

# Public Document Pack



**Cherwell**

DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** Thursday 18 June 2026  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD

## Membership

Councillor John Brown	Councillor Dr Faltermeyer
Councillor Kieron Mallon	Councillor Julius Parker
Councillor Robert Parkinson	Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill	Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Linda Ward	Councillor Bryonie Wells
Councillor Michael Wilson	Vacancy (Liberal Democrat)

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

## AGENDA

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

- 1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
- 3. Appointment of Chair of Committee for 2026/27 Municipal Year**

4. **Appointment of Vice-Chair of Committee for 2026/27 Municipal Year**

5. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 14)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2026.

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 End of Year 2025 - 2026** (Pages 15 - 60)

Report of the Head of Chief Executive's Office

**Purpose of report**

To report to the committee the council's performance position as of the end of year 2025-26, further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

**Recommendations**

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

- 1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's end of year 2025-26 performance report.

9. **Work Programme Planning for 2026/27** (Pages 61 - 66)

The Chair, Assistant Director – Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer and the Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead will facilitate a discussion on work programme planning for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year.

The indicative work programme for 2026-27 is included at Appendix 1. This gives details of regular items and subjects proposed during the previous Municipal Year, with suggested dates for consideration.

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

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

- External Scrutiny

## **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](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or 01295 221534 prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

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

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

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

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audio-record, and report on proceedings. The council will only seek to prevent this should it be undertaken in a disruptive or otherwise inappropriate manner.

**Queries Regarding this Agenda**

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

**Shiraz Sheikh**  
**Monitoring Officer**

Published on Wednesday 10 June 2026

## **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 24 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Rogers (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blakeway

Councillor John Broad

Councillor Frank Ideh

Councillor Simon Lytton

Councillor Dom Vaitkus

Councillor Barry Wood

Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill (for Labour Vacancy)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Dr Isabel Creed (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Phil Chapman

Councillor Gemma Coton

Vacancy (Labour Group)

Also Present:

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder Corporate Services

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management

Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Officers:

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing

David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning

Richard Smith, Head of Housing

Charlotte Baylis, Housing Management Team Leader

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead

Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration

Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office

Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management  
Sean Tilbury, Planning Enforcement Team Leader

54 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

55 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

56 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

57 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

58 **Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Chief Executive Office that provided an overview of the Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27, including proposed key performance indicators and annual delivery plan milestones to be reported across the new financial year.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that the report set out a clear framework to link the Corporate Delivery Plan, Annual Delivery Plan and Service plans to move emphasis from reporting metrics in isolation with the aim to provide meaningful evaluation to support decision making and service outcomes.

Members were also advised that the report responded directly to the findings of the 2025 internal audit and performance management framework. A total of 16 Corporate and 28 Directorate performance indicators were proposed with a benchmarking exercise comparing Cherwell's key performance indicators (KPIs) with those used by potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) partners, as well as reflecting recommendations from the Local Government Association to ensure better alignment of decision making for preparations for LGR.

In response to a question regarding the ability of quarterly reporting cycles to efficiently handle emergency situations, the Performance Team Leader explained that work was being carried out to introduce an ongoing performance monitoring structure to work alongside the current reporting

cycle, to ensure that measures were in place to help monitor and mitigate any potential issues as they occurred.

In response to a question regarding the inclusion of indicators for tracking climate change, the Performance Team Leader explained that a separate Climate Action Plan was in production that would include dedicated KPIs and actions related to climate change within the district.

In response to a question regarding LGR and its potential impact on the Climate Action Plan, and whether a strategy for solar energy would be at the forefront, the Corporate Director of Communities explained that both the Climate Action Plan and the emerging Solar Strategy were still in draft and yet to be reviewed by the Executive.

In response to a question regarding the time frames allocated to targets and KPI's, the Performance Team Leader explained that all targets and time frames were discussed with the service line and benchmarked against national targets.

In response to a question regarding a contradiction in the wording regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the district, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that they would liaise with officers to better clarify the wording for future reports.

In response to a question regarding the omission of measured targets for certain KPIs the Performance Team Leader explained that where appropriate figures were displayed as percentages, but the baseline figures were available for officers, and that other targets without measures were in the process of baseline monitoring with the intention for true targets to be included going forward.

In response to a question relating to a recommendation forwarded from the Accounts, Audit and Risk committee regarding the inclusion additional performance indicators relating to the environmental and social value of Castle Quay, members were asked to endorse the recommendation

It was proposed by Councillor Vaitkus and seconded by Councillor Lytton that the recommendations as set out in the report, as well as the additional recommendation relating to the inclusion of further performance indicators in relation to Castle Quay, be included.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy 2026/27 be noted with the following comments to be submitted to the Executive for consideration:
  - That consideration be given to additional performance measures for evaluating the Castle Quay investment, ensuring that social impact, environmental outcomes and growth potential are

monitored alongside the existing financial and treasury management indicators.

- (2) That having given due consideration, the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) Milestones 2026/27 be noted.

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### **Temporary Accommodation Policy Presentation**

The Committee considered a presentation from the Assistant Director of Wellbeing and Housing Services that detailed the councils Temporary Accommodation Policy.

Members were advised that the policy outlined the provision of temporary accommodation (TA) as part of the councils' statutory duties, and that TA was used when households presented as homeless and were categorised as Priority Need., 'Priority Need' status was a legislative test.

Members were advised that TA was provided either within units of residential accommodation or within hotels, and that when the council either found someone permanent accommodation or had no duties to continue housing them, the TA duty ended.

Members were also advised that demand for TA was rising rapidly, driven by affordability issues, complex needs, and crisis presentations and that the Council was shifting away from expensive, unsuitable hotel use toward owned/self-contained accommodation. there was also a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention, increasing housing supply

In response to a question regarding the rise in more complex needs of households, as well the rise in needs due to reports of domestic violence, the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services explained that the perceived rise in complexity could be contributed to national initiatives to increase awareness of domestic violence scenarios, as well as officer training to help identify needs.

In response to a question regarding the building of suitable housing for council stock, whether officers had given thought to the creation of a housing revenue account and whether the onset of LGR had an impact on any present and future plans, the Head of Housing explained that the government had revised its thresholds for housing revenue accounts, but temporary accommodation did not contribute towards it. The council had a capital scheme in place to aid in the purchasing of properties suitable for temporary accommodation. Members were also advised that the impact of LGR on the council's position on TA was unknown, but government incentives were in place to ensure that development of housing was at the forefront of local authorities' agendas.

In response to a question regarding the inspection and quality control of housing that was being acquired for the use of TA, the Head of Housing explained that all properties were vetted and assessed before use, and that most properties were newly built for purpose.

