spaces	Amber
Reducing the percentage of 'major' planning application decisions overturned at appeal	Implement Major Applications Action Plan	Amber
Streamline process for the preparation of 'section 106' legal agreements and associated land transfers which support planning permissions.	Implement actions from a S106 process review	Amber
Deliver Planning Service Improvement	Define and implement improvements	Amber

4.3.2 Of the 11 targeted corporate key performance indicators, five achieved their Q2 target or reported within the agreed tolerance, two reported slightly behind target, three didn't achieve their target, and one was not updated due to the data not being available at the time of writing this report.

Corporate Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions

Measure	Status
BP2.2.01 % Waste Recycled & Composted	Amber
BP2.2.03 % of Climate Action Plan delivering to target	Amber
BP1.2.05 % of Homelessness cases successfully prevented rather than relief/main duty being applied	Red
BP1.2.10 % of Major Applications overturned at appeal (within decision period)	Red
BP1.2.11 % of Major Applications overturned at appeal - Financial Year	Red
BP1.2.13 Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs	Red

4.3.3 Please find below further details for the KPIs reporting Red:

- **% of Homelessness cases successfully prevented rather than relief/main duty being applied** - Reporting 50% against a target of 60% in Quarter 2.

Comments from the service: At the end of Q2 we had successfully prevented homelessness in 36 cases of which 9 received a final offer of accommodation via the private rented sector. Prevention of homelessness is becoming more difficult due to lack of affordable accommodation in the private rented sector. The team are also experiencing more people presenting in crisis and with complex needs that often need addressing before a suitable offer of accommodation can be made.

- **% of Major Applications overturned at appeal (within decision period)-**

Reporting 22.2% against a target of 10% in Quarter 2.

Comments from the service: In Q1 and Q2, three appeals were allowed—Quarry Close, Bloxham, and two solar farms—making up 22% of appeals for that period. However, these relate to older cases and do not reflect the government's formal quality measure. The government assesses planning quality over two-year periods. For April 2023 to March 2025, 112 major decisions were made, with 12 appeals allowed (10.71%) and one pending, which could raise the rate to 11.61%. For April 2024 to March 2026, the current rate is 5.19% from 77 decisions and 4 appeals allowed, potentially rising to 6.59% with one pending. This shows improvement from the previous cycle's 12.8%.

Looking ahead to April 2025 to March 2027, there have been 21 decisions with no appeals allowed or pending, indicating a 0% overturn rate. Since April 2025, only one committee overturn has occurred, and no new major appeals have been submitted. The planning team is now working with the Performance and Insight Team to develop KPIs that better align with government reporting standards.

- **% of Major Applications overturned at appeal - Financial Year –** Reporting 17.7% against a target of 10% for Quarter 2.

Comments from the service: Three Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26. A total of 17 Major Planning Applications were determined within the period.

- **Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs** Reporting 360 against a target of 791 at the mid-point of the year (metric is reported twice per year, in Q2 and Q4)

Comments from Service: The reported figure is preliminary, with the count still ongoing and subject to change following final audits. Nonetheless, completions are expected to remain below target—a trend reflected nationally. According to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's September 2025 report, completions in Q1 fell by 2% from the previous quarter and by 19% compared to the same period last year.

4.3.4 Of seven targeted directorate key performance indicators six achieved their targets for the quarter or reported within agreed tolerances, one is reporting slightly behind target. Please note Directorate level KPIs are reported to Committees on an exception basis (only indicators reporting Red and/or Amber).

Directorate Key Performance Indicators – Exceptions

Measure	Status
BP1.2.14 % of Building Control full plans assessed within 5 weeks (or longer with applicant's agreement)	Amber

For full details on all ADP milestones and Corporate KPIS, Directorate and Monitoring KPIS exceptions, including commentary, please reference Appendices 1 and 2.

4.4 Performance Highlights

4.4.1 Here is a snapshot of some of the council's key achievements from the second quarter of the year.

- The agreements for lease for two new lettings at Castle Quay have been completed. Fit out works for one of the units are currently underway, marking progress toward occupancy at Castle Quay.
- The average time to process new Housing Benefit claims and Council Tax Reduction applications was reported at 11 days during quarter 2, significantly outperforming the target of a maximum of 18 days, supporting 619 households and reflecting the continued efficiency in service delivery, and a strong commitment to timely support for residents.
- The overall number of residents in temporary accommodation is showing a slight downward trend, though it remains relatively stable, reporting nine households less (82 in total for Q2) than the previous quarter (91), and 17 less than quarter 4 2024-25. Encouragingly, we are seeing positive move-on outcomes via the housing register, following recent changes to the Allocations Scheme. These improvements are helping to mitigate the impact of demand, with an average of nearly five households placed into temporary accommodation each week.
- A total of 173 local businesses were supported through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund programmes. Support included business development assistance via the Cherwell Business Spark and Cherwell Accelerator initiatives, decarbonisation support such as grants, tailored plans, expert one-to-one guidance, and workshops, as well as recognition and promotional opportunities through the Cherwell Business Awards.

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 financial position up to the end of Quarter 2 2025-26, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 To note the contents of the report and approve the recommendations found in section 1.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A as not an Executive report
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	Business Plan KPIs Q2 2025-26
Appendix 2	Annual Delivery Plan Actions Q2 2025-26
Background Papers	N/A
Reference Papers	N/A
Report Author	Celia Prado-Teeling - Performance & Insight Team Leader
Report Author contact details	Celia.prado-teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk , 01295 221556
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Michael Furness, Assistant Director – Finance, on behalf of Stephen Hinds, Executive Director- Resources, 23 October 2025

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Appendix 1 - Business Plan KPIs

Delivering quality housing and placemaking - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026									
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD R.A.G.
BP1.2.02 No. of Homeless Households living in nightly charged (Hotel) Temporary accommodation (TA)	CLlr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian Boll Nicola Riley 	Smaller Is Better	24.00	25.00	★	25.50	25.00	★
Commentary Number of clients in hotel accommodation is within target. This measure can be volatile as demand driven through those requiring emergency accommodation.									
YTD Commentary n/a									
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	50.00%	60.00%	▲	52.00%	60.00%	●
Commentary At the end of Q2 we had successfully prevented homelessness in 36 cases of which 9 received a final offer of accommodation via the private rented sector.									
YTD Commentary Prevention of homelessness is becoming more difficult due to lack of affordable accommodation in the private rented sector. The team are also experiencing more people presenting in crisis and with complex needs that often need addressing before a suitable offer of accommodation can be made.									

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD R.A.G.
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	88.9%	60.0%	★	81.9%	60.0%	★
Commentary 9 Major Planning Applications were determined during Q2 2025/26, 8 of which were determined within the National Indicator target or agreed timeframe.									
YTD Commentary 21 Major Planning Applications were determined during Q1 & 2 2025/26, 17 of which were determined within the National Indicator target or agreed timeframe.									
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	80.1%	70.0%	★	79.8%	70.0%	★
Commentary 246 Non-Major Planning Applications were determined during Q2 2025/26, 197 of them within National Indicator target or agreed timeframe.									
YTD Commentary 509 Non-Major Planning Applications were determined during Q1 & 2 2025/26, 406 of them within National Indicator target or agreed timeframe.									

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD R.A.G.
BP1.2.10 % of Major Applications overturned at appeal (within decision period)	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Smaller Is Better	22.2%	10.0%	▲	22.2%	10.0%	▲
Commentary 2 Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q2 2025/26 24/01908/OUT - Quarry Close, Bloxham - Outline planning application for the erection of up to 60 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point. All Matters Reserved except for means of access - re-submission of 23/01265/OUT 22/01682/F - Land North Of Manor Farm, Noke - Development of a ground mounted solar farm incorporating the installation of solar PV panels, associated infrastructure and access, as well as landscape planting and designated ecological enhancement areas.									
YTD Commentary 3 Major Planning Application decisions were allowed at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26. Overall, 17 Major Planning Applications were determined.									
BP1.2.11 % of Major Applications overturned at appeal - Financial Year	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Smaller Is Better	17.7%	10.0%	▲	17.7%	10.0%	▲
Commentary 3 Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26. A total of 17 Major Planning Applications were determined within the period.									
YTD Commentary 3 Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26. A total of 17 Major Planning Applications were determined within the period.									

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD 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	360	791	▲	360	791	▲
Commentary Please note this figure is preliminary, the count is still underway at the time of reporting so the final figure may be subject to change once the count is fully completed and figures audited.									
BP1.2.15 % of Non-Major Applications overturned at appeal (within decision period)	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Smaller Is Better	2.0%	10.0%	★	2.0%	10.0%	★
Commentary 5 Non-Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q2 2025/26. A total of 246 were determined within the period.									
YTD Commentary 9 Non-Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26									
BP1.2.16 % of Non-Major Applications overturned at appeal - Financial Year	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Peckford Ian Boll 	Smaller Is Better	2.2%	10.0%	★	2.2%	10.0%	★
Commentary 9 Non-Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26. A total of 406 were determined within the period.									
YTD Commentary 9 Non-Major Planning Application decisions were overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during Q1 & 2 2025/26. A total of 406 were determined within the period.									

Delivering quality housing and placemaking - Directorate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD R.A.G.
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	93.5%	95.00%	●	97.8%	95.00%	★

Commentary

29/31 achieved. The 2 not achieved were overdue by 1 and 3 days.

YTD Commentary

To date we have achieved 138/141.

Leading environmental stewardship and climate action - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD 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	50.86%	54.00%	●	51.42%	54.00%	★
Commentary Recycling rate is being affected by no growth in the recycling stream and reduced garden waste due to the hot summer.									
YTD Commentary n/a									
BP2.2.03 % of Climate Action Plan delivering to target	Cllr T Beckett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ian Boll ■ Jo Miskin 	Bigger Is Better	61.74%	66.00%	●	60.43%	66.00%	●
Commentary In Q2, of the 115 Climate Actions, 101 were Ongoing, 9 On-hold, and 5 Completed. RAG ratings showed 71 actions in Green, 35 in Amber, and 9 in Red. Key developments include Executive approval for transitioning the fleet to HVO fuels, expected in early Q4, and piloting the Carbon Budget Tool (Carbon Impact Assessment Tool) for capital projects ahead of its Q3 rollout. The 2024–2025 Greenhouse Gas Report has begun, and the Climate Change Strategy is being developed for Executive consideration in Q4. Phase 1 of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) has concluded, with Phase 2 (Cherwell-wide LAEP) launching mid-October. CDC submitted responses to strategic energy consultations including Transitional Regional Energy Strategic Planning (TRESP), Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES), and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). The Fast Follower project is nearing completion, focusing on carbon codes and sequestration potential. A joint bid to the Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) Flexible Fund was submitted to pilot heat resilience measures. CDC continues to support local businesses through green initiatives, including match funding for energy assessments and a Sustainable Business Survey. As a new partner in the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP), CDC is strengthening collaboration to reduce district-wide emissions. Broadly, there are two key factors contributing to the programme's current amber status: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited internal capacity to progress both CDC and district-wide climate programmes. 2. Insufficient funding for major climate projects, such as retrofitting our leisure centres and corporate buildings. We've reflected these challenges in the council's internal service prioritisation and transformation discussions, working closely with the Performance/Transformation and Finance teams to establish these gaps and explore potential solutions.									
YTD Commentary n/a									

Driving long-term economic prosperity - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026									
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD R.A.G.

Please note there are no Corporate KPIs under this priority due to be reported during Q2 2025-26

Empowering Community Leadership - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026									
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Qtr Actual	Qtr Target	R.A.G	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD R.A.G.

Please note there are no Corporate KPIs under this priority due to be reported during FY 2025-26

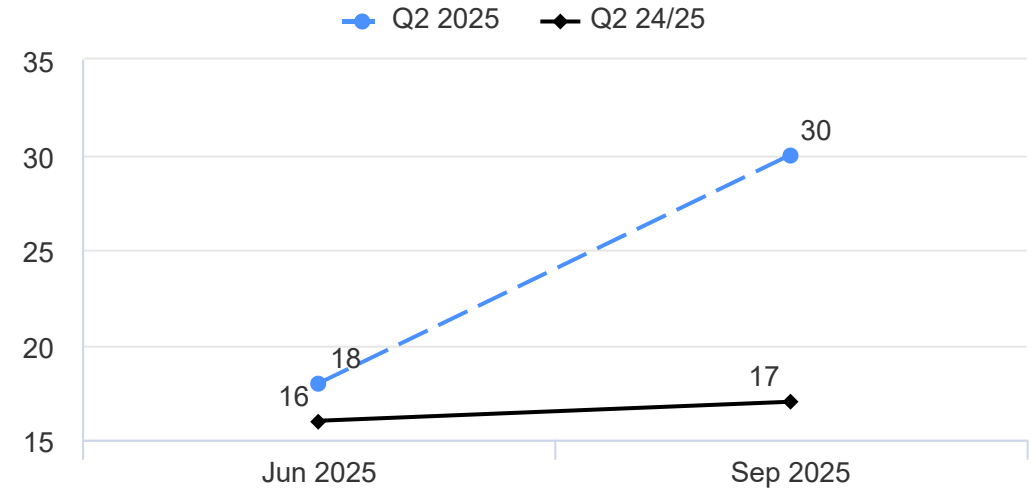
Please note in all the charts below the blue line represents the current performance and the black line the previous financial year 2024-25

BP5.1.07 Number of upheld complaints

There were 30 upheld complaints during Q2, 13 more than the same period last year. The team is analysing the nature of the complaints received and extracting lessons learnt to provide feedback to services.

Commentary

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Appendix 2 - Annual Delivery Plan 2025-26

Please note delivery of the actions below could be affected by changes in policy, national and local circumstances, these risks are managed through each service operational risk