In response to a question regarding the comparison in cost effectiveness of the Tenancy Sustainment Programme compared to TA and whether budgets set were adequate to sustain such programmes, the Head of Housing explained that focus was given to prevention initiatives but due to legislative restrictions, once a household presented as homeless they would have to be dealt with as such and therefore tenancy sustainment would not be possible.

In response to a follow up question regarding whether the council was doing everything it could to help prevent and mitigate homelessness within the district, the Head of Housing explained that there was always more work to be done, and that officers were tackling high caseloads, but priority was given to cases where the most work could be done to help.

In response to a question regarding the role Councillors had in helping officers with their work on housing and homelessness, the Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing explained that signposting to services and relevant officers was the best way to support the service.

In response to a question regarding the involvement of enforcement tactics in relation to Council Tax arrears for residents that were already facing housing crises, the Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing explained that there were discretionary funds available that were subject to stringent criteria and reviewed on a case by case basis. , There was also a dedicated policy regarding revenue and benefits that detailed options available to officers and residents.

In response to a question regarding the reduction in the use of hotels for temporary and emergency accommodation, the Head of Housing explained that the reduction was linked to many factors such as acquisition of suitable alternative accommodation and local and national demand, as well as national trends in cost of living and affordability crises that have an impact on the demand and supply of accommodation in the district.

## **Resolved**

- (1) That the Temporary Accommodation Policy Presentation be noted.

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## **Response to the Planning Advisory Service: Review of Planning Committee Decision Making**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director Planning that aimed to advise the Committee on how the Council was responding to the Planning Advisory Service review of Planning Committee decision making.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that a review of the Council's decision-making on planning applications for major developments was undertaken in 2025 by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) which formed part of the Local Government Association (LGA). Members were advised that the review was undertaken for

the period April 2022 to March 2024, due to the percentage of the Council's decisions overturned at appeal having slightly exceeded the nationally prescribed threshold of 10%.

Members were advised that the review concluded that the Council had an effective planning committee with professional, knowledgeable officers and members who understood planning issues and the importance of following officer advice. However, a number of recommendations were made in the interest of improvement;

- Improve early member engagement at pre-application stage
- Standardise and strengthen site visit procedures
- Introduce 24 Hour cut-off period prior to committee for late submissions
- Increase member involvement in planning appeals
- Improve understanding of planning enforcement
- Enhance clarity of officer reports as well as required considerations
- Strengthen member training programme
- Reintroduce developers' forum
- Review legal representation at committee

In response to a question regarding decisions that go against officer recommendation and the resulting appeal determination, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that PAS concluded that members were overly influenced by local objection and not evidence-based planning considerations in their decision making process.

In response to a question regarding the removal of a questions section before debate within Planning Committee meetings to allow for a more natural flow of questions and debate, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that this had been considered but consensus amongst members and officers was mixed, and that the potential introduction of pre-meetings could help alleviate the volume of questions asked within the meetings.

In response to a question regarding member participation in Planning Committee as well as pre-committee site visits for members who were in full time employment, and whether consideration could be made for such members, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that due to the technical intricacies of planning applications and their impact on the length of committees resulted in meetings needed to be held earlier in the day to allow time for full consideration of applications brought before members.

In response to a question regarding the involvement of Parish Councils at the pre-application stage, the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development Management explained that due to the confidentiality of applications at the pre-application stage, involvement was restricted. Members were advised that officers were working on the possibility of ward members involvement at pre-application stage, to better articulate localised issues and requirements.

In response to a question as to whether planning forums and training could be made available to all members of the council and not limited to Planning Committee members, the Assistant Director Planning explained that internal and developer planning forums were already open to all members, and that officers would ensure any training provided would also be open to all members, should they wish to attend.

In response to a question regarding the criteria for approving applications for development on land prone to flooding, the Head of Development Management explained that for applications on such sites, officers would consult with the Environment Agency, the local flood authority and the local draining provider, and a flood risk assessment would be carried out to assess whether the site would be acceptable for development.

It was proposed by Councillor Wood and Seconded by Councillor Thornhill that the Committee support the suggestion from PAS that consideration be given to dispensing with the questions stage before a debate (para 6.1 of the PAS report), and it be forwarded to the Executive for consideration.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Response to the Planning Advisory Service: Review of Planning Committee Decision Making report be noted.
- (2) That Executive be advised that Overview and Scrutiny support the suggestion from PAS that consideration be given to dispensing with the questions stage before a debate (para 6.1 of the PAS report)

## **61 Performance of S106 Delivery**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director Planning that provided an overview of the Section 106 agreement and infrastructure delivery process, and a review of infrastructure delivery in Cherwell from a health perspective.

In introducing the report, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement advised that Section 106 (S106) agreements secured infrastructure contributions to mitigate the impacts of development.

The Council was required to publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) setting out contributions secured, received, held and spent. The report provided an overview of the S 106 process and highlighted the factors that influenced both the securing and delivery of obligations, with a focus on health contributions in Cherwell.

In response to a question regarding the implementation of infrastructure as a result of development, with particular focus on health provision, and whether in lieu of input from parties such as the Integrated Care Board (ICB) the Council be eligible to fulfil the role of developer, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration explained that should the situation arise, the council would

have powers to act in such a capacity, but market interest and input from suitable developers with better market intelligence would be sought first.

In response to a question regarding the expansion of primary care provision as a result of developer contributions as part of S106 agreements, and whether the Council had any involvement in the ICB's decision making process for requesting sufficient funds to support growth in housing provision within the District, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration explained that the Council had the powers to request involvement in that process, but were not in that position currently.

In a follow up question regarding the Committee's ability to make recommendations to the Executive on expansion of primary care provision, the Executive Director Place and Regeneration advised that such involvement would result in the Council's intervention in the aforementioned processes officers would have to take that away for further discussion.

In response to a question regarding whether the lack of requests for funding from the ICB was linked to staffing provision issues, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that the Council was not privy to that information and therefore could not comment on the reasoning behind the ICB's decisions.

In response to a question regarding S106 contributions for healthcare from 48% of developments since 2021 and whether the remaining 52% was made up of developments that did not require health contributions, the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that the contributions were received from the development of residential sites and that not all of those sites included within the percentage demonstrated a need for contributions for health provisions.

In response to a question regarding what S106 contributions would typically be used for the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that contributions would consist of capital contributions with the intention of building improvements, and any contributions would be subject to demonstrable need.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Performance of S106 Delivery presentation be noted.
- (2) That the key findings for health contributions currently held by the Council and trends in health contributions secured between 2019/20 and 2024/25 be noted.