Council plan priority	Goals	Aims	Year 1 actions	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	QTR	Milestones Q1-Q4	RAG	Performance
Economic prosperity	Create vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages	To foster diverse economic centres and villages that support local businesses, attract investment, and enhance community life.	Ongoing engagement with businesses to support their investment plans. Working together with OCC to plan infrastructure for strategic growth	Julia Harrington Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Agree delivery timescales for Market Square, Bicester. Agree action plans and priorities for Kidlington, Bicester and Banbury		The Market Square project has been progressing throughout Q1. An estimated programme has been developed in Q1, and is included as an Appendix to the Exec report due to be presented on the 2nd September. The Area Priority Plans have been developed in Q1 for all 3 areas, and presented to the relevant Area Oversight Group (AOG).
						Q2	Agree the plan for the 2025/26 Economic Forum Hold annual Business Awards (Sept)		Economic Forum plan developed - location will be in Kidlington, to be held in March subject to venue confirmation.
						Q3	Commission a report on the Future of Cherwell's high streets. Develop and agree an action plan to reflect the findings of Experience Oxfordshire's Economic report on Cherwell		
						Q4	Hold the 2025/26 Economic Forum in order to explore investment opportunities and barriers/challenges to future investment		
		To promote sustainable economic prosperity through innovation, resilience, and strategic growth.	Continue the diversification of tenancies at Council owned commercial properties including key public/third sector partners	Mona Walsh Stephen Hinds	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Launch a campaign to attract a diverse range of tenants at commercial sites		Campaign launched. End Q1 outcome - terms agreed for two new lettings at Castle Quay. Offers received for vacant unit at Pioneer Square being considered and due diligence underway.
						Q2	No milestone		Agreement for lease for two new lettings at Castle Quay completed and fit out works for one letting is underway. Exec and Council approval of terms of new letting at 36-37 Bridge Street Banbury (part of ex M&S unit).
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	No milestone		
			Maximise the impact of Council-owned and other assets to further enable the regeneration of our Economic Centres	Mona Walsh Julia Harrington Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Complete asset register and agree future plan for each, with a focus on those that are underutilised or suitable for community transfer.		Initial document drafted and discussed with Cllr McLean. Actions agreed include action plan and focus on underutilised and assets suitable to transfer or disposal. Updated to Amber following monthly meeting with Prop Portfolio Holder (PH) on 19 Aug. Good progress made to date but some further actions to be agreed.
						Q2	No milestone		Further report to and discussions with Cllr McLean in Sept have led to agreed approaches and strategy for sites including community centres and garages.
						Q3	Complete options appraisal for Castle Quay Bridge Street area site and agree next steps in collaboration with Banbury AOG Agree assets for disposal and delivery plan		
						Q4	Complete an options appraisal for extending PV and wind energy on council assets in support of climate priority.		
	Build an inclusive and green economy	To build an economy that is both inclusive and environmentally sustainable, ensuring equitable opportunities for all while minimising environmental impact.	Delivering the Year 4 programme of UK Shared Prosperity Funding, to focus on pressures in our communities	Julia Harrington Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Agree and Launch the 2025/26 UKSPF programme. Produce report on the outcomes achieved for 2024/25		The UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) programme for 25/26 has been agreed by Cllr McLean as Portfolio Holder decision, with delegation to the Director of Communities to amend when required, in discussion with Portfolio Holder. The outcomes report for 24/25 has been completed and approved by Assistant Director of Finance and sent back to Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
						Q2	Identify implications for Cherwell of Oxfordshire Flood Task Force priorities		The Building Control and Flood Risk Manager is holding a Flood Workshop to discuss the priorities. UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) funding approved to be spent by March 26.
						Q3	Report on area infrastructure gaps/needs (electricity, water, foul) and agree priorities		
						Q4	Produce a report on the outcomes of the final year of the UKSPF programme.		
			Support the Marmot Place Partnership for Oxfordshire.	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr R Pattenden	Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2		Five villages in Cherwell have been selected for the Marmot Rural Place initiative based on data-driven insights, and the commissioning process is underway to appoint an organisation to deliver community insight profiles in collaboration with the Wellbeing team.
						Q2	Launch Marmot Place Programme with partners		Procurement of a research partner has been protracted resulting in a delay to the progress of partnership work. The research phase will conclude in Q3.
						Q3	Consult on the Deprivation Remediation Programme for 2026		
						Q4	No milestone		
Community Leadership	Strengthen community collaboration and resilience	To work closely with communities and partners to foster shared solutions to building safe, resilient, and empowered communities.	Review of our Local Strategic Partnership to be more effective in delivering co-produced solutions to community issues	Tim Hughes Ian Boll	Cllr R Parkinson	Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2		Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2.
						Q2	Work with key partners to identify and agree key community issues for the partnership to consider in year.		A stakeholder survey has been drafted ready for circulation and will be open from 8th - 31st October. The survey will seek to obtain partners input to the review of the LSP and to acquire partners input regards the key community issues that should be addressed by the LSP. The survey will also seek views from stakeholders on how the partnership might be improved to better achieve positive outcomes benefitting the community
						Q3	Work with key partners to identify and agree community-based solution. Review and re-launch the LSP accordingly.		
						Q4	No milestone		
			Develop parish council toolkit to empower communities	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Launch parish toolkit initiative		Parish liaison meeting considered the first topic for a toolkit should be flooding. The Council will be holding a Parish Flood Workshop in late Summer/early Autumn - Cherwell in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council.
						Q2	Work with parish councils to identify key components required to empower communities and agree next steps		Flooding workshop 16h October. Further workshops will be considered for the New Year.
						Q3	Review and agree Cherwell's Green and Blue Corridors to increase understanding and awareness		
						Q4	Review and implement actions as appropriate from the Oxfordshire Adaptation Route map		
			Transfer existing community assets to community organisations to support collaboration and resilience	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2		
						Q2	Identify and agree potential assets for transferring to community organisations		The timescale for identification has slipped to Q3
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	No milestone		
			Strengthening community cohesion	Nicola Riley Tim Hughes Ian Boll	Cllr C Brant	Q1	Produce Annual EDI General Duty Compliance Report and agree next steps.		Work has begun on collation but timescale not achieved for report.
						Q2	Agree new EDI Framework and supporting actions		Currently the framework is being reviewed by the Council's Inclusion Champions awaiting for the feedback to publish.
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	No milestone		
						Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2		Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2.
						Q2	Develop and agree new Community Safety Partnership Plan		New plan agreed by Community Safety Partnership.
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	Establish baseline metrics for measuring progress towards Community Safety Plan		
	Promote health and wellbeing with a focus on inequality	To enhance health, wellbeing, and social cohesion across the district and address inequalities through preventive initiatives and targeted interventions.	Improving access to sports and healthy places by making the most of the external (and developer) funding we receive, improved insight and maintenance of our leisure centres.	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr R Pattenden	Q1	To identify Parishes where significant capital projects are planned and support them with their delivery plans to ensure developer contributions deliver improved outcomes for their communities.		Parishes with s106 allocated for new development of community and sports projects have been consulted with and capital plans have been mapped over the Multilateral Trading Facility (MTFs).
						Q2	No milestone		
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	Confirm which Capital projects will be progressed in 26/27 and how they will be funded		

Council plan priority	Goals	Aims	Year 1 actions	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	QTR	Milestones Q1-Q4		Comments
Environmental Stewardship	Safeguard the environment and promote biodiversity	To implement sustainable policies and practices, protect natural habitats, and support conservation initiatives that enhance ecosystem health and biodiversity while responding to the climate emergency.	Identify pathways for CDC to reach net zero carbon	Jo Miskin Ian Boll	Cllr T Beckett	Q1	Review consultant's report on the costed pathways to net zero and agree next steps / direction of travel		Bioregional is expected to share the draft report for this study by the end of this week w/c 28 July/25.
						Q2	Produce new draft climate change strategy		The evidence base informing the strategy, specifically the Council's and District's net zero pathways studies has not yet been finalised and is now expected to complete in early Q3. This has impacted the original timeline. The Climate Team is now working to produce and finalise the strategy, with publication expected in early Q4. The delay ensures the strategy is robust, evidence-led, and aligned with CDC's wider climate objectives.
						Q3	Consult on draft climate change strategy		
						Q4	Agree new climate change strategy in light of costed pathway findings		
			Progress decarbonisation of our fleet, including electrifying smaller vehicles and implementation of HVO fuel	Ed Potter Ian Boll	Cllr I Middleton	Q1	Produce report on decarbonising waste fleet and agree next steps		Report gone to CLT.
						Q2	No milestone		Report was approved by Executive on 2nd of September, implementation plan commenced.
						Q3	Implement HVO fuel plan		
						Q4	No milestone		
	Promote the circular economy of reduce, reuse and recycle to minimise waste	To encourage sustainable consumption, optimise the use of resources, and implement efficient recycling systems that support waste reduction and re-use initiatives.	Embed the new Simpler Recycling requirements for kerbside collections and promotion of greater recycling.	Ed Potter Ian Boll	Cllr I Middleton	Q1	Modelling new service delivery options, to include early adoption of kerbside glass recycling		Service delivery options modelled. Simpler Recycling Project Board met 4 times to evaluate.
						Q2	No milestone		Kerbside glass due at Executive in November.
						Q3	Agree new service delivery design		
						Q4	Implement new service		
			Continue with progress for the provision of a modern and for purpose depot facilities to support activity to minimise waste	Ed Potter Ian Boll	Cllr I Middleton	Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 3		Planning application likely to be submitted in Q2 but the admin features of the design have been completed.
						Q2	No milestone		
						Q3	Approval of outline business case. Submission of Planning Application.		
						Q4	No milestone		
			Reduce waste and food insecurity through community initiatives to reuse and recycle.	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr R Pattenden	Q1	Refresh promotion around district's Growing Spaces		Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and community food grants have supported eight growing spaces including Cropredy Lock Garden, Sustainable Duns Tew, Horton and Kidlington Parish Councils, as well as edible garden projects at schools including St Leonards, Dashwood, St Joseph's, and West Kidlington. Resources have been updated and shared via the Growing Space leaflet
						Q2	Review delivery of Y2 actions of Food Action Plan for CDC		Progress made against every objective as planned.
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	Establish a schools-food partnership		
			Promote environmentally conscious communities	Ed Potter Ian Boll	Cllr I Middleton	Q1	Agree the litter blitz programme for 2025/26		Litter blitz carried in Banbury Town Centre. Rest of the programme to be finalised.
						Q2	Develop and agree a Civic Pride campaign to promote cleaner communities and open spaces		A Neighbourhood blitz programme has been developed , to be considered by the Portfolio Holder for approval
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	No milestone		
Quality housing and Place Making	Deliver sustainable and strategic development that meets Cherwell's needs now, and in the future	To ensure the right mix of facilities, services and infrastructure for new developments, to create successful, well-designed communities.	Progress the Cherwell Local Plan 2042	David Peckford Ian Boll	Cllr J Conway	Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2		
						Q2	Submit Local Plan for Examination		The draft Local Plan was approved by the Council's Executive on 3 July. On 21 July it will be presented to the Council. Upon approval, it will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination including public hearings.
						Q3	No milestone		Local Plan submitted for Examination on 31 July. Examination has commenced.
						Q4	No milestone		
			Establish a new Programme for a Review of Conservation Area Appraisals	David Peckford Ian Boll	Cllr J Conway	Q1	Confirm new three-year programme of Conservation Area reviews and appraisals		Programme established - Year 1 - Bloxham, Grimsbury, Hanwell; Year 2 - Hook Norton, Chesterton, Hampton Gay - Shipton on Cherwell -Thrupp; Year 3 - Islip, Bodicote, Begbroke, Fritwell. Bloxham is at an advanced stage and Grimsbury is on-going.
						Q2	No milestone		Bloxham Conservation Area Appraisal is being finalised. Grimsbury is on-going and work on Hanwell has commenced.
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	Complete year 1 of Conversation Area programme		
			Monitor and manage housing land supply	David Peckford Ian Boll	Cllr J Conway	Q1	Complete and agree Housing Delivery Action Plan		The Housing Delivery Action Plan was approved by the Council's Executive on 10 June 2025. The Executive also resolved that it be kept under review having regard to comments received, and to make any necessary changes in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management. Officers were also instructed to present a comprehensive review of the five year housing land supply position to the Executive, should there be evidence of a significant change.
						Q2	Implement Housing Delivery Action Plan		The Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP) has been published and being implemented by the Planning and Development & the Growth and Economy teams.
						Q3	Implement Housing Delivery Action Plan		
						Q4	Review the progress of the Housing Delivery Action Plan		
			Reducing the percentage of 'major' planning application decisions overturned at appeal	David Peckford Ian Boll	Cllr J Conway	Q1	Complete and agree major applications action plan		An action plan for the management of strategic planning applications was prepared in Q1 and presented to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee on 28 May 2025.
						Q2	Implement Major Applications Action Plan		Project working group established and meeting. Resourcing for implementation under review.
						Q3	Implement Major Applications Action Plan		
						Q4	Review the progress of the Major Applications Action Plan		
			Streamline process for the preparation of 'section 106' legal agreements and associated land transfers which support planning permissions.	David Peckford Ian Boll	Cllr J Conway	Q1	Complete internal s106 process review and agree improvement action plan		A review of the Council's internal processes for 'section 106' legal agreements was completed by the start of Q1.
						Q2	Implement actions from s106 process review		Resourcing for implementation under review.
						Q3	Implement actions from s106 process review		
						Q4	Review the progress of the s106 improvement action plan		
			Deliver Planning Service Improvement	David Peckford Ian Boll	Cllr J Conway	Q1	Establish performance improvement indicators, targets & resource needs		A review of the Council's development management (Planning Committee) decision making processes has been undertaken and included a peer review on 29 May 2025. The final report is awaited and will be published. The recommendations will inform improvement targets together with the defined actions for the management of strategic planning applications and from the section 106 review (see above). A consolidated plan is to be prepared and resourcing needs are being reviewed.
						Q2	Define & implement improvements		Planning Advisory Service Report received. Consolidated plan dependent on corporate transformation programme. Resourcing under review.
						Q3	Implement improvements		
						Q4	Implement improvements & review progress		

Council plan priority	Goals	Aims	Year 1 actions	Lead/Director	Portfolio Holder	QTR	Milestones Q1-Q4		Comments
Quality housing and Place Making	Deliver sustainable and strategic development that meets Cherwell's needs now, and in the future	To ensure the right mix of facilities, services and infrastructure for new developments, to create successful, well-designed communities.	Establish and progress with Partners the Area Oversight Groups for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington	Julia Harrington Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Implementation of Area Oversight Groups for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington		The 3 Area Oversight Groups have been implemented.
						Q2	Identify and report on infrastructure delivery issues (water, electricity, foul, etc), develop and agree action plan		Atlas project in Bicester has project team to focus/resolve infrastructure issues - action plan and funding identified. OCC/LAEP (Local Area Energy Planning) on-going work covering energy issues throughout Cherwell area. Foul water issue resolution and plan in place. Issue on all APP (Area Priority Plan) to be discussed at AOGs (Area Oversight Groups).
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	No milestone		
	Achieve more high-quality, secure, and affordable housing that caters for the diverse needs of our residents	To help all residents access safe places they can make/call their home, including housing that is affordable through direct ownership, private rental and social rent housing.	Reduce pressure on temporary accommodation capacity in the District through delivery of our Housing Strategy	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr N Cotter	Q1	Commence delivery of new LAHF schemes for temporary accommodation and resettlement, and S106 scheme to provide additional temporary accommodation provision		Grant agreements in place with SOHA. They have begun to identify properties and progress purchase. All properties are on target to deliver in year.
						Q2	Review procurement of temporary accommodation and nightly charged options to ensure we make the best use of our resources, whilst providing suitable standards of temporary accommodation		Review completed. Some current provision will cease but nightly charged accommodation still required and procurement opportunity has been launched. Once successful supplier is identified, this will come to Executive.
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	Complete annual review of housing strategy action plan to identify any improvements needed		
			Host a registered providers forum to improve tenant outcomes	Nicola Riley Ian Boll	Cllr N Cotter	Q1	Conduct satisfaction survey of CDC tenants		Completed. Survey took place during May and June 2025 with the shared ownership and rented tenants.
						Q2	No milestone		
						Q3	Establish new monitoring framework for Registered Provider activity and performance and agree objectives and line up for forum		
						Q4	Hold registered providers forum to discuss challenges in meeting obligations		
			Ensure Graven Hill Village Development Company submits Planning Application for Phase 2 at Graven Hill (for completion of the site)	Stephen Hinds	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Ensure Graven Hill Village Development Company submits Planning Application for next phase of development at Graven Hill to LPA		The application for planning permission (25/01768/HYBRID) was received as a valid application by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
						Q2	No milestone		
						Q3	No milestone		
						Q4	No milestone		

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This report is public	
Cherwell District Council Safeguarding Self-Assessment	
Committee	Overview and Scrutiny
Date of Committee	11 November 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Councillor Rob Pattenden
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	
Report of	Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

Purpose of report

To provide an overview of the progress made on safeguarding measures and activity across Cherwell District Council, highlighting areas that have progressed through training and briefings. Identifying the themes of safeguarding concerns from the internal reporting mechanism, our partnership working with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board and District Councils.

1. Recommendations

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolves:

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the multiagency collaboration for safeguarding.
- 1.2 Consider actions for future safeguarding briefings for Members

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Cherwell District Council responds to safeguarding queries from residents by making referrals to either Oxfordshire County Council social care teams, emergency services: police, fire and rescue, or to health services including mental health teams. No cases are held by Cherwell.
- 2.2 Staff recruitment and management of volunteers are the remit of the district Council and all those staff and volunteers who have contact with residents on a regular basis are recruited safely using appropriate Disclosure and Barring services.
- 2.3 Cherwell employs a dedicated Safeguarding Officer who coordinates our activity in relation to countywide safeguarding partnerships and prescribes training and development for staff, volunteers and councillors.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications		Commentary		
Finance		There are no additional resource implications arising from the report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Office, 3 November 2025		
Legal		Cherwell District council has a duty to report on how it promotes the wellbeing and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with care and support needs and those who are victims of abuse. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 3 November 2025		
Risk Management		Cherwell District Council acknowledges the risk it faces by not recruiting appropriately and failing in training and supporting staff to understand their safeguarding duties and responsibilities. This risk is being managed through the Leadership risk register, Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 3 November 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 lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?			x	

Climate & Environmental Impact		x		
ICT & Digital Impact		x		
Data Impact		x		
Procurement & subsidy		x		
Council Priorities	Healthy, resilient and engaged communities			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property				
Consultation & Engagement				

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Section 11 (s11) of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key organisations to self-assess the extent to which they meet the safeguarding requirements and standards. (On hold 2025).

These key organisations include both County and District councils that provide any of the following services, including children's and adults social care, public health, sport, housing, culture, leisure services, licencing, and youth services.