The Committee considered a report of Assistant Director – Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer as part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (OSC) constitutional obligation to report annually to Council on

function of their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

The Committee were asked to consider and approve the draft annual report for 2025-26, for submission to full Council. The report provided a summary of the subjects covered by OSC during the previous Municipal Year, highlighting key observations and outcomes of discussions.

Members were advised that due to the timing of the draft report, information would need adding to reflect the discussions had at this meeting. Delegated authority was therefore requested for the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair, to finalise the report as required for its submission to full Council in May.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report – 2025-26 be noted.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance, in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Chair, to finalise the report for submission to full Council

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### **Work Programme Update**

The Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead provided an update on the Committee's Work Programme 2026 – 2027.

Members were advised that there would be a detailed work programme planning discussion at the first meeting of the committee at the start of the new municipal year 2026 – 2027, at which point the indicative items can be discussed in detail and proposed dates for consideration could be agreed by members. Should the committee be minded the set-up of any dedicated working groups could also be considered.

In response to a question regarding requests from the public for items to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and whether mention of this mechanism could be included on the work programme for the benefit of the public, the Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead explained that topics listed on the work programme were often a result of suggestions from elected Members, who may have had subjects raised with them by residents the topics with their elected representative., Consideration would be given to the possibility of highlighting the opportunities for the public to suggest items for the work programme.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That having given due consideration, the Work Programme 2026 – 2027 be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.22 pm

Chair:

Date:

<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>Performance Monitoring Report End of Year 2025 - 2026</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Overview & Scrutiny
<b>Date of Committee</b>	18 June 2026
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Cllr Lesley McLean, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership and Regeneration
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	03 June 2026
<b>Report of</b>	Head of the Chief Executive's Office

## Purpose of report

To report to the committee the council's performance position as of the end of year 2025-26, further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

## 1. Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny resolves:

1.1 To consider and note the contents of the council's end of year 2025-26 performance 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

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Finance</b>	There are no financial and resource implications arising directly from this report.  Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 20 May 2026
<b>Legal</b>	The report sets out as at Quarter 3 2025/26 performance position for the Council as part of its overall control and monitoring duty. There are no legal implications arising at this stage.  Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal, 26 May 2026
<b>Risk Management</b>	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.  Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 24 April 2026

<b>Impact Assessments</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equality Impact</b>		X		There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.  Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 24 April 2026
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision has an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>Data Impact</b>		X		N/A
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>		X		N/A
<b>Council Priorities</b>	This report links to all council's priorities, as it summarises our progress against them during 2025 - 26.			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	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.

## 4. Details

### 4.1 Performance Summary

4.1.1 The council is performing well against its objectives, which consist of 16 Corporate KPI Measures, seven Directorate KPI Measures, 11 monitoring only measures and 26 Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) actions. Targeted measures reported for the end of the year 2025/26 as per the table below.

Plan	Total number of measures	Red		Amber		Green		No Status specified	
		(Behind target)		(Slightly behind target)		(Achieved or within tolerance)		No	%
		No	%	No	%	No	%		
ADP	26	0	0%	14	54%	12	46%	0	0%
Corporate KPIs (Targeted)	16	2	13%	2	13%	11	69%	1	6%
Directorate KPIs (Targeted)	7	0	0%	1	14%	6	86%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>

4.1.2 Please note at the time of doing this report the data for the measure “Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs” is not available yet. An update will be provided within the Quarter 1 2026-27 report.

### 4.2 Monitoring measures

4.2.1 The council monitors 11 key measures to help identify concerning 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 All monitoring indicators are included within this End of Year report to provide a complete picture of performance trends across the year.

### 4.3 Performance Exceptions

4.3.1 Of the 26 Annual Delivery Plan Actions set for this end of Year, 12 were delivered and 14 reported to be slightly behind.

#### Annual Delivery Plan – Exceptions

Action	Status
Maximise the impact of Council-owned and other assets to further enable the regeneration of our Economic Centres	Amber
Support the Marmot Place Partnership for Oxfordshire	Amber
Review of our Local Strategic Partnership to be more effective in delivering co-produced solutions to community issues	Amber
Develop parish council toolkit to empower communities	Amber
Transfer existing community assets to community organisations to support collaboration and resilience	Amber
Strengthening community cohesion	Amber
Progress decarbonisation of our fleet, including electrifying smaller vehicles and implementation of HVO fuel	Amber
Promote environmentally conscious communities	Amber
Establish a new Programme for a Review of Conservation Area Appraisals	Amber
Monitor and manage housing land supply	Amber
Reducing the percentage of 'major' planning application decisions overturned at appeal	Amber
Streamline process for the preparation of 'section 106' legal agreements and associated land transfers which support planning permissions	Amber
Deliver Planning Service Improvement	Amber
Continue with progress for the provision of a modern and for purpose depot facilities to support activity to minimise waste	Amber

4.3.2 Of the 16 targeted corporate key performance indicators, 11 achieved their end of Year target or reported within the agreed tolerance, two reported slightly behind target, two did not achieve their target and one we are still waiting for data information.

#### 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
BP1.2.10A % of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025	Red
BP2.2.05 Total Greenhouse gas emissions for the year	Red
BP1.2.13 Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs	Data not available

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

- **% of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025** - Reporting 11.2% against a target of 10% for end of Year.

**Comments from the service:** Performance was affected by a small number of legacy major appeal decisions from earlier periods, including committee overturns and appeal outcomes influenced by changes to the NPPF and the five-year housing land supply position. These historic decisions disproportionately impacted the quality metric. Targeted actions have been implemented, including PAS-led committee review and training, strengthened senior officer input at committee, improved governance of major applications, and tighter internal controls on refusals. Strategic and operational improvement plans are now embedded.

Improvement is already evident, with current quality of major decisions at 5.15%, well below the 10% threshold. Performance is forecast to remain under the threshold in the next accounting period, even if all pending appeals were allowed.

- **Total Greenhouse gas emissions for the year** - Reporting 4,014 tCO<sub>2</sub>e against a target of 3,900 tCO<sub>2</sub>e for end of Year.

**Comments from the service:** Total emissions for 2024–25 are 4,014 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (please note this number is reported in arrears), representing a marginal reduction compared to the revised 2023–24 baseline of 4,016 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. The prior year figure has been restated (from 4,119 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) following improvements to data quality, methodology, and asset coverage, providing a more robust and consistent baseline for reporting. Overall emissions have plateaued, with reductions achieved across leisure centres, fleet, and water largely offset by increases in other areas, notably due to expanded landscape contractor activity and changes within the corporate estate. Performance from decarbonisation measures has been positive, but operational issues particularly with heat pump systems are limiting the full realisation of expected energy and carbon savings. While emissions remain broadly consistent with pre-Covid levels, improvements to data accuracy and reporting completeness represent a strengthening of the evidence base and a positive step forward. Looking ahead, more substantial reductions are anticipated through the transition to HVO fuel for the fleet and the delivery of PSDS4-funded decarbonisation projects.