Following the publication of Working Together 23, and the renewed leadership, governance, approach, and structure of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP), the Lead Safeguarding Partners in Oxfordshire have approved the 'Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements which will be published early in December 24.

The new arrangements introduce a new structure which will be determined, established and coordinated under the direction of the Executive Group to support the delivery of the statutory requirements required of local safeguarding partnerships.

The Executive Group are currently reviewing and agreeing the membership for each component of the new structure and have started by agreeing the membership for the 'new' Business Delivery Group. This group has a central and crucial role for providing assurance of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice, and compliance to the requirements of Working Together 23.

- 3.2 Cherwell District Councils core business is not explicitly and directly to work with children and young people, or adults with care and support needs as we do not have the social care duty but where Cherwell services do come in to contact with

children and young people or vulnerable people our systems and processes we must demonstrate an ability and capacity to safeguard and promote their welfare through the following guidelines.

- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- Wider promotion of safeguarding, working agencies that have direct contact with children and young people.
- Senior Management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- A clear statement of the agency's responsibilities for children and young or vulnerable people is available to all staff.
- Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults for all staff who might come in to contact with children and families.
- Safer Recruitment.
- Monthly safeguarding briefings for all staff on national and local themes of safeguarding concerns.
- Internal awareness campaigns across Cherwell and joint working with District Councils.
- Evidence in the OSAB annual safeguarding report attached.

4. Details

- 4.1 As outlined in the introduction this report will focus on providing Members with more detailed information around actions for safeguarding in Cherwell.
- 4.2 As the District Council has a Contract with Parkwood Leisure to deliver the services at the Leisure Centres the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead takes the opportunity to conduct Centre specific audits to ensure they are also meeting their safeguarding and contractual requirements. This process brings benefit not only to the District Council but also to the Leisure Operator in reviewing their practices. This external auditing of commissioned services is a process officers are keen to implement with other organisations who we commission to act on the Councils behalf.
- 4.3 Whilst there has been an emphasis on safeguarding audits in our Leisure Centres, there has also been internal auditing of the Council's own Holiday Activity Programmes. We have provided an improved safeguarding training package for the Youth Activity workers including behaviour Management training. This has enabled those officers to reflect on the good practices that are in place but also taking the opportunity to improve their confidence in recognising signs of neglect & abuse. Improved mechanisms in place for reporting concerns, making reporting timely and appropriate.
- 4.4 To underpin staff awareness around safeguarding and to complement the training offered via the iHasco platform, staff have been given greater access to various training opportunities particularly through internal briefings. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead has provided a number of online sessions including topics such as Neglect/ Self-Neglect/ Modern Slavery and Domestic Abuse/ Exploitation/How to make a Good Referral.

These sessions have been particularly well attended by staff and the interactive nature of the training means they are well informed and engaged. We have evidenced a Whilst recognising these briefings were important there was also a need to ensure that if staff were empowered to identify signs of abuse that they should also be better supported in how to carry out internal reporting or how to make an external referral and therefore additional training sessions on this have been provided.

- 4.5 All delegates provide feedback on the learning, which has generally been a positive experience and therefore intend to continue with this offering next year
- 4.6 A number of these briefings are offered to Members; this has not progressed this year.
- 4.7 We share relevant information with the two safeguarding boards, Oxfordshire safeguarding adults Board (OSAB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCP) helping to maintain a good awareness and understanding of emerging risks that are relevant to our area. Working with all partners involved to consider strategic actions that can manage and reduce these risks. Cherwell representatives attend several subgroups through the year.

The CE Subgroup.

The below are the key areas for the CE Subgroup.

On Thursday, January 16, 2025, the Home Secretary announced that Oldham and four other Local Authorities will be investigated and reviewed for CSE and grooming. Although Oxfordshire was not named, the Executive group (DSP) requires the partnership to prepare as if it might be one of these four LAs. The three-month review, led by Dame Louise Casey, will begin "imminently," according to the Home Office. The audit will examine further evidence, including ethnicity data and demographics of gangs and their victims, as well as "cultural and societal drivers" for this type of offending. The Home Office states it will review existing data to "equip law enforcement with the information and understanding needed to combat these crimes." The audit will be "supported by an expert advisory board and will draw on the views of victims and survivors."

Steps Taken in Preparation:

- The Mock Joint Target Area Inspection CSE Audit has commenced, with a moderation meeting planned for February 28, 2025. A written report of findings will follow, providing rich qualitative data.
- Laura Gajdus and Gillian Ming have been tasked with urgently conducting a mapping exercise to understand the partnership's architecture.

Mapping exercise Cherwell's response provided to the group before 14th March. (See attached).

Neglect Subgroup.

The Neglect Subgroup remains well attended by all agencies, with regular submissions of service/agency action plan and progress. It is recognised that leaders in neglect require regular sessions to exchange information and support partnership activity to improve practice and that the subgroup will remain for another year into 2025 to consolidate aims of strategy.

Meetings.

DDSL attends several meetings see safeguarding meeting attendance.

PAQA as vice chair, I will step down from Dec 25.

In addition to these meetings Cherwell has held a Hoarding partnership group meeting with Local authorities (Gloucestershire LA /OCC/ Districts / F&R/ members of the partnership attending.

This has proven the need to review the Hoarding policy and has been picked up by the OSAB, a task & finish group will be working on hoarding. It was suggested a 2-year plan to focus on Hoarding.

I have requested OCC take the lead with this group, Steve Turner OSAB will be looking to support this going forward.

Cherwell guidance for Hoarding has been shared with OSAB to review as a start for the Task & Finish subgroup.

Community centre visits to offer information and awareness on safeguarding issues, attended Grimsby Community centre 3rd April provided information on Cuckooing and hoarding, invited the police and community wardens. Feedback was to attend more.

Working in partnership with Fire & Resue and police has improved and good communication and joint visits for concerns of hoarding is a normal practice.

Supporting frontline services, safeguarding resources have been provided to each service resettlement team have a safeguarding folder now on teams I update for them to use.

Delivering MARM training in team meetings, and any requested themed training. I have regular attendance to the Community safety team which has been very useful for both sides.

- 4.8 Other initiatives to support Officers as part of their role have included the provision of a safeguarding wallet size card on what to do if you are concerned for a child or vulnerable adult. These have been provided to Members, Refuse Collectors and Youth Activity Workers. This initiative was driven by identifying those staff who were often front facing and dealing with members of the public in an external environment who would then have access to the relevant contact details in the need of a referral or reporting of an incident. We are looking at expanding these resources working with Taxi licencing and providing resources/ guidance for exploitation/CSE/CCE for

the Taxi drivers. Working with Community centres safeguarding packs have been provided to ensure information is available for the community.

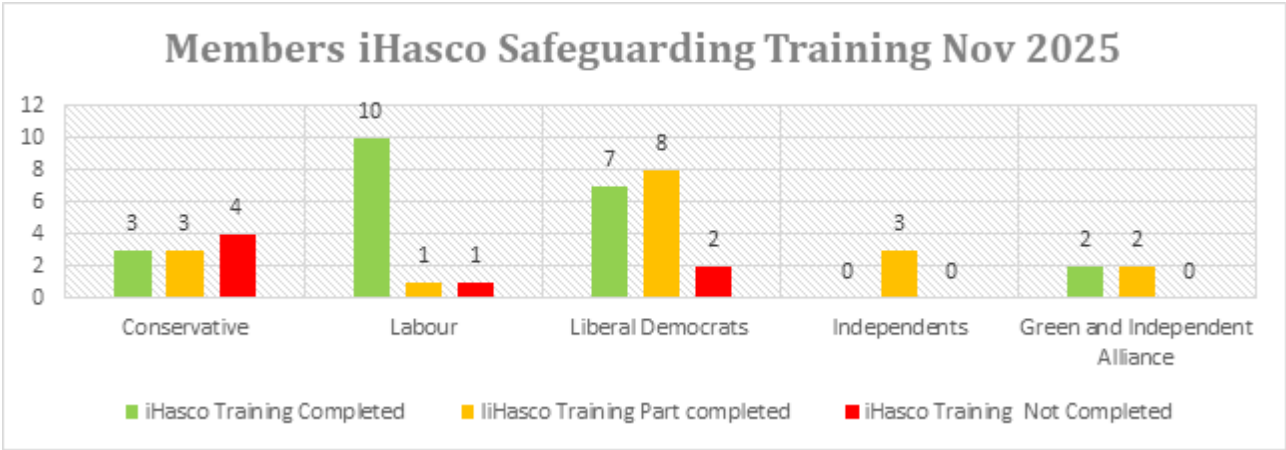
Additionally, customer service and housing and Community service teams also benefit from attendance at their morning briefings by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead providing advice and support. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead provides the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Boards 7 Minute briefings on a variety of topics to support the team. This was recognised as a valuable tool to aid those teams who regularly deal with members of the public who are vulnerable.

Updating on Modern slavery reporting and effective referral process in line with the Modern Slavery coordinator from Ox-City who has attended team meeting in Housing, resettlement team and Community Safety.

OSCP training is also provided to all services in Cherwell and underpins the internal online training through iHasco.

- 4.9 The members intranet page has been updated with contact details for safeguarding concerns and pre-recorded briefings on Domestic Abuse and Neglect.

iHasco training logins provided to all members the below chart shows the data for training Jan -Dec 25 (Part completed is where PREVENT training is the only session completed).



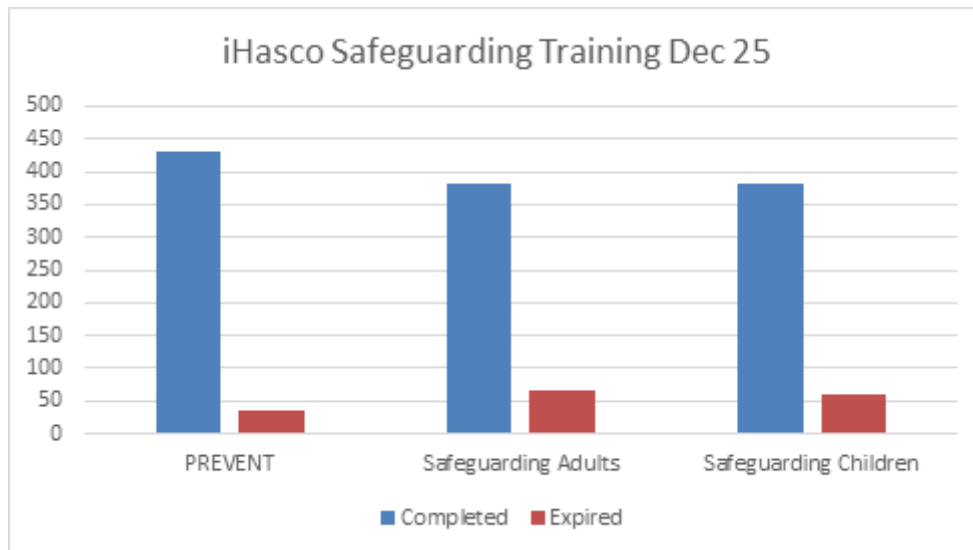
Awareness campaigns continue in line with the CDC awareness calendar which is available on the intranet. These campaigns are shared with districts in Oxfordshire to run campaigns at a similar time for improved effectiveness across the County. Often these are linked to National campaigns.

- 4.10 Since the launch of iHasco online training we have improved the monitoring and recording of safeguarding training across Cherwell. Outlined below are the number of staff who have completed the mandatory training on iHasco.

Compulsory Safeguarding training comprises of the following:

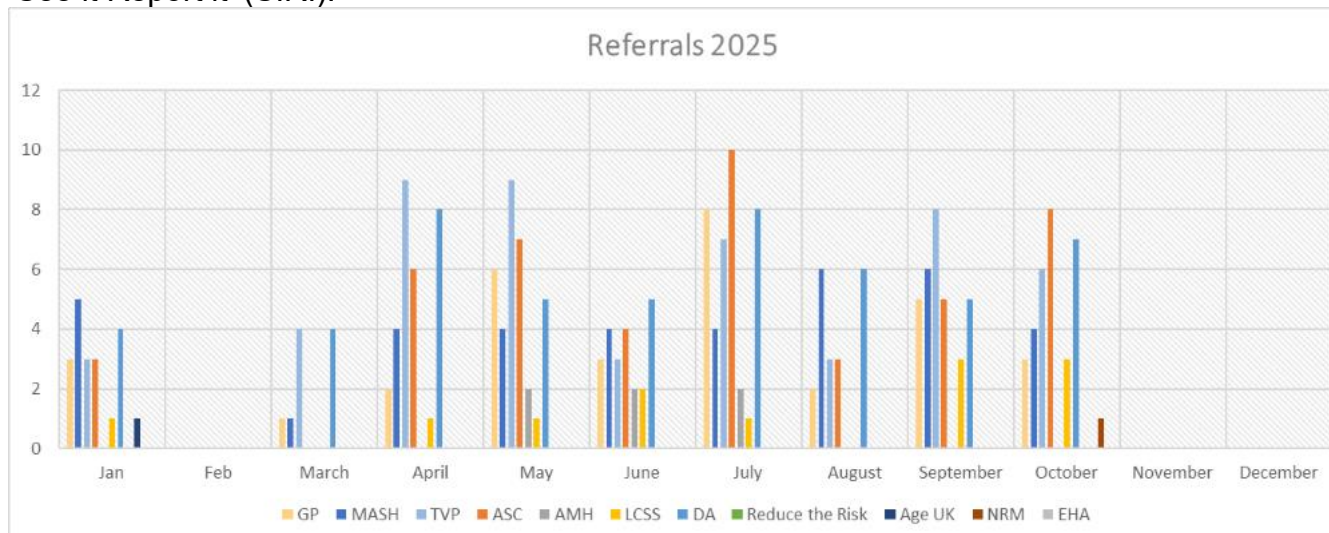
Active Users	Training	Needing Attention	Not Started	Completed	Expired	Training Hrs/CPD Time logged
476	PREVENT	40	81	432	35	10,208 hrs of training, plus 18,634 certificates issued
470	Safeguarding Children	71	87	383	60	
457	Safeguarding Adults	74	63	374	66	
411	GDPR	77	157	328	52	

Safer recruitment training is added to Managers who hire individuals that need a DBS.



Reporting Safeguarding

- 4.11 As outlined above the District Council hosts its own internal reporting mechanism on the total amount of times external services have been contacted each month for 'See it Report it' (SIRI).



Below are the occasions that each organisation has been contacted by the Council for a referral.

2025 – we have recorded 356 SIRC reports (Jan-Oct), the actions taken from the SIRC reports referring to the Police and Social Care Services as follows:

- Adult Social Care, 46 14% increase on 2024.
- MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), 41 37% decrease from 2024.
- TVP (Thames Valley Police), 52 51% increase on 2024.

This equates to a total of 214 referrals to Adult Social Care/ Police/ MASH etc.

In addition to this these figures services across Cherwell do contact the Police including wellbeing and safer life checks, through the “Right Person Right Care” process. These are not always recorded on the internal reporting mechanism SIRC. Individual services have reported concerns directly to Oxfordshire Social Services not informing Cherwell Safeguarding team.

- 4.12 Whilst recognising this is an upward trend in the number of referrals there is a suggestion that this could be linked to the additional training given to staff to raise their awareness of incidents. The national trend is seeing increasing records of concerns in line with what we are seeing across Cherwell. The number of referrals is monitored closely to identify trends, work with MASH is in place to review these referrals being made, if they meet the threshold for safeguarding.

As outlined earlier in the report regular safeguarding briefings have been held through the year, these include Safeguarding, SIRC reporting, Mental Health/ Suicide, and Self – Harm / Self-Neglect / How to make a Good Referral etc. External; training has been provided to all frontline staff for compassion fatigue.

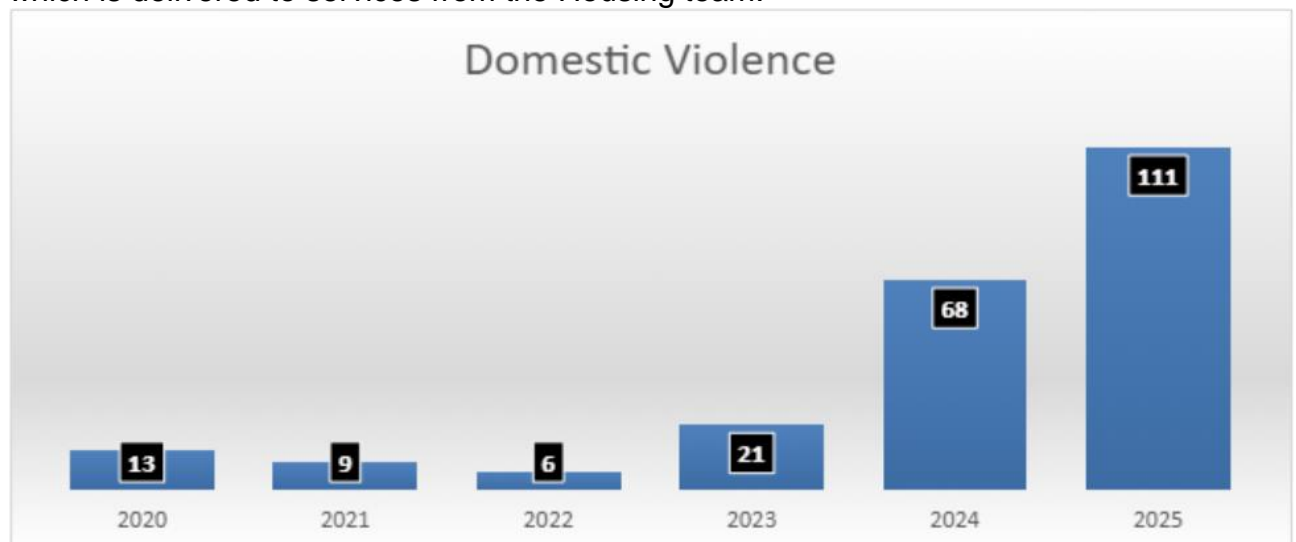
We developed these short presentation/ briefings to support this knowledge and underpin the safeguarding training available through the iHasco modules.

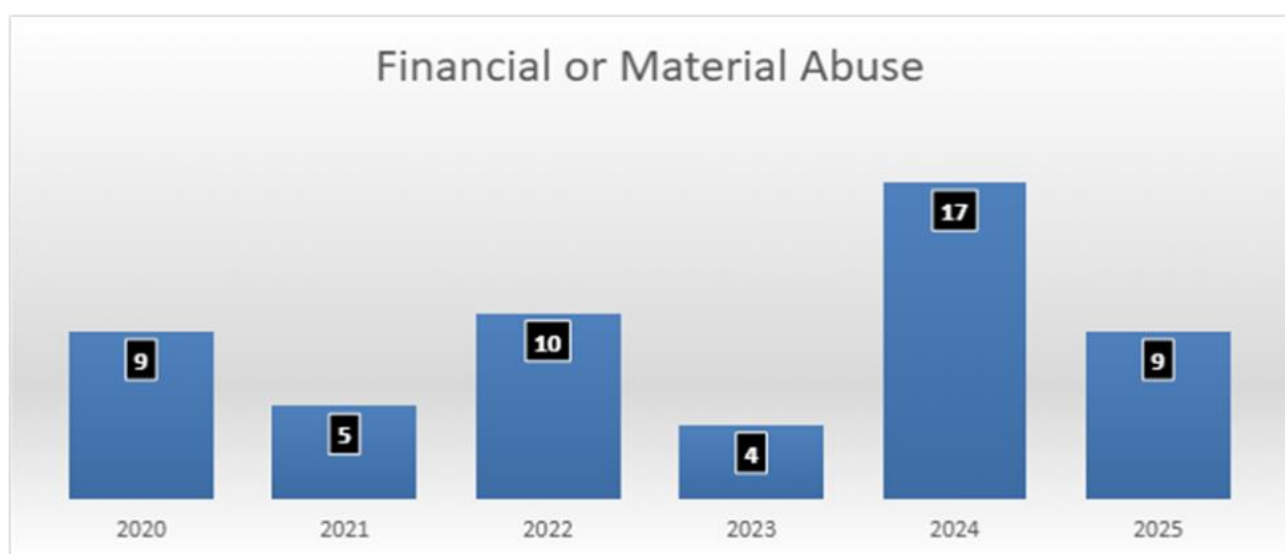
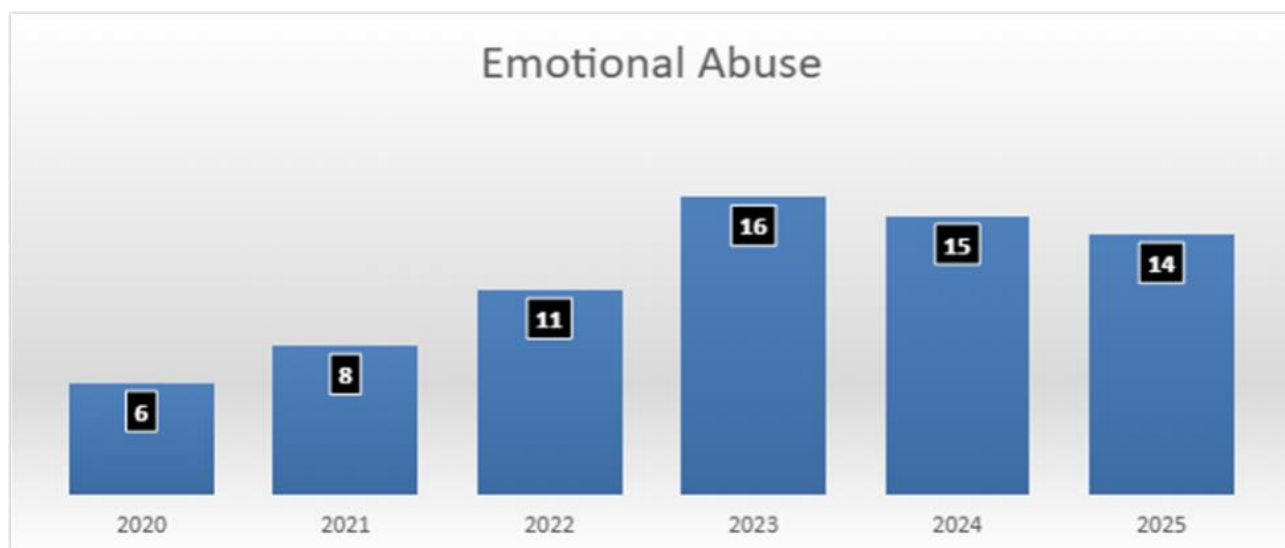
- 4.13 We have had a total of 95 members of staff attend safeguarding briefings this year, on a number of themed topics.



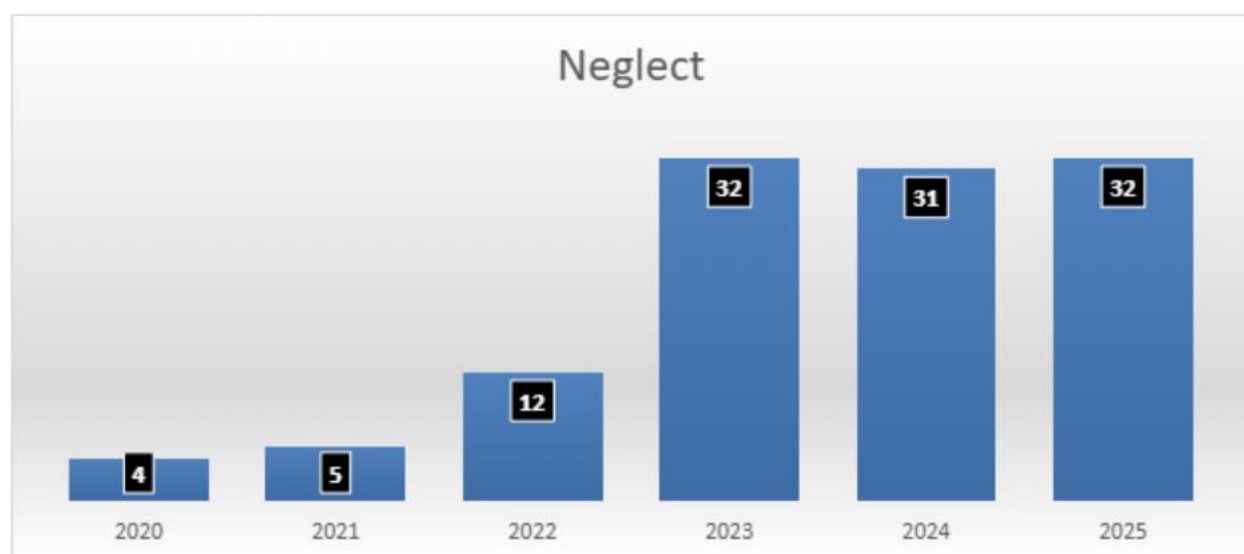
In addition to the above we have provided briefings on How to make a Good Referral / Child Sexual Exploitation / Criminal Exploitation/MARM training.

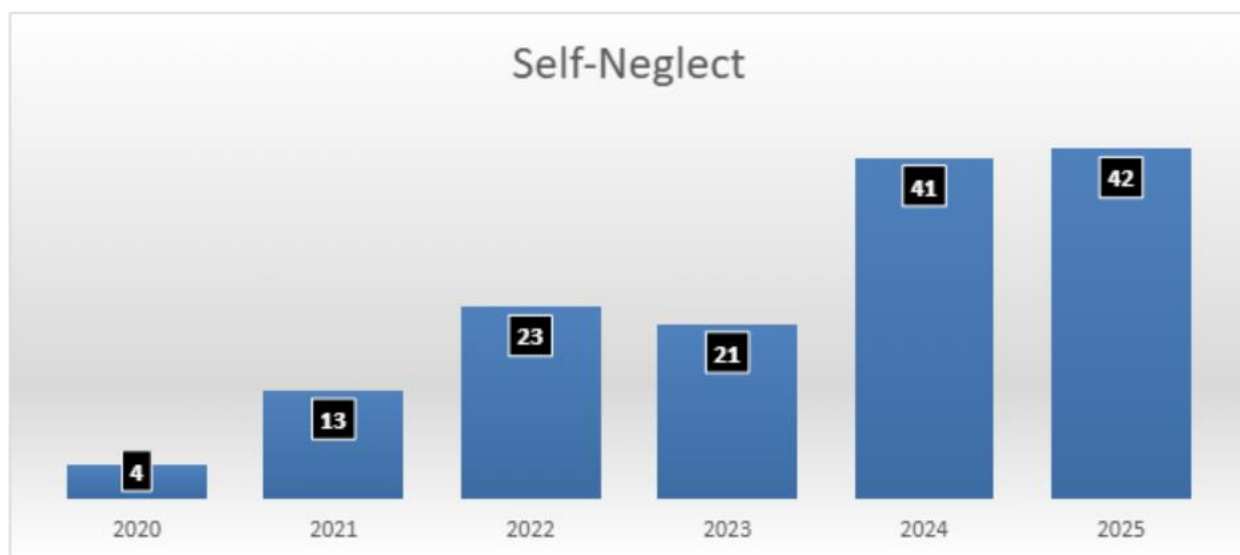
- 4.14 Emerging themes for this year appear to be an increase on domestic abuse reporting, which is at its highest for the last three years. CDC now has a Domestic Abuse key worker embedded in housing team and leads on the DA training and DAHA accreditation. We have provided a Domestic Abuse policy for Cherwell, which is delivered to services from the Housing team.





4.15 Mental Health and Neglect/ Self-Neglect are the two areas we continue to see the most reported on the SRI reports. We are seeing an increase of Physical abuse been recorded this year.





In the Districts meetings we aim to review these themes to identify any concerns across the four districts.

4.16 External Partnering

As part of the partnering work with other organisations across the County the Deputy Safeguarding Lead attends the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Single agency audit performance and quality assurance meetings (PAQA) with district councils. The Oxfordshire Children's Safeguarding Boards (OSCB) subgroups enable the OSCB to deliver its multi-agency objectives as set out in the business plan which are then updated at each meeting.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead also attends the PIQA meetings (Performance information and quality assurance subgroup). The purpose of this exercise is for agencies / services to share details on their safeguarding audit work and the learning from it. Information from these returns is included in the OSCB annual report.

District Council meetings are held Monthly the aim of the Joint District Safeguarding Partnership Group is to bring together safeguarding representatives from Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council to share information and learning in order to support their statutory safeguarding roles and responsibilities.

This includes the following:

Establishing ways of analysing data and identifying trends on safeguarding themes to inform Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board (OSAB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) understanding of prevalence of abuse and neglect. This analysis of data and trends allows for a focus of resource into these particular areas of concern. Where appropriate this information will assist the Safeguarding Boards in raising awareness of safeguarding issues among the districts, organisations, and the wider public.

Providing single agency returns to PIQA/PAQA covering both children and adults.

Circulation of information within districts to enhance learning gained through the partnership group meetings. (Cherwell District Council attend county safeguarding

groups such as PIQA/PAQA / Neglect Strategy Group/ Neglect Forum/ Business group/ Engagement group providing updates to the districts)

Sharing of good practice and learning to deliver a consistent countywide approach to safeguarding.

Development of training needs across the districts to ensure a joined-up approach across the county.

Consolidating templates for audits, action plans, reporting mechanisms and any other methods of information gathering with a view to streamlining the processes.

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.

No alternatives considered

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The District Council, has a statutory duty to have appropriate arrangements and procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults, living in our community.
- 6.2 This training framework acts as a core part of these arrangements and aims to ensure that employees and members are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skillset to be able to identify safeguarding (and also criminal) concerns and report them to the appropriate person/agency in a timely manner.
- 6.3 We recommend that all members attend a Safeguarding Briefing every two years and encourage members to make use of the resources available including attending themed safeguarding briefings for Domestic Abuse and Self-Neglect/Neglect.

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	CA211025 OSAB-Annual-Report-2025
Appendix 2	Oxfordshire Mapping – Child Sexual Exploitation Cherwell Return 14-03-2025
Appendix 3	Safeguarding Meetings
Appendix 4	Safeguarding Presentation
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Susan Asbury
Report Author contact details	Susan.Asbury@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 753 748
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services, 03/11/2025

OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) member organisations work to protect adults who have needs for care and support, making sure they are safe from abuse and neglect. This report covers what OSAB and its partners did between April 2024 and March 2025.

What did OSAB do this year?

- OSAB focused on four main things: improving how staff work, preventing abuse, checking the quality of safeguarding, and learning from past cases.
- The Board and its smaller groups met regularly to check progress and make sure everyone was working together.
- Most planned actions were finished on time, and any ongoing work is being tracked.
-

What did the subgroups achieve?

- **Policy and Practice:** Updated important safeguarding policies and created a new guide to help staff decide when to raise a safeguarding concern.
- **Quality Assurance:** Kept an eye on safeguarding data. There were more concerns reported this year, but this shows people are more aware and willing to speak up. The team also got better at helping people achieve the outcomes they wanted.
- **Engagement:** Made sure people with lived experience had a say, raised public awareness, and helped create a new Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- **Case Reviews:** Looked into serious cases and deaths among homeless people. Lessons learned were shared with staff, and OSAB's approach was recognised nationally as good practice.

What did partner organisations do?

- **Oxfordshire County Council:** Improved how quickly and well they respond to safeguarding concerns.
- **NHS:** Worked together to improve referrals, trained staff, and shared information better.
- **Police:** Set up a new team to help vulnerable adults and improved how they share information.
- **Fire & Rescue:** Included safeguarding in home visits and helped set up a group to support people who hoard.
- **District Councils:** Improved safeguarding in housing and community safety, and trained staff.
- **Healthwatch and Charities:** Made sure the voices of people using services were heard and helped raise awareness.

What did we learn from case reviews?

- Reviews showed the need for staff to be curious, work flexibly with people who are hard to reach, share information better, and act quickly.

- OSAB made changes based on these lessons, like improving how repeat concerns are flagged and making sure all agencies are involved in meetings.
- Reports from these reviews will now stay online for up to seven years so everyone can learn from them.

How has safeguarding changed over 10 years?

- Safeguarding is now much stronger, with better teamwork and more people knowing how to get help.
- There are new challenges, like more complex cases, more people needing help, and new risks such as self-neglect and online scams.
- The COVID-19 pandemic made things harder, increasing isolation and safeguarding concerns.

What's next?