4.3.4 Of seven targeted directorate key performance indicators, six achieved their targets for the end of Year or reported within agreed tolerances and one reported 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 (BC) full plans assessed within 5 weeks (or longer with applicant's agreement)	Amber

For full details on all ADP actions 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 at the end of the financial year.

- **No. of Homeless Households living in nightly charged (Hotel) Temporary accommodation (TA):** We have taken positive action that has led to a notable reduction in households in temporary accommodation, particularly in hotels, with numbers halving from around 50 to fewer than 25 since the start of the financial year. While new placements have remained steady, our improved policies, increased availability of self-contained accommodation, and proactive service management have enabled quicker moves into permanent homes. This progress is especially encouraging given that temporary accommodation use is rising nationally, making our downward trend in Cherwell a strong and favourable outcome.
- **Average time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims and council tax reduction (Days):** Throughout the year, we have successfully and consistently met the set speed of processing targets, with a means average turnaround time for new claims of 12.27 days against a target of 18 days. These outcomes were supported by our ongoing digital transformation which now sees over 40% of our change event processes being automated or automated in part and system led workflow streamlining end-to-end processes, enabling the service to remain resilient and responsive, maintaining smooth operations even during periods of peak demand.
- **Average time taken to process Housing Benefit Change Events & council tax reduction (Days):** Throughout the year, we have successfully and consistently met the set speed of processing targets, with a means average turnaround time for change events 2.66 days against a target of 8 days. These outcomes were supported by our ongoing digital transformation which now sees over 40% of our change event processes being automated or automated in part and system led workflow streamlining end-to-end processes, enabling the service to remain resilient and responsive, maintaining smooth operations even during periods of peak demand.
- **Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation (TA):** Numbers in TA are at the lowest level since November 2024. The number of clients within TA is falling overall. Changes to the allocations scheme in 2025 have meant that clients in TA for whom we owe or are likely to owe the main housing duty to are receiving permanent offers more quickly. This reduces time spent in TA.
- **Number of affordable homes delivered:** 319 affordable housing completions for the year is the highest number since 2020-21. Numbers have been boosted by delivering additional affordable homes on some sites, including 100% affordable housing schemes.

4.4.2 Please find our Performance Annual Report 2025-26 attached at appendix 3.

## 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 a snapshot of our Performance position at the end of the financial year 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

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

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Business Plan KPIs 2025-26 End of Year
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Annual Delivery Action Plan 2025-26 End of Year
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Performance Annual Report 2025-26
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:Celia.Prado-Teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Celia.Prado-Teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a> 01295 221556
<b>Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Kaimi Ithia – Head of the Chief Executive’s Office 19 May 2026

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Quality housing and placemaking - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End 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"> <li>▪ Kristian Aspinall</li> <li>▪ Nicola Riley</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	25	25	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      Families are being moved on to more suitable temporary accommodation resulting in a limited stay in B&amp;B provision. The numbers in hotel accommodation are now half that at the beginning of the financial year.                      With the increase in self-contained accommodation that the Council has access to combined with the overall decrease in TA population, the number in hotels is consequentially falling.</p>						
BP1.2.05 % of Homelessness cases successfully prevented rather than relief/main duty being applied	Cllr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kristian Aspinall</li> <li>▪ Nicola Riley</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	61.25%	60.00%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      Prevention of homelessness continues to be challenging due to the lack of affordable accommodation in the private rented sector. The team continue to experience crisis presentations with complex needs which require addressing before a suitable offer can be made. In addition affordable social lets are now becoming unaffordable to those subject to the benefit cap.</p>						
BP1.2.08 % of Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ David Peckford</li> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	81.6%	60.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      81.6% of Major applications were determined within the NI criteria during this period. National targets for Major applications require the determined of greater than 60% within the NI criteria.</p>						

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.09 % of Non-Major Planning Applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ David Peckford</li> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	79.2%	70.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b> 79.2% of Non-Major applications were determined within the NI criteria during this period. National targets for Non-Major applications require the determination of greater than 70% within NI criteria.</p>						
BP1.2.10A % of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	11.2%	10.0%	▲
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b> Performance was affected by a small number of legacy major appeal decisions from earlier periods, including committee overturns and appeal outcomes influenced by changes to the NPPF and the five-year housing land supply position. These historic decisions disproportionately impacted the quality metric. Targeted actions have been implemented, including PAS-led committee review and training, strengthened senior officer input at committee, improved governance of major applications, and tighter internal controls on refusals. Strategic and operational improvement plans are now embedded. Improvement is already evident, with current quality of major decisions at 5.15%, well below the 10% threshold. Performance is forecast to remain under the threshold in the next accounting period, even if all pending appeals were allowed.</p>						
BP1.2.10Aa No. of Current Major Decisions	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	228		n/a
BP1.2.10Ab No. of Appeals allowed	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	26		n/a
BP1.2.10Ac No. of Pending appeals	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0		n/a

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.10B % of Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2024 to March 2026, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2026	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	4.0%	10.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b> Currently, 4% of Major planning applications have been overturned by the Planning Inspectorate.</p>						
BP1.2.10Ba No. of Current Major Decisions	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	185		n/a
BP1.2.10Bb No. of Appeals allowed	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	9		n/a
BP1.2.10Bc No. of Pending appeals	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0		n/a

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.10C % of Major Applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2025 to March 2027, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2027	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0.0%	10.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b> Currently, no Major planning application decisions have been overturned by the planning inspectorate.</p>						
BP1.2.10Ca No. of Current Major Decisions	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	73		<b>n/a</b>
BP1.2.10Cb No. of Appeals allowed	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0		<b>n/a</b>
BP1.2.10Cc No. of Pending appeals	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0		<b>n/a</b>

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.11A % of Non-Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2023 to March 2025, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2025	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	1.4%	10.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>  1.4% of Non-Major planning application decisions were overturned by the Planning Inspectorate at appeal.</p>						
BP1.2.11Aa No. of Current Major Decisions	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	4,156		<b>n/a</b>
BP1.2.11Ab No. of Appeals allowed	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	59		<b>n/a</b>
BP1.2.11Ac Pending appeals	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0		<b>n/a</b>

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.11B % of Non-Major applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2024 to March 2026, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2026	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	1.4%	10.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>            Currently, 1.4% of Non-Major applications were determined within the NI criteria during this period. National targets for Non-Major applications require the determination of greater than 70% within NI criteria.</p>						
BP1.2.11Ba No. of Current Major Decisions	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	3,497		n/a
BP1.2.11Bb No. of Appeals allowed	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	33		n/a
BP1.2.11Bc No. of Pending appeals	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	16		n/a

Measure Description	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.11C % of Non-Major Applications overturned at appeal, based on applications determined between April 2025 to March 2027, allowing for appeal decisions up to December 2027	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	1.4%	10.0%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>  1.4% of Non-Major applications were determined within the NI criteria during this period. National targets for Non-Major applications require the determination of greater than 70% within NI criteria.</p>						
BP1.2.11Ca No. of Current Major Decisions	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	1,539		n/a
BP1.2.11Cb No. of Appeals allowed	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	20		n/a
BP1.2.11Cc Pending appeals	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Paul Seckington</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	23		n/a
BP1.2.13 Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ David Peckford</li> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better		1,582	?
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>  Housing completion monitoring takes place at the end of year. Data is then reconciled with previously recorded completions and planning permissions. The figures will be confirmed in Summer 2026.</p>						

Quality housing and placemaking - Directorate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.06 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims and council tax reduction (Days)	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michael Furness</li> <li>▪ Stephen Hinds</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	12	18	★

**Year End Commentary**

For the period quarter 4, new claims were put into payment within 13.02 days against a target of 18 days. Throughout the year, we have successfully and consistently met the set speed of processing targets, with a means average turnaround time for new claims of 12.27 days against a target of 18 days. These outcomes were supported by our ongoing digital transformation which now sees over 40% of our change event processes being automated or automated in part and system led workflow streamlining end-to-end processes, enabling the service to remain resilient and responsive, maintaining smooth operations even during periods of peak demand.

BP1.2.07 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit Change Events & council tax reduction (Days)	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michael Furness</li> <li>▪ Stephen Hinds</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	3	8	★
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**Year End Commentary**

For the period quarter 4, changes were 1.60 days against a target of 8 days. Throughout the year, we have successfully and consistently met the set speed of processing targets, with a means average turnaround time for change events 2.66 days against a target of 8 days. These outcomes were supported by our ongoing digital transformation which now sees over 40% of our change event processes being automated or automated in part and system led workflow streamlining end-to-end processes, enabling the service to remain resilient and responsive, maintaining smooth operations even during periods of peak demand.

BP1.2.12 Average time taken for new applications to be responded to within 15 working days	Cllr N Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kristian Aspinall</li> <li>▪ Nicola Riley</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	10	15	★
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**Year End Commentary**

This quarter's result means that over the course of the year, new applications were responded to on average in less than 10 working days.

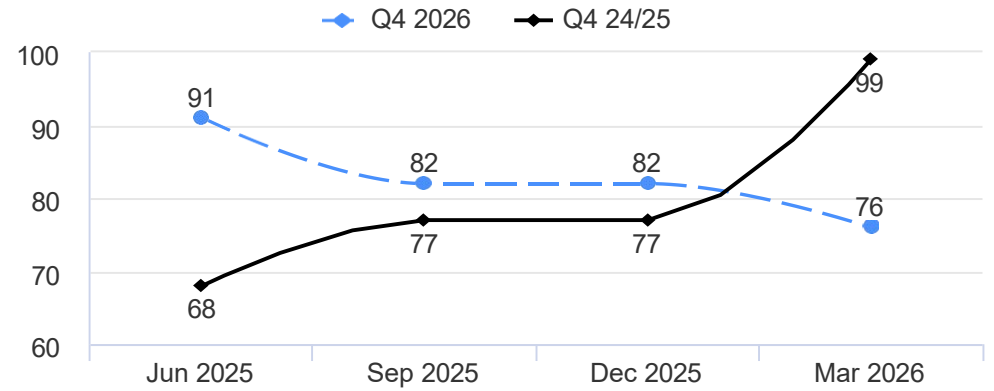
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP1.2.14 % of BC full plans assessed within 5 weeks (or longer with applicant's agreement)	Cllr J Conway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Tony Brummell</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	90.73%	95.00%	●
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>  232 full plan applications out of 252 were determined within five weeks. The 20 'late' cases either arose from recording lapses or technical issues where records were inputted but not saved. In all these cases contact was maintained with the applicant which avoided a deemed approval of submitted plans. The technical error was resolved and the satisfactory closing of files is addressed at team level.</p>						

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

BP1.2.01 Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation (TA)

Numbers in TA are at the lowest level since November 2024. The number of clients within TA is falling overall. Changes to the allocations scheme in 2025 have meant that clients in TA for whom we owe or are likely to owe the main housing duty to are receiving permanent offers more quickly. This reduces time spent in TA.

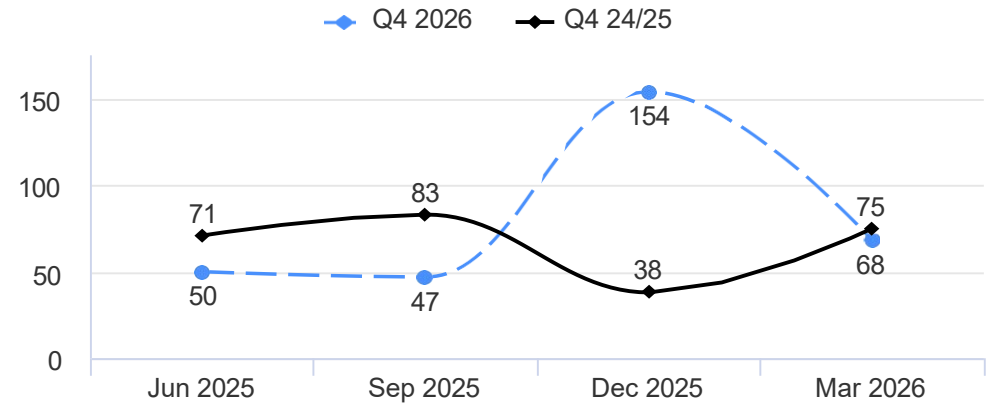
Year End Commentary





BP1.2.04 Number of affordable homes delivered

319 affordable housing completions for the year is the highest number since 2020-21. Numbers have been boosted by delivering additional affordable homes on some sites, including 100% affordable housing schemes.