- OSAB wants to make sure lessons and resources reach frontline staff, set up a formal risk register, work more closely with children's safeguarding, and focus more on preventing abuse before it happens.
- The Board will keep improving, learning, and working together to keep adults in Oxfordshire safe.

Annual Report - Introduction

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) was established in April 2015 under The Care Act 2014. Its main objective is to assure itself that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect adults with care and support needs in its area.

This report covers OSAB's work from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, addressing:

- **Main Objectives & Strategic Plan Implementation** – What the Board and its subgroups did to achieve their goals.
- **Member Agency Actions** – Contributions each partner made to implement the strategy.
- **Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)** – Findings from any reviews of serious cases and actions taken in response.
- **Decade in Review** – Notable positive and negative changes in adult safeguarding over the past 10 years.
- **Looking to the Future** – Suggestions for 2025-26 onwards.

Main Objective and Strategic Plan Implementation (2024–25)

OSAB's Main Objective: *"To safeguard adults with care and support needs in Oxfordshire by coordinating effective multi-agency action and ensuring continuous improvement in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect."* In 2024–25, OSAB pursued this overarching goal through a strategic plan focusing on **four priority**

areas. These included improving frontline practice, enhancing prevention and engagement, strengthening quality assurance, and learning from experience. The Board updated its **Strategic Plan for 2024–2027**, incorporating feedback from members and progress on previous actions. This plan includes a roadmap for the year, aligning subgroup workplans and partner efforts with OSAB’s main objectives. **Board Meetings and Governance:** The OSAB and its subgroups met regularly to monitor progress against the strategy and workplans to drive implementation.

For example, at each Performance, Information & Quality Assurance (PIQA) meeting, the group reviewed data on safeguarding activity (e.g. number of concerns raised, types of abuse, outcomes) to identify trends and risks. The board observed that the average number of safeguarding concerns rose to around 676 by March 2025, indicating increased awareness and reporting. Care homes and provider agencies remained the top sources of safeguarding concerns coming into the system.

However, they also have one of the lowest conversion rates (the number of concerns that meet the criteria for a statutory safeguarding enquiry). The person’s own home remained the most likely place for a safeguarding incident to occur. referrals, and the Board urged all partners to create targeted prevention efforts accordingly.

All subgroups of the Board track delivery of their work via an **Action Log**. This log captured tasks from prior meetings (such as developing new policies, improving training, or completing reviews) and progress is requested for each meeting. The majority of actions were completed on schedule, and ongoing items (e.g. launching a risk register for the Board) were carried forward with clear deadlines.

The Full Board ensured **multi-agency collaboration** by having each subgroup Chair and partner agency report on their work. No significant inter-agency escalations were reported in this period, showing good cooperation. The Board’s Independent Chair and the recently appointed **Independent Scrutineer** provided external oversight, challenging the Board to keep improving. For instance, the Scrutineer highlighted areas for potential improvement such as formalising a Board risk register. They have also led on work to develop principles for working with people who are self-neglecting by drawing on both academic research and the experience of local practitioners.

Subgroup Activities: OSAB carries out much of its work through specialised subgroups. In 2024–25, these subgroups were very active in implementing the strategic plan:

Policy, Practice & Procedure Subgroup

This subgroup (chaired by Thames Valley Police) led on updating local safeguarding policies to reflect best practice. A major piece of work was revising the old “Thresholds” guidance into the new **Safeguarding Adults Consideration (SAC) Framework** to aid professional decision-making. The document is a tool to help professionals understand what may constitute a safeguarding concern requiring a referral into the Local Authority, who have responsibility for conducting safeguarding enquiries. Members agreed to replace the term “thresholds”, which was felt to be limiting, with this new framework emphasising professional judgement. By September 2024, the SAC Framework was finalised and launched on the OSAB website.

The subgroup also undertook a comprehensive review of multi-agency safeguarding procedures, adapting the Pan-London policy to suit the Oxfordshire context—a significant undertaking given the document’s length of 146 pages. In order to manage this process efficiently, responsibilities were allocated among participating agencies, with a six-week deadline established for completion of the final revisions.

As a result key policies were updated or in progress by year-end, including a revised **Self-Neglect and Hoarding Policy** (with consideration to split it into separate policies for clarity). The subgroup focused on how to effectively communicate these changes to frontline staff; for example, members agreed to issue communications briefs and use practitioner forums to embed the new SAC Framework terminology.

Performance, Information & Quality Assurance (PIQA) Subgroup

PIQA monitored safeguarding data and performance indicators across the partnership. In 2024–25, they noted a **steady increase in safeguarding concerns** being reported – on average 30 per day, spiking to 40–60/day early in the week, which put significant strain on teams. The subgroup drilled into data such as sources of referrals, with provider agencies, care homes, Police and South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) consistently being the highest referring cohort, and urged the Board and subgroups to target efforts based on these insights. This resulted in reports to PIQA from SCAS and Police about their efforts to understand and then reduce the numbers of unnecessary concerns coming into the system. The impact of this will be monitored through 2025-26.

Under the leadership of the County Council’s Head of Services for Adult Safeguarding, several quality improvements were implemented within Adult Social Care: by early 2025 the team was **meeting required timescales** for allocation of enquiries for investigation. This resulted in more timely Section 42 enquiries and better outcomes tracking – in fact, the Board was pleased to see the proportion of cases where the adult’s desired outcomes were achieved rose to 90%, a significant improvement over the previous years (for example, the rate was 72% in 2018-19). PIQA also oversaw specific audits (e.g. on Mental Capacity assessments in complex cases, and on repeat referrals involving self-neglect) and ensured learning from these audits fed into frontline practice. By February 2025, the data was beginning to show the positive impact of these changes, with improvements in meeting target times for safeguarding processes. The Board recognised self-neglect as a growing area of concern and discussed it alongside hoarding, instructing the Policy subgroup to refine guidance and training on this topic during 2025-26. Additionally, the Board created the Principles of Self-Neglect Task and Finish group to better create a more focussed understanding of self-neglect within safeguarding.

Engagement & Inclusion Subgroup

The Engagement subgroup works to ensure that the Board hears from the community and raises awareness of adult safeguarding. During 2024–25, this subgroup carried out a range of activities, outlined below.

It facilitated input from **people with lived experience**. For example, representatives from My Life My Choice (a local self-advocacy group) attended and contributed. They offered to help create **easy-read materials** for the public to explain safeguarding,

ensuring accessibility (noting a small charge for this service). This led to a plan for a public-facing, plain English summary of the Annual Report, which members agreed was important for transparency. This plain English summary will be trialled with this year's Annual Report and published on the OSAB website.

The subgroup members shared “current safeguarding issues” from their perspectives. One meeting discussed the new “**Right Care, Right Person**” approach (a national initiative clarifying which agency should respond to certain welfare situations). Members debated its local impact – for instance, whether it affected police willingness to conduct welfare checks. Some had positive experiences after additional training e.g. city council staff saw improved responses by directing calls appropriately). Others noted concerns about occasional gaps such as difficulty getting police to attend some welfare calls. These insights were fed up to the Board so that any multi-agency issues, like clarification of roles, could be addressed. Partner agencies in this subgroup also reported on **public awareness campaigns** and training. Healthwatch Oxfordshire and Age UK, for example, participated in spreading safeguarding messages to the public, while many subgroup members organised activities during National Adult Safeguarding Week in November. The subgroup emphasised explaining “what is safeguarding” in simple terms. Following public consultation about the Annual Report, they recommended that it should include data about the prevalence of the different types of abuse reported in Oxfordshire, the outcomes of safeguarding interventions, and trends over time. This reflects the subgroup’s role in making safeguarding work understandable to the general public and service users.

Co-production progress: The subgroup took on an action to assist in co-producing Oxfordshire’s new Domestic Abuse Strategy with input from those with lived experience with domestic abuse (working alongside Public Health). By involving lay members and advocacy groups, they aimed to ensure strategies are informed by real experiences.

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Subgroup

This subgroup oversees reviews of serious cases to identify learning. It also reviews cases of deaths of homeless individuals, known locally as Homelessness Mortality Reviews (HMRs), which are conducted under the discretionary SAR process. They are carried out like this to ensure there is a robust legal framework for the Board conducting the review and to give the reviews an equal standing to any other case review the Board conducts.

In 2024–25 the SAR Subgroup considered several referrals for review and steered ongoing review processes. The **findings from case reviews** are in their own section of the report below.

The subgroup examined new cases to decide if they met the criteria for a formal Safeguarding Adults Review. For borderline cases, they introduced a structured scoping form to gather more information and ensure consistent decisions.

National recognition: OSAB’s approach to SARs and HMRs has been cited positively beyond Oxfordshire. The Independent Scrutineer reported that the joint SAR/HMR process received national recognition for effective practice. The work around HMRs has also been noted as good practice by the Ministry for Housing,

Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). This suggests that the Board's learning and review mechanisms are considered a model, thanks to clear processes and active partner engagement.

By year-end, the subgroup had several review reports either completed or nearing completion. **All findings from reviews were translated into action plans** for the agencies involved. The Board also incorporated all the learning into the **Learning from Reviews Workshops** to help disseminate learning from reviews to a broad audience of frontline professionals. For example, one action from a recent SAR was to update the Board's **escalation policy** to higher management when agencies aren't attending important multi-agency meetings – a gap identified in a review. This update was implemented so that in future, if a critical partner is missing from safeguarding discussions, it is quickly raised to senior managers to avoid communication breakdowns.

In summary, OSAB and its subgroups actively worked on their main strategic priorities throughout 2024–25. They revised and rolled out key policies, scrutinised performance data to drive improvements, engaged communities and service-users in safeguarding, and conducted reviews to learn from serious cases. **Progress was monitored and documented** through the Board and the groundwork laid this year (policy updates, frameworks, and identified improvements) positions the Board to continue strengthening safeguarding practice in line with its objectives.

Actions by Each OSAB Member to Implement the Strategy

OSAB is a multi-agency partnership, including Oxfordshire County Council (Adult Social Care), NHS Integrated Care Board and provider trusts, Thames Valley Police, District Councils, Fire & Rescue, Healthwatch, and voluntary sector organisations (like Age UK), among others. **Member agencies took concrete steps in 2024–25 to deliver the Board's strategy in their own sphere.** Some of the notable contributions are outlined below:

Oxfordshire County Council (Adult Social Care): The Council's adult safeguarding team made significant operational improvements this year, addressing issues that align with OSAB's priorities on effective practice. Under the Head of Service for Adult Safeguarding, the team instituted daily check-in meetings to review new concerns and ensure prompt action. Staff were required to spend more time in the office (three days a week) to facilitate better team communication and oversight of decisions. By late 2024, this had led to faster turnaround on safeguarding enquiries and improved consistency. **Result:** By the February 2025 PIQA meeting, the Council reported that its safeguarding team was "in a strong position" – motivated staff, recent specialist training completed, and adherence to statutory timescales now being achieved. If a referring partner wasn't getting feedback, they were encouraged to contact the manager directly – demonstrating a new openness to resolving issues quickly. These actions by the Council fulfil strategic aims around **strengthening safeguarding processes** and **Making Safeguarding Personal**, as evidenced by the rise in outcomes achieved and positive staff feedback.

NHS Health Partners: Health organisations on the Board (the Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire/Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, Oxford

University Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Trust, South Central Ambulance Service, etc.) contributed through both system-wide initiatives and internal improvements. For instance:

- **Healthcare Safeguarding Leads Collaboration:** The designated safeguarding leads from the hospital trust – Oxford University Hospitals, (OUH) and community/mental health trust (Oxford Health) worked together on difficult issues such as improving the “conversion rate” of safeguarding concerns into Section 42 enquiries. An action was agreed for the OUH lead, Oxford Health lead, and Council manager to meet outside OSAB meetings to develop a plan to improve appropriate referral conversions. This indicates health partners actively engaging in quality improvement in line with the Board’s performance priorities.
- **Training and Awareness:** Oxford Health ran Mental Capacity Act (MCA) training and focused on professional curiosity in safeguarding – a theme flagged by the Board. OUH ensured its staff received updates on referral pathways (like when to involve social care versus police, in line with *Right Care, Right Person* guidance discussed at OSAB). The Integrated Care Board’s Adult Safeguarding lead presented data and insight to the PIQA subgroup and championed issues like reducing DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) backlogs, which relates to one of the Board’s strategic priorities around law compliance and risk management. Health partners also strengthened **information-sharing**: one achievement was the circulation of a new information-sharing agreement to clarify what can be shared between agencies for safeguarding.
- **Service Improvements:** Specific improvements were reported, such as the **South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)** revising its safeguarding referral form to be more effective in triaging the type of concern.

Thames Valley Police: The police, as a core OSAB member, took forward multiple initiatives supporting the Board’s strategy of prevention and protection of adults:

- They established a new **Harm Reduction Unit (HRU)** focusing on cases involving vulnerable adults who may be involved in or victims of crime and anti-social behaviour. In late 2024, this unit became fully operational, with dedicated officers and new processes to better link police intelligence with partner agencies. For example, the HRU launched “Custody 25”, a project embedding part-time link workers and navigators in police custody suites (in locations including Abingdon and Banbury). These workers help identify detained individuals with possible care/support needs or neurodiversity (like ADHD) and connect them to services – even providing on-the-spot aids like distraction packs in custody to calm those with vulnerabilities. This directly advances OSAB’s objective of safeguarding adults in all settings, by intervening early during criminal justice contact.

- The police also improved **information-sharing and transparency** with OSAB. A Detective Chief Inspector now regularly updates the Board on police safeguarding referrals. Additionally, the force addressed backlogs in processing domestic abuse disclosures (Clare's Law requests).
- On a strategic level, the Police representative (who chaired the Procedures subgroup) championed cross-cutting improvements like the new accolades procedure (to recognise good practice) and ensuring **alignment with the Children's Partnership**. The Independent Scrutineer highlighted the need for better links between the Adult Safeguarding Board and Children Safeguarding Partnership post some structural changes, and police along with other members agreed to explore joint approaches where appropriate. This reflects a forward-looking stance to implement the Board's plan in a holistic way.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service: The Fire & Rescue Service contributed to OSAB's strategy mainly through prevention and outreach. The Partnerships & Safeguarding Manager at Fire & Rescue actively participated in the Engagement and PIQA subgroups. Firefighters continued to incorporate adult safeguarding checks into their **Safe and Well visits** in people's homes – if crews encountered an at-risk adult (for instance, someone showing signs of self-neglect or confusion) during fire safety checks, they made safeguarding referrals as needed. This year, Fire & Rescue's safeguarding lead worked with the Board to ensure their referral pathways were aligned with the new SAC Framework (so that fire personnel use the updated guidance on levels of risk). They also helped address issues around **hoarding**, which is both a fire hazard and a safeguarding concern. Fire officers are often first to spot hoarding; hence Fire & Rescue co-founded a new **Hoarding Support Group** with council and health colleagues in Cherwell district to coordinate support for individuals who hoard. This on-the-ground action directly implements the Board's strategic aim of early intervention and partnership working for complex cases.

District and City Councils: The district councils (Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse & West Oxfordshire) and Oxford City all sit on OSAB and made important contributions, particularly in housing and community safety – key factors in adult safeguarding:

- **Housing and Homelessness:** With the rise in safeguarding concerns related to homelessness (as highlighted by OSAB's Homelessness Reviews), the districts stepped up coordination. For example, Oxford City Council's Community Safety Manager raised the profile of safeguarding within community safety partnerships, ensuring that vulnerable adults (like rough sleepers) are discussed at both housing forums and OSAB.
- **Local Initiatives:** Cherwell District led on the aforementioned hoarding pilot project, bringing together mental health, environmental health, and housing staff to engage a person with extreme hoarding behaviour (the success of which was shared as a case study at the Board). Their efforts resulted in a grant to help in hoarding cases and development of a multi-agency hoarding

protocol. Such ground-level initiatives by council members directly implement OSAB's objective to **prevent harm by multi-agency collaboration**.

- District council officers also ensured training for their staff (like housing officers) on identifying and reporting safeguarding issues was up to date. They outlined actions such as improved safeguarding referral processes in housing departments and joint visits with police for complex anti-social behaviour cases where adults at risk were involved.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire: As the consumer champion for health and care, Healthwatch ensured the **voice of service users** remained in focus. In OSAB meetings, the Healthwatch representative reminded the Board to consider the experience of adults going through safeguarding processes. This aligned with the Board's strategic aim to hear from those with lived experience. Healthwatch's push for plain language also influenced the Board to commit to a **Plain English Annual Report summary**, making the Board's work more transparent to the public.