Year End Commentary



Environmental stewardship - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP2.2.01 % Waste Recycled & Composted	Cllr I Middleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ed Potter</li> <li>▪ Kristian Aspinall</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	49.86%	54.00%	
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      End of year recycling % will be 50% this is a 1.5% reduction compared to 2024/25. This correlates to the reduction in Garden Waste due to the dry summer and the reduced garden waste subscriptions.</p>						
BP2.2.02 % Reduction in fuel consumption	Cllr I Middleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kristian Aspinall</li> <li>▪ Stuart Cruickshank</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	0.99%	1.00%	
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      We have more electric vehicles on the fleet than previous years resulting in a slight reduction of diesel consumption.</p>						

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP2.2.03 % of Climate Action Plan delivering to target	Cllr T Beckett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ian Boll</li> <li>■ Michael Suddens</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	59.88%	66.00%	

**Year End Commentary**


During 2025–2026, the Climate Programme prioritised delivery, strengthening the evidence base, and embedding climate considerations into council decision-making. By year end, of the 125 Climate Actions, 31 were completed, 77 ongoing, 13 on hold, and 4 closed as no longer relevant. Overall performance was Amber, reflecting steady progress alongside recognised capacity and infrastructure constraints.

Key progress included completion of Phase 1 of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) and continued development of a Cherwell-specific LAEP and associated deliverables to inform future investment and infrastructure planning. The Programme advanced pathway studies for both CDC operations and district-wide emissions, alongside work on natural capital, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration. Following the de-prioritisation of the Climate Change Strategy, the Climate Team produced the Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2026–2027, which was approved by Executive on 7 April 2026, providing a clear short-term delivery framework. Statutory and corporate reporting milestones were met, including the Biodiversity Duty Report, annual Executive climate updates, and coordinated 2024–2025 greenhouse gas data submission with Oxfordshire County Council.

Delivery enablers progressed during the year, including Executive approval for the transition of the council fleet to HVO fuels, integration of the Carbon Impact Assessment tool into capital decision-making, continued engagement through Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP), and strengthened leadership capacity through the appointment of a Head of Biodiversity and Climate Resilience. The year also highlighted ongoing challenges, notably electricity infrastructure constraints, limited internal capacity, and funding gaps for large-scale retrofit and decarbonisation projects, which continue to influence programme pace and prioritisation.

As the council enters a new financial year, with a robust evidence base, strengthened governance, and clearer short-term delivery priorities in place, the Programme is well positioned to build momentum and support scaled-up climate action in future years.

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BP2.2.05 Total Greenhouse gas emissions for the year	Cllr T Beckett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ian Boll</li> <li>■ Michael Suddens</li> </ul>	Smaller Is Better	4,014.00	3,900.00	
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**Year End Commentary**

Total emissions for 2024–25 are **4,014 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**, representing a marginal reduction compared to the revised 2023–24 baseline of **4,016 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**. The prior year figure has been restated (from 4,119 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) following improvements to data quality, methodology, and asset coverage, providing a more robust and consistent baseline for reporting.

Overall emissions have plateaued, with reductions achieved across leisure centres, fleet, and water largely offset by increases in other areas, notably due to expanded landscape contractor activity and changes within the corporate estate. Performance from decarbonisation measures has been positive, but operational issues particularly with heat pump systems are limiting the full realisation of expected energy and carbon savings.

While emissions remain broadly consistent with pre-Covid levels, improvements to data accuracy and reporting completeness represent a strengthening of the evidence base and a positive step forward. Looking ahead, more substantial reductions are anticipated through the transition to HVO fuel for the fleet and the delivery of PSDS4-funded decarbonisation projects.

Environmental Stewardship - Directorate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
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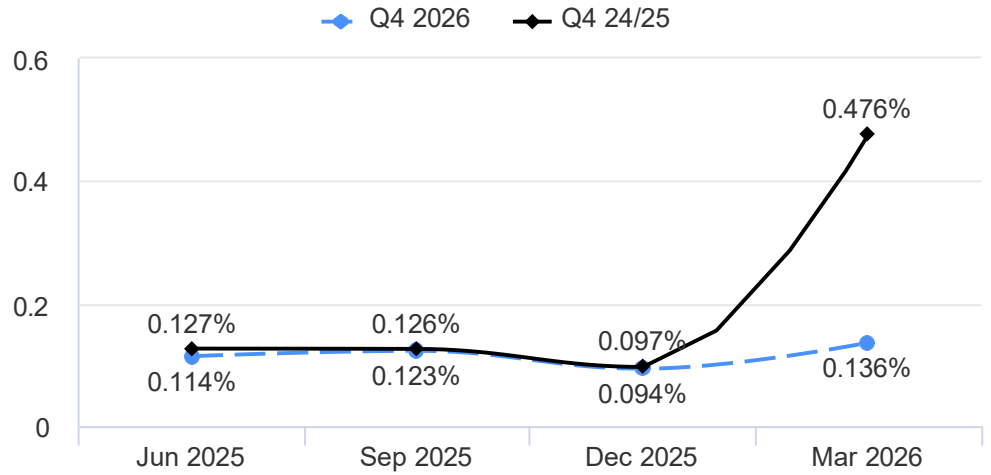
*Please note there are no Directorate KPIs under this priority due to be reported during FY 2025-26*

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

BP2.2.04 % of missed waste containers

Average % of missed bins is 0.12% which is comparable with other authorities.  
Jan, Feb and March are always the highest quarter for missed containers as residents produce more waste over the christmas/new year period and the new garden waste subscriptions start.

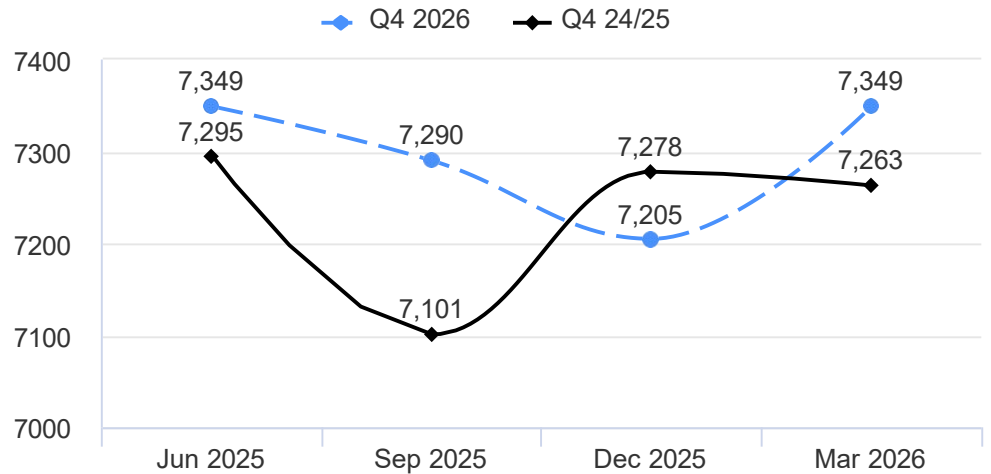
Year End Commentary



BP2.2.01d Tonnes residual household waste collected

Residual Waste has increased by 254 tonnes this is a lot less than expected due to a reduction in contamination and cost of living.