Voluntary Sector Partners: Age UK Oxfordshire and other voluntary partners like Connection Support and My Life My Choice played critical roles:

- They acted as a **bridge to the community**, bringing issues from people we support to OSAB's attention (e.g. My Life My Choice highlighted difficulties people with learning disabilities face in safeguarding processes, and Connection Support flagged systemic issues encountered in supporting a client which led to a SAR referral).
- Voluntary partners also delivered parts of the strategy by **outreach and empowerment**. For example, Age UK held community awareness sessions about financial abuse prevention and provided feedback to the Board on older persons' safeguarding needs. Connection Support, which works with people facing housing crises, improved its internal protocols as noted and shared that learning through OSAB to encourage other providers to do the same.
- These organisations often piloted innovative support approaches: one member (**Elmore Community Services**) reported to the Engagement subgroup on a new community-based approach to engage isolated individuals early to help reduce loneliness, aligning with OSAB's prevention objective.

The synergy of these efforts is evident – for instance, while the Council improved internal safeguarding response times, the NHS trained staff on recognising abuse, the Police intervened earlier with at-risk individuals, and community partners offered advocacy and feedback loops. All these contribute to the common strategic goal: **better safeguarding outcomes through effective partnership**.

Notably, joint working between agencies increased. A good example is how partner agencies responded to **self-neglect**: The sharp rise in self-neglect cases (often involving elements of hoarding or substance misuse) prompted a unified response. Social care, healthcare, mental health, fire service, and housing all coordinated under OSAB's guidance – updating the Self-Neglect and Hoarding Policy together, sharing, and ensuring frontline teams across organisations knew what support to offer. This

collaborative approach by all members exemplifies implementing the Board's strategy in unison.

Findings of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and Subsequent Actions

During 2024–25, OSAB conducted or continued several Safeguarding Adults Reviews and Homelessness Mortality Reviews. **These in-depth reviews examine cases where an adult tragically died or was seriously harmed, and multi-agency lessons can be learned.** The key findings and the actions taken as a result are summarised below. All published reports can be accessed on the OSAB website, and a learning compendium is being developed to bring together all the learning from all reviews (from this and past years) to form a single reference document for professionals.

Learning Themes: Across the SARs/HMRs considered this year, some common themes emerged:

- **Quality of Frontline Practice:** SARs reinforced the importance of professional curiosity and not taking things at face value. For instance, in one case, it was noted that having a system flag for individuals who are referred multiple times might have prompted professionals to dig deeper into recurring issues. Learning from this, the Board has requested the Local Authority to explore enhancements to case management systems to better highlight repeat concerns.
- **Working with “difficult to engage” individuals:** Several reviews involved adults who either declined services, had chaotic lifestyles, or mental capacity fluctuating due to substance misuse. Reviews found that traditional approaches sometimes weren't effective. Consequently, OSAB partners are adopting more flexible engagement strategies – for example, using outreach navigators (as the police Harm Reduction Unit does) or multi-agency case conferences, and ensuring that if one agency can't engage someone, another (with a trusted relationship) takes the lead. In the BD case, positive feedback on the persistence of outreach teams was highlighted, encouraging all agencies to persist creatively with hard-to-engage clients.
- **Information Sharing and Coordination:** Gaps in communication were a finding in at least one SAR – e.g. occasions when important information wasn't passed between agencies promptly, or key agencies (like ambulance services or certain care providers) not being fully involved in planning. The Board has quickly addressed this by updating protocols. By March 2024, an agreement on inter-agency information sharing was drafted and circulating for sign-off. Also, OSAB emphasised the expectation that all relevant agencies attend safeguarding meetings or otherwise contribute; if not, it should be escalated to ensure continuity of care.
- **Timeliness of Interventions:** Delays in services being put in place or assessments being conducted were identified as a factor in worse outcomes.

While some systemic issues like waiting lists are challenging, the OSAB used its influence to push for faster responses where this is possible. For example, Oxford Health reviewed how they manage their waiting list for complex needs and consider if interim support can be given while waiting.

- **Hoarding and Self-Neglect:** A specific insight came from cases of severe self-neglect/hoarding. A SAR highlighted that such cases benefit from a **multi-disciplinary approach** and strong legal literacy on the part of organisations so they are aware of the full range of legal powers that can be used to protect the person. Oxfordshire's SARs echoed national findings that self-neglect cases need a skilled, relationship-based approach. In response OSAB updated the Self-Neglect and Hoarding Policy (reviewed in January 2025) incorporated SAR lessons – for example, OSAB created clearer guidance on assessing mental capacity over time for people who self-neglect due to addiction and mapped out all available support services so practitioners know what to try next if initial offers are refused. The Board also decided to split Self-Neglect and Hoarding into distinct sections/policies, acknowledging that while related, each can occur independently and may require tailored strategies. As noted earlier, a hoarding task group was set up and a partnership grant is being used to directly help individuals (one outcome of a case review where housing and mental health sectors realised more practical help was needed).
- **Mental Capacity and Consent:** Some SAR cases involved questions about mental capacity and the balance between respecting an adult's choices and protecting them. Reviews found instances where assessments of capacity were done, but perhaps needed revisiting as circumstances changed. For example, when early stage dementia or other circumstance where fluctuating capacity was a factor, capacity should be assessed more than once.
Subsequent actions: OSAB disseminated a reminder of the 2021 Alcohol Change UK guidance on assessing capacity in people with alcohol dependence to front-line teams. The Board's Learning & Development subgroup (in discussions about its future) identified that **cross-training** with the Children's Board on issues like executive capacity and self-determination could be useful, given similar challenges in adult self-neglect and youth contexts. This will feed into future training plans.
- **Agency-Specific Improvements:** Each SAR produces recommendations for specific agencies. All OSAB member organisations have taken these seriously:
 - For example, **Probation Service** involvement in a case led to a reflection on record-keeping; Probation committed to refresher training for officers on documenting and flagging safeguarding concerns.
 - In one review, the **Police** recognised that on some occasions officers did not submit safeguarding alerts to the county's MASH when attending incidents. As a result, the Police representative agreed to

meet with the Detective Inspector in charge of domestic abuse to ensure officers are reminded and supervised in making those referrals every single time. That action was recorded and is being tracked by the SAR subgroup.

Publication and Dissemination: OSAB decided this year to **extend the availability of SAR reports** on its website. Previously, published reports were taken down after 18 months per an old policy. The Board reversed this, agreeing to keep past SAR reports online for up to 7 years so that lessons remain accessible to practitioners and the public over a longer period. This came from a question raised by a Board member and demonstrates OSAB's commitment to openness and ongoing learning. Additionally, an **“easy-read” or summary version of SAR reports** is considered when appropriate, to share findings with family members and people accessing our services in a sensitive, understandable way.

In summary, the SARs and other reviews undertaken in 2024–25 yielded critical lessons, which OSAB has acted upon diligently. Many of the “further actions” mentioned in this section – improving flagging of repeat concerns, faster multi-agency escalation, better communication of changes to frontline staff – have already been set in motion via the Board's action plans. The Board recognises that the real measure of success is seeing practice change on the ground as a result of these reviews. To that end, OSAB held a series of **Frontline Practitioners Learning Events** (the Learning from Reviews Workshops referenced earlier) during the year (noted by the Independent Scrutineer as being well-received) where case studies and SAR findings were discussed with operational staff. This kind of direct dissemination is being built into the Board's routine. The Independent Scrutineer will continue to monitor how well these SAR lessons are being implemented and will report to OSAB on any gaps. Overall, the SAR process is a cornerstone of OSAB's strategic plan implementation – ensuring the Board not only responds to incidents but turns them into opportunities to prevent future harm.

Changes Over the Last 10 Years

Over the past decade, the landscape of adult safeguarding in Oxfordshire (and nationally) has evolved significantly. **Overall, the trajectory has been one of improvement and expansion in safeguarding, but is accompanied by new challenges.** Key changes include:

Positive Developments:

Stronger Statutory Framework: Ten years ago, Safeguarding Adults Boards were just becoming a statutory requirement (with the Care Act 2014). Since then, OSAB has matured into a well-established body with clear roles. The introduction of an Independent Chair and now an Independent Scrutineer, and defined subgroups, has professionalised safeguarding governance. This has led to more consistent multi-agency collaboration than a decade ago, when arrangements were more ad-hoc.

Increase in Awareness and Reporting: Public and professional awareness of adult safeguarding has grown greatly. In 2015, many cases of abuse or neglect likely went unreported due to stigma or lack of knowledge. Now, mandatory training in

organisations and public campaigns mean people recognise and report concerns more readily. The data reflects this: safeguarding concern rates have risen (to 676 in March 2025), but this is considered a positive in terms of visibility – “It’s better to light a candle than curse the darkness.” People know help is available, which is a success of years of engagement work.

Better Outcomes for Individuals: The approach to safeguarding has shifted to be far more person-centred. The push for Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) in the last decade is paying off – as noted earlier, 90% of individuals or their advocates are now being asked about and achieving the outcomes *they* want from the process. Ten years ago, the focus might have been more on process than outcomes; now the conversation with the adult is central. There are many examples where individuals have been empowered – e.g., an adult at risk being supported to make choices about their living situation rather than agencies deciding for them. This cultural change is a huge positive shift.

Multi-Agency Working & Information Sharing: A decade back, different agencies often worked in silos due to data protection fears or lack of forums to meet. Today, there is far more *real-time* collaboration – the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has been embedded, joint training occurs, and there’s a far clearer **protocol between OSAB, the Community Safety Partnership, and the Health & Wellbeing Board** mapping each other’s roles (established in 2014 and built upon). The result is less duplication and fewer cases “falling through the cracks” between agencies than in the past.

Addressing New Topics: Over 10 years, OSAB has broadened its scope to address emerging issues. For example, financial scamming of elders, online abuse, modern slavery and exploitation, and domestic abuse in adults with care needs are now firmly on the Board’s agenda – topics that would have been less discussed a decade ago. The Board’s involvement in homelessness mortality reviews is another example of how safeguarding practice has extended into non-traditional areas to protect very vulnerable groups.

Next Steps and Further Work

Higher Demand and Complexity: As highlighted, the volume of safeguarding concerns has increased substantially over the decade. While partly due to better reporting, it also reflects real rising need – aging population with complex health issues, mental health and addiction issues becoming more apparent. The cases OSAB deals with now often have multiple intersecting issues for example, an older person with dementia *and* an unpaid carer who is struggling, possibly leading to neglect. Managing these layered complexities can stretch services.

Resource and Workforce Pressures: Over the last 10 years, austerity measures and budget constraints in public services have undoubtedly impacted safeguarding. Local authority budgets for adult social care have been tight, NHS services are under strain, and voluntary sectors have had funding uncertainties. Turnover of experienced staff is an issue and the recruitment and retention of care staff and social workers remain a challenge into 2025. OSAB partners have done admirably to

“do more with less,” but the strain shows, for example, in waiting times in some services.

New Types of Risk: Some negative trends emerged in society that affect safeguarding. For instance, **self-neglect** was not even formally recognised in policy until about 2014; now it constitutes a large proportion of cases and is very challenging to resolve. Similarly, the growth of **county lines drug trafficking** over the past 10 years has drawn vulnerable adults into exploitation, requiring safeguarding responses in scenarios that previously would have been seen purely as criminal or social issues. Technology, too, has introduced risks like online scams or abuse via social media that weren’t on the radar before. The safeguarding system has had to catch up to these, sometimes after harm has occurred.

Pandemic Impact: As reported in the LGA’s COVID-19 Adult Safeguarding Insight Project work, it is worth noting the COVID-19 pandemic had lasting negative effects on adult safeguarding. Isolation increased, some services became remote, and hidden harm likely grew. Locally, the OSAB’s data in the years since shows elevated concerns around self-neglect and mental health, arguably aggravated by the pandemic’s social aftermath. This event stands out as a significant setback for adults with needs for care and support, and it will require ongoing action to mitigate its effects (for example, rebuilding social support networks).

Expectations and Accountability: There is greater scrutiny on safeguarding now (which is positive), but it means agencies face higher expectations with limited means. For example, every SAR brings a spotlight. In the last decade, media and regulatory attention on adult safeguarding failings (such as high-profile neglect cases nationwide) have increased pressure. OSAB has to maintain public confidence that adults are safe, which is an ever-demanding task as complexities grow. In reflecting on these changes, OSAB has shown it can adapt – the Board today is more proactive, data-informed, and collaborative than it was 10 years ago. However, challenges such as sustaining the workforce, preventing burnout, and innovating within tight budgets are ongoing.

Looking to the Future

While OSAB made solid progress this year, the Board is candid about areas needing further development. The Scrutiny Committee’s interest in future actions is timely, as OSAB itself has identified and begun to address several key improvements for the coming period:

Improve Frontline Awareness of Lessons and Resources: A recurring point in Board discussions was ensuring that all the good work on policies, procedures, and SAR findings actually reaches front-line practitioners in an impactful way. There remains some uncertainty at the frontline about new initiatives – for instance, a **Learning-from-Practice** survey suggested some staff weren’t sure how lessons from subgroups are shared with them. OSAB should continue to strengthen communication channels: more briefings, newsletters, or short videos could reinforce new policies (like the SAC Framework) and learning points from reviews. Frontline staff feedback mechanisms (such as regular practitioner forums or feedback forms

after using new guidance) can help the Board gauge what's working or needs clarification. Essentially, *closing the loop* on learning is a top priority going forward.

Establish a Formal Risk Register: The Independent Scrutineer recommended OSAB develop a **Risk Register** to log and monitor risks to the Board's objectives. This would include, for example, risks like "High volume of referrals exceeding capacity" or "Lack of SAR authors" or "Changes in partner funding affecting safeguarding resources". By having a risk register, the Board can proactively manage these – assigning owners to each risk and mitigation plans (like recruiting more specialist staff or seeking funding for certain initiatives). The Board agreed and in January 2025 tasked all members to send in thoughts on key risks, for the Strategic Partnerships Manager to compile a draft register. The suggestion here is to expedite this: the Scrutiny Committee could support by asking for a status update on the risk register at the next review. This tool will improve OSAB's strategic oversight and resilience.

Deepen Partnership with Children's Safeguarding Partnership: Changes in the children's safeguarding arena were noted, specifically restructuring of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (previously Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board). This was done after an extensive review of the statutory requirements laid out in guidance for local children's safeguarding partnerships. Given many issues like transition from children's services to adult services, domestic abuse in families, or contextual safeguarding (like exploitation) span both groups, the OSAB would benefit from closer ties. A further action is to formalise regular information exchange or even joint projects with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. One idea is a **joint annual conference on a cross-cutting theme**. Reviving this discussion now the OSCP has been restructured would be valuable, as it reinforces holistic family safeguarding approaches.

Focus on Prevention and Early Intervention: The data indicates more people are being safeguarded, which is good, but prevention could stem the tide. OSAB should build on its Engagement subgroup work to launch **public awareness campaigns** especially targeted at prevention of scams, financial abuse, and self-neglect. For example, a county-wide campaign on self-neglect (signposting how people can seek help early, perhaps via GPs or community groups) could be beneficial given the spike in cases. Also, continue expanding initiatives like the hoarding support network – and evaluate if similar networks are needed for other issues (like for care providers to share learning on frequent falls or pressure ulcer safeguarding referrals, etc.). The more the Board can help agencies problem-solve early, the better outcomes for individuals.

Final Thoughts

Over the past year (2024–25), OSAB and its partners have worked diligently to meet their main objective: safeguarding Oxfordshire's vulnerable adults by implementing a robust strategic plan. They achieved a lot – from policy reform and enhanced training to direct action from reviews – and this directly benefited adults in our county (e.g. quicker help, more person-centred support). Each member agency played its part, demonstrating the strength of a multi-agency approach. The Board has also been candid in self-reflection, identifying what needs to improve.

Going forward, the recommendations and further actions highlighted in this report – better frontline communication, establishing a risk register, addressing resource gaps, and reinforcing prevention – should form the focus of OSAB’s work in the next year. Cabinet can take confidence in OSAB’s positive trajectory and provide support by monitoring these developments and helping unblock any barriers. With continued commitment, learning, and partnership, Oxfordshire’s Safeguarding Adults Board will be well-equipped to handle both present demands and future challenges, ensuring adults at risk are supported and protected effectively.



Child Exploitation Subgroup Mapping Exercise: Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse – Oxfordshire

Context: The government's priority is to tackle the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, secure truth and justice for victims and survivors of these crimes, ensure perpetrators are identified and face the full force of the law, and protect children and young people now and in the future. The government is committed to taking further action to address the historic and ongoing crimes of group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation, such as those that have taken place in Rochdale, Rotherham, Telford, Walsall, Oldham, and Oxfordshire.

Following the Child Exploitation Subgroup meeting on 25.02.25, it was identified that we need to conduct mapping across services to evaluate our understanding of the scale, nature, and drivers of group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse in Oxfordshire. This template has been devised to generate individual responses from agencies across Oxfordshire

Required Contact Information:

- **Agency:** Cherwell District Council
- **Name of person completing this template:** Susan Asbury
- **Role and links to Child Exploitation in Oxfordshire:** Lead CSE for Cherwell

Questions for Group Members:

Representation and Actions: As a member of the group, which agency/ies are you representing, and what actions do you take from the meetings you attend?	Cherwell District Council Data/Themes /Practice/ Procedures are all feedback to teams across Cherwell. Information & Learning is shared both ways in these meetings across Cherwell and with the services attending these subgroups.
Data: What data that links to child exploitation is held by your agency, and how is this used to understand, respond and drive improvements?	Internal reporting mechanism, "See it Report it" concerns raised for CSE. Reporting making referrals working with the partnership, training, raising awareness across services in Cherwell. Partnership working and learning events. Working closely with community safety team and identifying hot spots and intel with TVP.

Other Group Memberships: Are you a member of any other groups where child exploitation is an agenda in Oxfordshire?	OSCP/Neglect/PAQA/JATAC/Networking Sessions with LCSS/CASO/ENACT/ School Liaison Officer
How does your service disrupt, pursue and protect children identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation? Can you provide evidence of this.	Community Safety partnership, forward referring regular patrol plans target areas around schools. Intel led patrol plans/ hot spots local parks visible around schools. Responding to missing persons reports on the police radio.
What practices or procedures does your agency have in place for working with groups of young people who are transition into adult services? Do you have any case examples	We do not have children services. Housing & Customer service follow internal safeguarding policy. Housing ensure due diligence through housing & homeless individuals reviewing risk factors. Working with probation. Attendance to TVP meetings with community safety teams frequent meetings ensuring strong communications and close working relationships. CAWN – Child abduction warning notice through the briefing with the police & patrolling.
How well do you believe the subgroup focus on prevention, protection and pursuit enable agencies to ensure that we provide the right support at the right time?	Robust focus and challenges in this group from services attending.
What do you believe to be the strengths in the partnership for identifying and responding to children affected by Child Expolitation?	Communication sharing information partnership working close working relationship with the police / school/ school police liaison officer and our community safety team. Engagement events referrals advise and signpost to services for support.
What do you see are the challenges and barriers to this work?	GDPR- Lack of engagement from schools with community safety wardens. People not aware of what they see, such as shoplifting YP stealing condoms.
What opportunities do you see on how the partnership can improve the response for children affected by exploitation in Oxfordshire?	Joint strategies/projects, in hot spot areas. Drop-in centres for children who might need someone to talk to, go for advice a chat hot drink. Local with professionals/school/NHS/TVP/ Community Wardens working together hrs from 3:30 to 18:00 maybe. Raise awareness for the support available.

If you can give examples and evidence of this work and return this template back to OSCP@oxfordshire.gov.uk by **Friday 14th March** so that we can collate and write a report to the Executive group for oversight.

Safeguarding Meetings

2025

	Meeting	Regularity	Aims	Partnership Working
1	CSE	Monthly	<p>The group is aware of exploitation through radicalisation and will consider issues if they arise without taking on governance of this work. All references to the term 'child' will continue to relate to those under the age of 18. The Sub-Group will retain the flexibility to consider other emerging themes and safeguarding concerns as necessary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop our understanding of how we can best support and protect young people at risk of exploitation, and their families, to inform practice change and improvement. 2. Develop the capability and confidence of the workforce in working with child exploitation through a better understanding of roles and responsibilities, and effecting changes required arising from the review to ensure learning is embedded in practice. 3. Relevant procedures and pathways reflect the new system, vision and statements of intent 4. The new system is effectively implemented through changes in working practices of the groups that form the system, and which hold the accountabilities that have been agreed. 	Yes
2	Domestic Abuse/ Link worker	Monthly	Internal meeting working with DA coordinator for the DAHA accreditation, attend OxDaf meeting for updates	Yes
3	Neglect	Monthly	Support David North who should attend as lead for CDC, I cover when needed and also provide data and information from CDC. Compile reports for PAQA/ Hoarding etc	Yes
4	OSCP	Monthly	Attend on behalf of Nicola Riley	Yes

5	OSAB	Monthly	Attend on behalf of Nicola Riley	Yes
6	Districts meetings	Quarterly	Share leaning, joint projects and review concerns identifying themes.	Yes
7	Community Safety Partnership	Monthly	Training, discuss concerns, referrals and resources. Projects that overlap other meetings.	Internal
8	Bicester & South Community Meetings	Monthly	Working to support and offer advice, attend ad hoc	Yes
9	OSCP Training /Learning Development group	Monthly	Learning, Training development, use of resources for our training. Support reviewing training and if identifying areas that need additional training.	Yes
10	Leisure & Community Facilities	Monthly	Team meetings	No
11	PIQA	Monthly	Adult safeguarding board assurance and partnership collaboration	Yes
12	PAQA	Monthly	Child safeguarding partnership and collaboration and auditing reviews. (Vice chair end Dec 25.)	Yes
13	Hoarding Partnership	Bianually	Part of our internal and partnership working building the network and supporting challenging of the service in supporting change and funding.	Yes
14	Policy, Practice & Procedure	Monthly	Identify concerns reviewing and identifying where change is needed.	Yes
15	OxDaf meeting	Monthly	Updates from all services on project, concerns and learning sharing of resources.	Yes
16	Engagement Group	Monthly	Lead on actions for further deep dive on themes from OASB	Yes
17	Resettlement team	Monthly	Training, support and triage cases	No
18	Twice yearly summits	Biannual		Yes
19	CSPR Review group	Monthly	As and when needed, collate all information from services in CDC and return rapid reviews etc	Yes
20	Themed Priority Task & Finish Groups/ Multi-Agency Protection	As and when needed	Hoarding Task & Finish Group	Yes

Safeguarding



Self-Assessment / Section 11

- 2025 Self-Assessment **on hold** while changes to Safeguarding Partnership is agreed, the boards will be replaced by a Designated Safeguarding Partnership & Lead Safeguarding Partnership.

In its place for 2025 a Professional Curiosity Survey and the feedback from the Learning from Reviews Workshop documents were reviewed.

Finding:

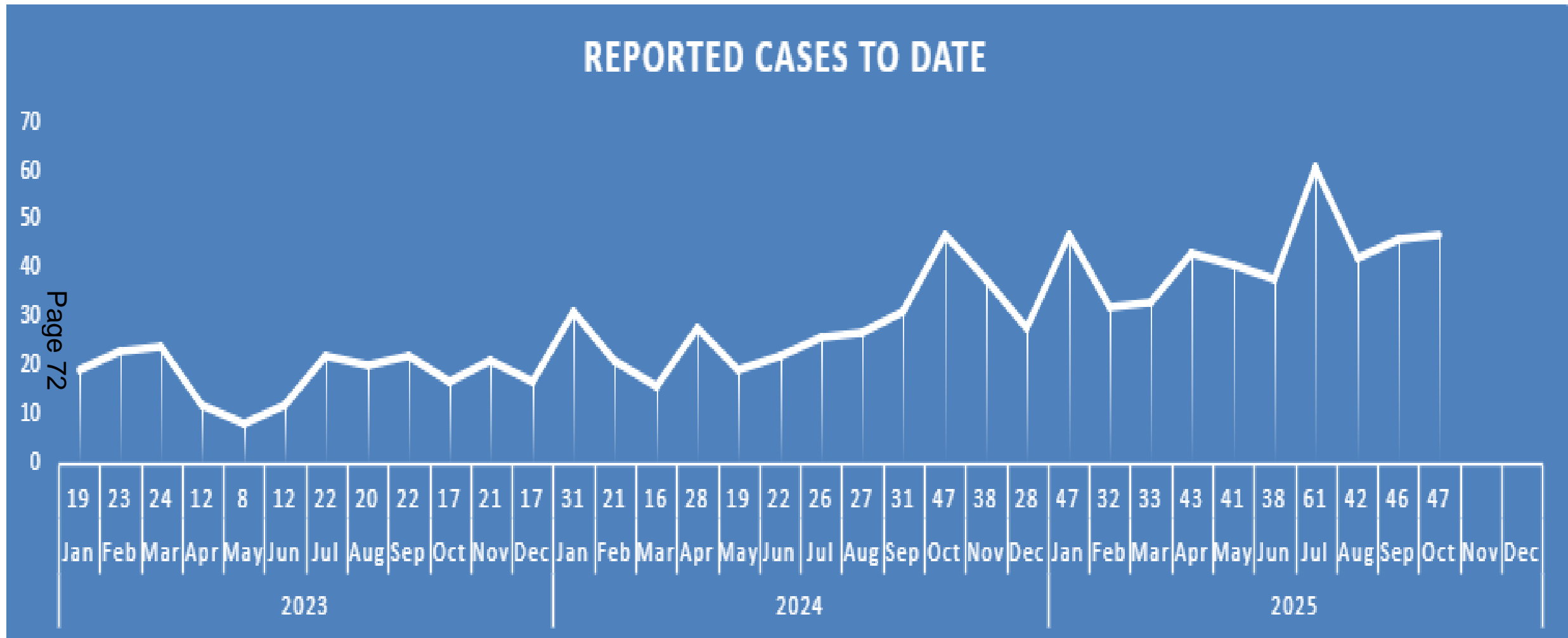
For frontline practitioners to empower professional agency:

- Fostering Safe Curiosity
- Leveraging Peer Support
- Engaging with Learning
- Building Collaborative Interagency Relationships

OSAB Annual Report 2024-25
What the Board partners did towards the priorities
Cherwell District Council

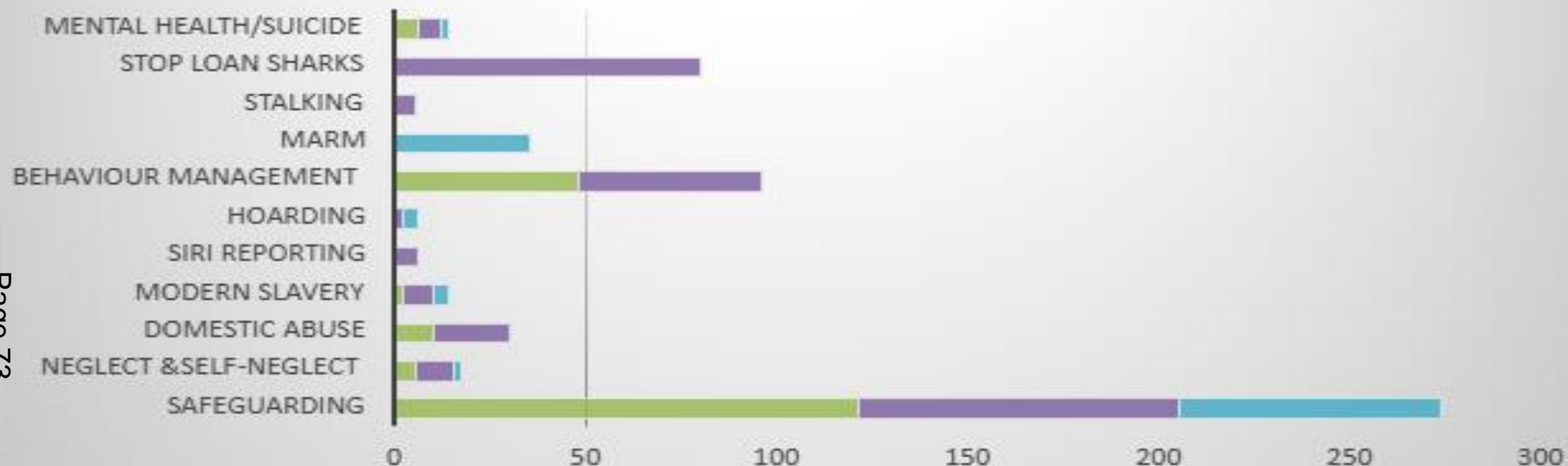
- OSAB's Main Objective: "To safeguard adults with care and support needs in Oxfordshire by coordinating effective multi-agency action and ensuring continuous improvement in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect."
- What Cherwell achieved;
- Policy, Practice & Procedure Subgroup-Outcome: Key policies were updated or in progress by year-end, including a revised Self-Neglect and Hoarding Policy .
- Engagement & Inclusion Subgroup: CDC Case study on Hoarding including outcomes good and bad.
- Local Initiatives: Cherwell District led on the hoarding pilot project, bringing together teams from mental health, environmental health, and housing to engage a person with extreme hoarding behaviour (the success of which was shared as a case study at the Board). Their efforts resulted in a grant to help with hoarding cases and development of a multi-agency hoarding protocol. Such ground-level initiatives directly implement OSAB's objective to prevent harm by multi-agency collaboration.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns



Internal 'See it Report it' (SIRI)

Internal Safeguarding Training Jan -Dec 25



	Safeguarding	Neglect & Self-Neglect	Domestic Abuse	Modern Slavery	SIRI reporting	Hoarding	Behaviour Management	MARM	Stalking	Stop loan Sharks	Mental Health/Suicide
2023	121	5	10	2	0	0	48	0	0	0	6
2024	84	10	20	8	6	2	48	0	5	80	6
2025	69	2		4		4	0	35			2

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This report is public.	
Kerbside Glass Collection Service	
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny
Date of Committee	11 November 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Ian Middleton
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	August 2025
Report of	Assistant Director Environmental Services / Corporate Director Communities

Purpose of report

This report sets out the options for the Kerbside glass collection, and other new requirements driven by the Environment Act. It provides the necessary details to enable an informed decision.