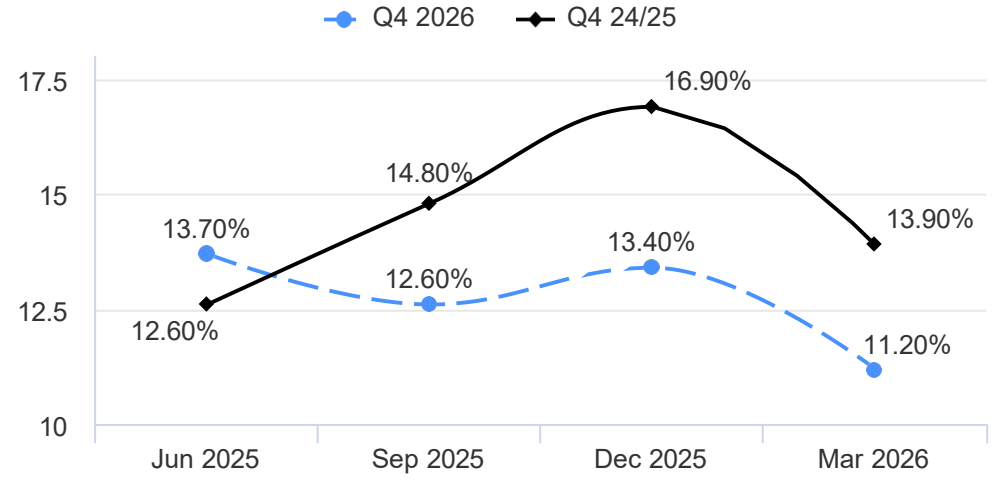
Year End Commentary



BP2.2.07 % of Recycling Contamination rate

Contamination rate has reduced by over 1% from 14.5% in 2024/25. For comparison, the average contamination rate for all councils using the MRF is 16%.

Year End Commentary



Economic prosperity - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP3.2.07 Secure non-retail-based key tenants	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ian Boll</li> <li>▪ Mona Walsh</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	2	2	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      Terms agreed and solicitors instructed for letting of space at Castle Quay to OCC for a new Banbury Library. Lease of ex-Debenhams unit at Castle Quay completed.</p>						

Economic prosperity - Directorate KPI's 2025-2026

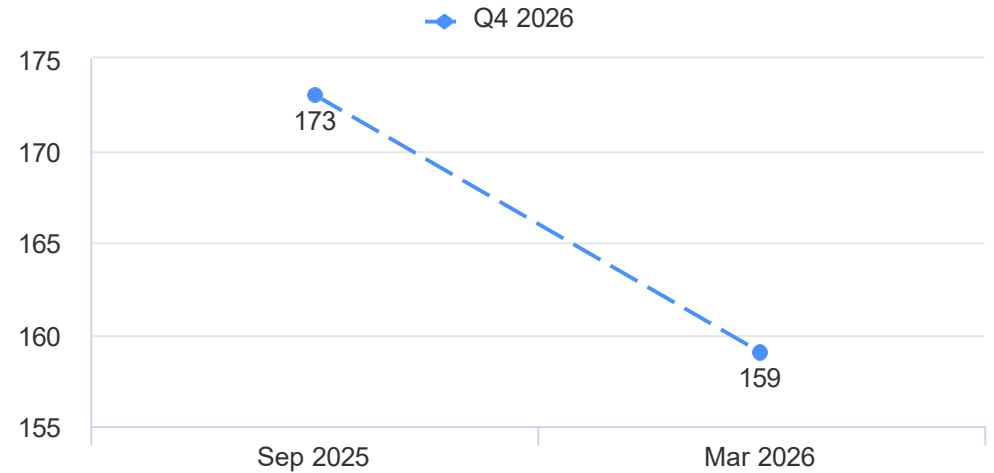
Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP3.2.01 % of Council Tax collected, increase Council Tax Base	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michael Furness</li> <li>▪ Stephen Hinds</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	97.81%	97.50%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      The end of year Council Tax collection rates for 2025/26 was 97.81% with the total amount collected during the year was £147.1m. In addition, the Revenue Services team recovered £2.7m relating to Council Tax arrears from previous financial years and will continue to actively pursue all outstanding balances in line with recovery procedures including those from 2026/27.</p>						
BP3.2.02 % of Business Rates collected, increasing NNDR Base	Cllr L McLean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Michael Furness</li> <li>▪ Stephen Hinds</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	97.74%	98.50%	★
<p><b>Year End Commentary</b>                      The end of year collection rate for National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) was 97.74%, slightly below target. Total in-year collections for 2025/26 amounted to £123.1m. The Revenue Services team also successfully collected £8.1m in Business Rates arrears from previous financial years and will continue to pursue outstanding debts in line with recovery procedures, including those from 2026/27, taking the eventual collection rate towards the 98% target.</p>						

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

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

In 2025/26 a total of 332 businesses were engaged, benefitting from \*business support through the Business Spark and Accelerator programmes; decarbonisation support, including grants; 1:1 support; free decarbonisation plans; and workshops \* support to the Cherwell Business Awards.

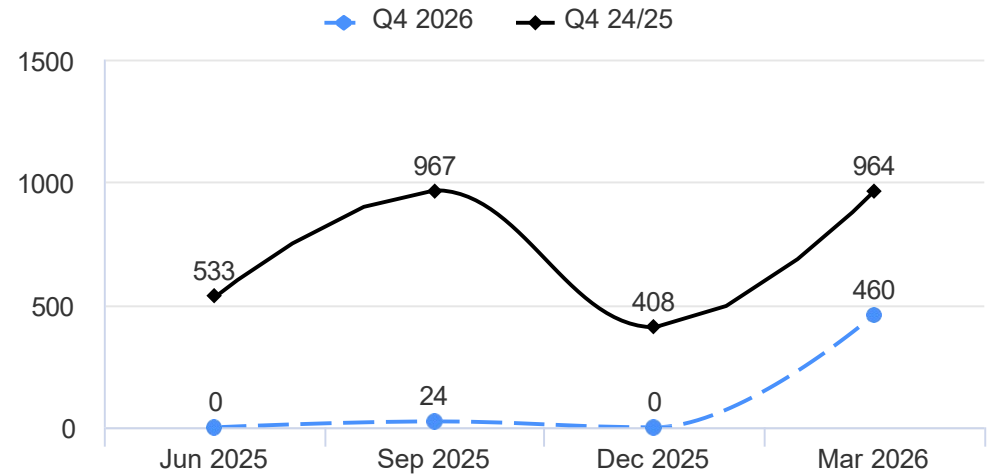
Year End Commentary



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

In 2025/26 a total of 484 residents were engaged, benefitting from employability support sessions through the No Limits programme and attendance at the Banbury Job Fair held at Castle Quay on 18 March 2026.