1. Recommendations

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee resolves:

- 1.1 Support the proposed changes to the service, introducing kerbside glass collections in January 2026.
- 1.2 Note the potential impacts of the Environment Act on the waste collection service and that a further report on other elements of Simpler Recycling will come forward to Executive in the near future

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Several legislative changes, including the Environment Act, will significantly alter the waste collection service for residents. These changes are driven by initiatives like

- Simpler Recycling
- Deposit Return Scheme

- Extended Producer Responsibility
- Emissions Trading Scheme

- 2.2 Simpler Recycling is a new law that ensures the same materials are collected by all councils across the country. By April 2026, the default is for residents to receive kerbside collections of paper, cardboard, cans, plastic bottles, and glass. This may result in residents having at least four containers. Full compliance will require issuing residents with a container for paper and cardboard and adding glass to the dry mixed recycling, which could cost around £1.5 million in capital.
- 2.3 The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), starting in October 2027, will require a deposit on drinks containers, which is repaid when the container is returned. This is expected to substantially reduce the number of drink cans and plastic bottles in dry mixed recycling from October 2027. The full details of the scheme have yet to be developed. However, during 2026 how the scheme will work should become clearer.
- 2.4 The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme shifts the recycling costs from local authorities to packaging producers and retailers. In November 2025, the Council should receive £1.7 million from the packaging industry for collection and treatment costs. To continue annually receiving future similar payments, the service must be judged as 'effective & efficient'.
- 2.5 The Emissions Trading Scheme will cover Energy from Waste Plants starting in 2027. This could cost the County Council £3 million in extra disposal costs. Reducing the amount of residual waste and increasing recycling could minimise this cost. However, the current flow of funds between the disposal authority and the collection authorities means that to do more recycling will cost the collection authorities more, with all the financial benefits being received by the disposal authority. Therefore, the County Council is proposing an incentive scheme so that collection authorities receive much of the financial benefits from doing more recycling.
- 2.6 The Simpler Recycling Project Board has considered these changes. This report focuses on introducing the Kerbside Glass collection in 2025/26. The new waste collection service has several possible options, which will be presented soon.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	<p>The current mode of glass collection in the district via bring banks results in a net income budget of £348k pa. Costs are currently limited to salaries, specialised vehicles and transfer fees which are all more than offset by the commodity price of glass (and to a lesser extent the other commodities recycled at the bring banks, eg. textiles) resulting in the net income position.</p> <p>All of the options considered to introduce kerbside glass collection will unavoidably increase the costs of the service. The proposed option of collecting glass in recycling blue bins is the least expensive. The forecast net cost of collecting glass in the blue bins is predominantly driven by the additional tonnage from glass transferring to the blue bins which will then be subject to gate fees as all dry mixed recycling currently is. Gate fees are significantly higher than the transfer fees paid for glass (separate from other dry mixed recycling). In addition, income is impacted because the glass will no longer attract a commodity price but will instead be subject to recycling credits, which are not as lucrative.</p> <p>The options around collecting glass separately would improve the income achieved and not be subject to gate fees; however, these improvements are more than offset by the additional revenue costs of operating and resourcing the additional vehicles required, resulting in net costs higher than the options to include glass in blue bins. Please see section 4.6 for a breakdown of the forecast span of increased costs compared to the current budget for the options considered.</p> <p>The staff employed on bring banks are expected to be eligible to apply to vacancies elsewhere in the service; therefore, no</p>

	<p>redundancy or pension strain costs are expected from the recommended option.</p> <p>Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 01295 221545</p>			
Legal	<p>Denzil Turbevill, Head of Legal, 01295 221586</p> <p>The Council has a statutory responsibility to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.</p> <p>The Council also has to comply with the Environment Act 2021 to ensure that certain recyclable materials are collected appropriately.</p> <p>The proposals set out within this report will help to ensure that we remain complaint with our obligations.</p>			
Risk Management	<p>The Council has to carry out most of the functions of Waste & Environmental Services as they are statutory services.</p> <p>A robust governance & risk management framework will be implemented to ensure a successful service change.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader,</p>			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				Not applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is		Y		Not applicable

delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		Y		Not applicable
Climate & Environmental Impact	x			Increasing recycling has a positive impact on the environment. Using recycled materials rather than virgin materials develops a circular economy and helps to address climate change
ICT & Digital Impact		x		No impact
Data Impact		x		No impact
Procurement & subsidy		x		Any purchase of wheeled bins would be through framework agreements
Council Priorities	Supporting Environmental Sustainability			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The council collects around 60,000 tonnes of waste each year from approximately 73,000 properties. The current service includes an alternate-week residual waste bin, an alternate-week dry mixed recycling bin, and a weekly food waste recycling bin. The national waste strategy, launched in December 2018, requires a change to move towards a circular economy. Simpler Recycling requires collection authorities to collect paper, cardboard, plastics, steel, aluminium cans, and glass at the kerbside.
- 3.2 The current alternate week collection service was introduced in 2003/04. Since then, the main changes to the service have been the introduction of food waste collections. Initially, food was added to the garden waste service around 2010. Then, in 2022, a garden waste subscription service was introduced with a weekly separate collection of food waste. Other smaller services such as the collection of batteries, small electrical items and coffee pods have been successfully introduced over the years.
- 3.4 Simpler Recycling requires collection authorities to collect the same materials and deliver similar services. Commercial collections should be in by 31 March 2025, with Domestic properties by 31 March 2026. From 31 March 2027, plastic film needs to be added to the range of collection materials. A late addition to the collection requirements was collecting paper & cardboard separately from the other dry recycling materials
- 3.5 Two changes are required to meet the requirements of Simpler Recycling. Firstly, glass must be collected at the kerbside. In addition, paper and cardboard must be collected separately from the rest of the recycling materials.
- 3.6 A TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment may help delay implementation. A TEEP assessment could be written to delay implementation of the collection of paper and cardboard separately. This argument is likely to be developed by the uncertainty of the impact of DRS on the dry mixed recycling collections. However, it is unlikely that a TEEP assessment to postpone the glass collection would be robust.

4. Details

- 4.1 Currently, glass is recycled through an extensive network of over 100 glass banks. This low-cost method captures about 70% of household glass. Introducing a kerbside glass collection is expected to increase the recycling rate by only 1% to 1.5%, adding 500-700 tonnes of glass per year to the recycling stream. With the introduction of kerbside collection, most of the glass bring bank sites will be removed in a planned manner.
- 4.2 The banks are located at well over 100 sites, so residents can recycle their bottles at supermarkets, local shops, village halls, and community centres. This low-cost collection method requires one staff member and a specialist crane lorry. The glass produces an income stream. The bring banks in some areas can be a focus for fly tipping, with materials being dumped around them.
- 4.3 There are three options for glass collection:
1. Collecting glass mixed in with the blue bin.
 2. Collecting glass separately.
 3. Continuing with the bring bank system (not collecting at the kerbside).
- 4.4 Glass collected at the sorting centre (Materials Recovery Facility or MRF) is separated by machines. The large pieces are sorted by colour for further processing, whilst smaller pieces are used for road aggregate or short blasting material. The gate fee at the current MRF is now the same regardless of whether glass is present in the mixed recycling.
- 4.5 With the introduction of kerbside glass collection, most of the existing glass bring bank sites will be removed. This is because the volume of glass recycled through these banks will rapidly decrease. Many of these sites can be removed within a few weeks, with all likely to be gone within a few months.
- 4.6 The following table summarises the financial implications of each option, comparing them to the 2025/26 budget:

	Best Case Last 12 Months	Current Pressure	Worst Case Last 12 Months	Range

Dry Recycling service with Glass in the blue bin (with Bring bank at 4 sites) Option 1 (a)	£ 405,863	£ 442,193	£ 493,663	£ 87,800
Dry Recycling service with Glass in the blue bin (NO Bring Bank sites) – Option 1 (b)	£ 389,732	£ 428,036	£ 475,840	£ 86,108
Dry Recycling service with Glass collected separately at kerbside (with Bring Bank at 4 sites) Option 2 (a)	£ 408,710	£ 422,010	£ 516,250	£ 107,540
Dry Recycling service with Glass collected separately at kerbside (NO Bring Bank sites) Option 2 (b)	£ 360,628	£ 373,928	£ 468,168	£ 107,540

Below is the impact of commencing collections from January 2026 rather than April 2026

	Forecasted Outturn as at September (Based on Glass from April 2026)	Revised Forecasted Outturn (to include Glass from January 2026)	Variance (New Pressure for Environmental Services during 2025/26)
Gate Fees	51,497	88,055	36,558
Recycling Credits	-235,508	-232,651	2,857
Sale of Glass	-235,000	-184,313	50,687
Cost for Collection of Bring Banks	0	17,243	17,243
	-419,011	-311,666	107,345

- 4.7 A communications plan is being developed to inform residents of the changes. The goal is to start this communication process after the report goes to the Executive in November, with information potentially included in a Christmas mailing. As more residents begin putting glass in their blue bins, the amount of glass at the existing bring bank sites will decrease, allowing for their gradual closure over several months. The closure of Bring Bank sites will also mean a reduction in clothes banks and hence a small reduction in the number of textiles being recycled.
- 4.8 In late 2024, the council began working with Oxford City Council and West Oxfordshire District Council to explore potential financial efficiencies. This collaboration is progressing, as it could lead to significant savings and may be a precursor to a new unitary council potentially covering all three areas.
- 4.9 All three councils have very similar waste collection services, with the main difference being how they handle glass. Oxford City Council already collects glass with other recyclables, while West Oxfordshire collects it separately at the kerbside. To realise the financial benefits of working together, this council and West Oxfordshire must align their glass collection methods with Oxford City. Therefore,

when deciding on a technique for kerbside glass collection, the partners' methods have been carefully considered.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified. Option 1 is the Officer's preferred solution

5.2 Option 1: Collect glass mixed in with the blue bin (Preferred Option)

This option involves adding glass to the existing blue bin with other dry-mixed recyclables. It is straightforward, does not require extra vehicles or staff, and is easy for residents to use.

Key Financials: This option has no additional capital costs for new containers or vehicles. While there would be a capital cost of around £1.5 million for new bins for each property to comply with Simpler Recycling fully, this specific option does not add to it. However, the financial value of colour-separated glass is lost, and the gate fee at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) is the same whether glass is present or not, as of a new contract in August 2025. The gate fee would cover 15,000 tonnes of dry mixed recycling with glass, up from 11,500 tonnes without.

5.3 Option 2: Collect Glass Separately at the Kerbside (Rejected Option)

This method would require residents to have another container, likely a box, specifically for glass. It would also require more staff and vehicles.

Key Financials: The option for separate kerbside glass collection has significant capital costs:

- New vehicles: **£625,000**
- New kerbside boxes: **£316,800**
- Total estimated capital cost: **£941,800**
- The costs include delivery of boxes (**£30,000**) and removal of bring banks (**£25,171**).

There are also ongoing revenue costs resulting from capital expenditure to consider. Once these are added to the figures in section 4.6, the options relating to separate glass collection become the most expensive to implement. The additional revenue costs are forecast on an incremental basis in the table below:

<u>MRP & Interest - Borrowing Costs for Glass collected separately at Kerbside</u>						
	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	
Glass Collection Vehicles	£ 25,000.00	£ 67,829.90	£ 2,713.20	£ 2,821.72	£ 2,934.59	£ 101,299.41
Kerbside Boxes for Glass	£ 13,872.00	£ 28,885.30	£ 1,155.41	£ 1,201.63	£ 1,249.69	£ 46,364.03
	£ 38,872.00	£ 96,715.19	£ 3,868.61	£ 4,023.35	£ 4,184.29	£ 147,663.44

This option also introduces new health and safety risks for collection staff related to manual handling and noise.

5.4 **Option 3: Produce a TEEP assessment and continue using bring banks (Rejected)**

This option involves a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment, which may help to delay the implementation of the new requirements. The current low-cost glass bring bank system captures 70% of household glass. The Kerbside glass collection is significantly more expensive than the current bank system.

A TEEP assessment arguing for a delay in glass collection is unlikely to be robust or accepted. There are no technical or environmental barriers to kerbside collection. The economic argument will likely be considered weak, especially since the council will receive significant EPR funding from November 2025.

6 **Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

6.1 The council recommends introducing glass recycling from the kerbside by adding it to the blue bin during January 2026 to comply with Simpler Recycling. This approach has several benefits:

- This should make it easier for residents to recycle their glass and lead to a slight increase in the recycling rate (1-1.5%).

- It does not require additional capital for new containers or vehicles or the associated revenue implications of capital expenditure.
- It aligns with the method of glass collection used by Oxford City Council, which is essential as the three councils (including West Oxfordshire) move toward a potential new unitary council.

6.2 Remove the remaining banks in a planned manner. In some areas, the bring banks can be a focus for fly tipping. As kerbside glass collection is introduced, the volume of glass through the glass banks will fall.

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	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Ed Potter Assistant Director Environmental Services

Report Author contact details	ed.potter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221574
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Nicola Riley Executive Director Neighbourhood Services (Interim)

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-26

(Updated: 3 November 2025)

Items allocated to specific meeting dates		
16 December 2025		
Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Thames Valley Police Attendance	External Scrutiny - Annual recurring item To fulfil the Council's requirement regarding crime and disorder scrutiny to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions no less than once in every twelve-month period. All Members are invited to attend the meeting.	Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Councillor Rob Parkinson
27 January 2026		
Quarter Three (October to December) Performance Monitoring Report	Performance Monitoring To consider the Quarter three performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive.	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Temporary Accommodation (Previously referred to as Homelessness and Rough Sleeping) Suggestion from Cllr Lynne Parsons	Progress against the new Temporary Accommodation Policy Cllr Parsons revised the remit of this suggested topic following the recent approval of the new Temporary Accommodation Policy (Executive 1 July 2025)	Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services Richard Smith, Head of Housing Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities, Councillor Rob Pattenden

<p>Cherwell Futures Programme (previously Transformation Programme) (may feed into Local Government Reorganisation and Budget Planning) Suggestion from Chief Executive (to include previously separate item of Service Levels)</p>	<p>Holding the Executive to account. To consider regular updates on the transformation programme; initial 'Case for Change' scheduled for Executive in July 2025, OSC involvement during implementation phase. To become an annual item.</p> <p><i>Moved from December meeting to allow focus on Crime and Disorder Scrutiny/Attendance of Police and Police and Crime Commissioner.</i></p>	<p>Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources Charlene Greenaway, Transformation Programme Manager Leader & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Councillor David Hingley</p>
<p>24 March 2026</p>		
<p>Draft Performance Outcomes Framework 2026-27</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring. To consider and make comments / recommendations to Executive on the draft Performance Outcomes Framework for 2026-2027 prior to Executive adoption of the framework</p>	<p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant</p>
<p>Action Plans stemming from Planning and Development To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAS Review Merton College PR9 Site Appeal Housing Delivery Action Plan (as discussed at 3.6.25 Committee) <p>Suggestion from Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Holding the Executive to account Multiple items across the year; Scrutinising implementation of the various action plans. An initial update on implementation of the various plans.</p>	<p>David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management, Councillor Jean Conway</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report	To consider the draft annual report of the Committee, prior to submission to full Council	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
To be allocated – remaining 25-26 Year		
Graven Hill	Holding Executive to Account/External Scrutiny Review planning process for Phase 2 July 2026, then annually – review of previous year’s performance and monitoring of Phase 2 implementation. Timing of this element is dependent on the planning process.	Stephen Hinds, Shareholder Representative Leader & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Councillor David Hingley
Follow-up on recommendation relating to Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership Plan	At 11 March 2025 meeting of the Committee it was resolved - “(1) That the Committee recommends that the Executive, as a matter of urgency, ensure that the Cherwell Safer Community Partnership Plan be reviewed and updated and presented to this committee early in the next municipal year” This item could be tied in with the wider CSCP item, dependent on timing of the renewed plan	Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Councillor Rob Parkinson
Performance of S106 delivery Raised by Cllr Dr Isabel Creed, , with additional detail raised by Cllr David Rogers	Many housing developments across the district, particularly in Banbury, are having houses built but then developers appear to not be completing additional infrastructure such as play parks. Could be covered under transformation item in future, due to possible changes to how S106 agreements are monitored. Initial OSC aspect could be current enforcement of S106 Developer Agreements.	David Peckford, Assistant Director – Planning Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management, Councillor Jean Conway
NEW	End of inquiry reports and recommendations from the four working groups are being submitted to Executive in October. Executive then have two months to provide	Various officers and Portfolio Holders.

Executive Response to working group recommendations	a response, which will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny	
To be allocated to 2026-27 work programme		
Year end Performance Monitoring 2025/26	Performance Monitoring To consider the year end performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive.	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Action Plans stemming from Planning and Development To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAS Review Merton College PR9 Site Appeal Housing Delivery Action Plan (as discussed at 3.6.25 Committee) Suggestion from Monitoring Officer	Holding the Executive to account Multiple items across the year; Scrutinising implementation of the various action plans. Full detailed report on each action plan.	David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management, Councillor Jean Conway
Cherwell Futures Programme (previously Transformation Programme) (may feed into Local Government Reorganisation and Budget Planning) Suggestion from Chief Executive	Holding the Executive to account. To consider regular updates on the transformation programme. To become an annual item.	Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources Charlene Greenaway, Transformation Programme Manager Leader & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership, Councillor David Hingley

Meeting dates 2025-26 (All Tuesday 6:30pm unless indicated)

9 September; 14 October; 11 November; 16 December; 27 January; 24 March.

Members are reminded of the five roles of scrutiny when considering items for the work programme:

Performance Monitoring; Policy Development; Policy Review; Holding the Executive to Account; External Scrutiny

The Executive Forward Plan is [published on the Cherwell District Council website monthly](#).

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Guidance

May 2025

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.

Agreed by the Council on 21 May 2025.

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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 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. The *Criteria for selecting scrutiny topics* Guidance Note 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 be 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 *Scrutiny Working Group Inquiry Scoping Document template*) 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 an issue 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 normal b 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.

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](#)

- 9.7. 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.
- 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 as 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 SSMART – 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&MId=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
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