Year End Commentary



Community leadership - Corporate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
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Please note there are no Corporate KPIs under this priority due to be reported during FY 2025-26

Community leadership - Directorate KPI's 2025-2026

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Good is	Year End Actual	Year End Target	Year End R.A.G.
BP4.2.04 % of due food hygiene inspections of premises rated A-D completed	CLlr R Pattenden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kristian Aspinall</li> <li>▪ Tim Hughes</li> </ul>	Bigger Is Better	94.06%	95.00%	★

**Year End Commentary**

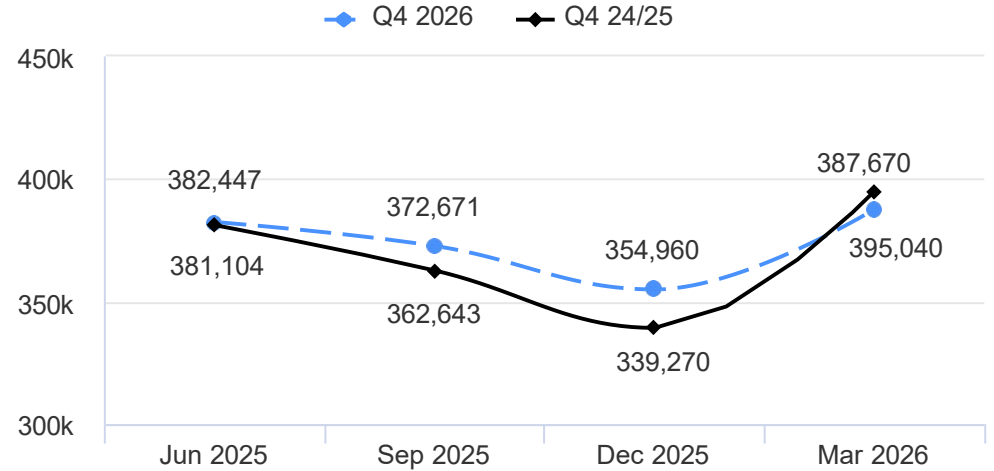
Food hygiene inspection program above 95% target for Q4. Previous quarters overdue visits were also completed.

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

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

Total usage figures across all 4 leisure centres have increased by circa 19,000 with the increase aligned to improved number of attendances at Kidlington Leisure Centre

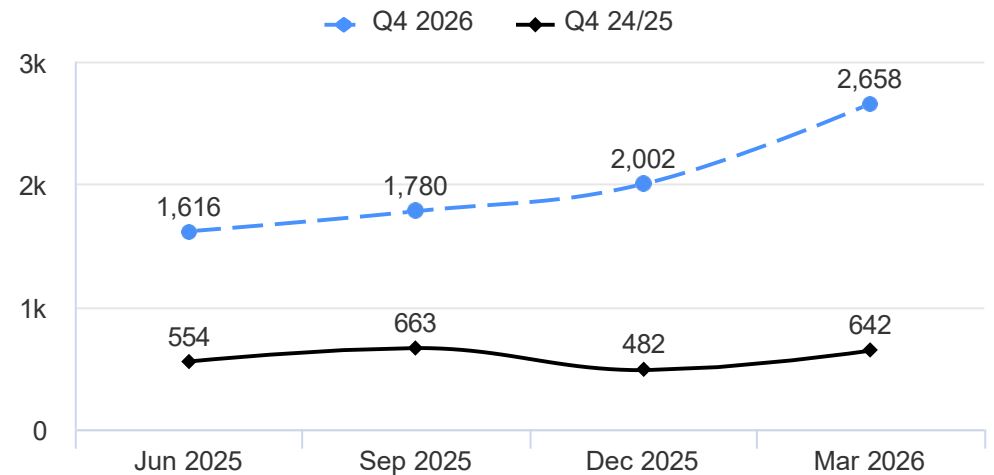
Year End Commentary



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

This year has been highly successful for the Wellbeing Team's health prevention work, with You Move, Move Together and Youth Activators delivering clear improvements in health, wellbeing and equity across the district. You Move effectively supported families, particularly in areas of highest need, to increase physical activity, improve mental wellbeing and build long-term healthy habits. Move Together helped residents with long-term health conditions regain confidence, wellbeing and independence, while also reducing reliance on health services through its person-centred approach. Youth Activators successfully engaged children and young people, boosting activity levels, confidence and emotional wellbeing. Together, these programmes have contributed to reduced health inequalities, with IMD data showing improvement in priority areas of Banbury. Overall, the year highlights the strong impact and value of preventative, place-based work in delivering lasting change.

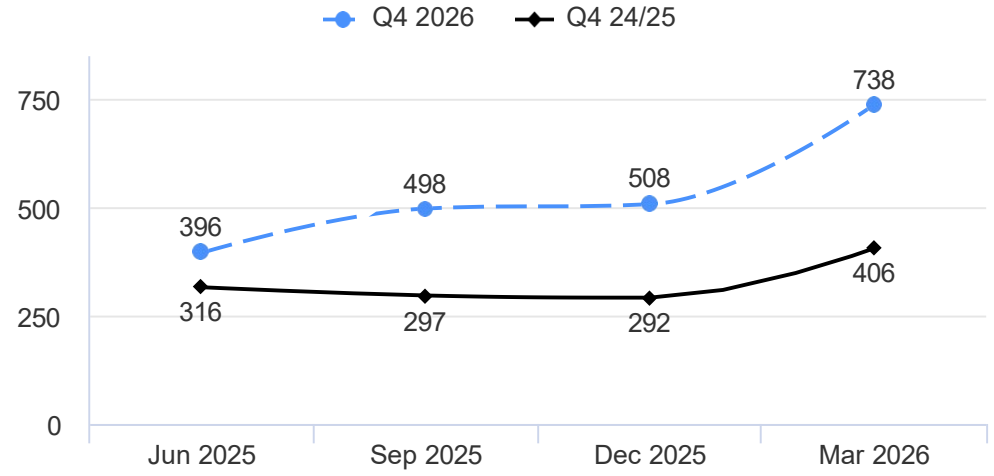
Year End Commentary



BP4.2.05 Number of Illegal Fly Tips

There is an increase in the number of fly tips on the system this year, but we are now reporting the numbers of fly tips reported to the council and I have tightened up the data on our system since I came into the role to give us a more accurate picture.

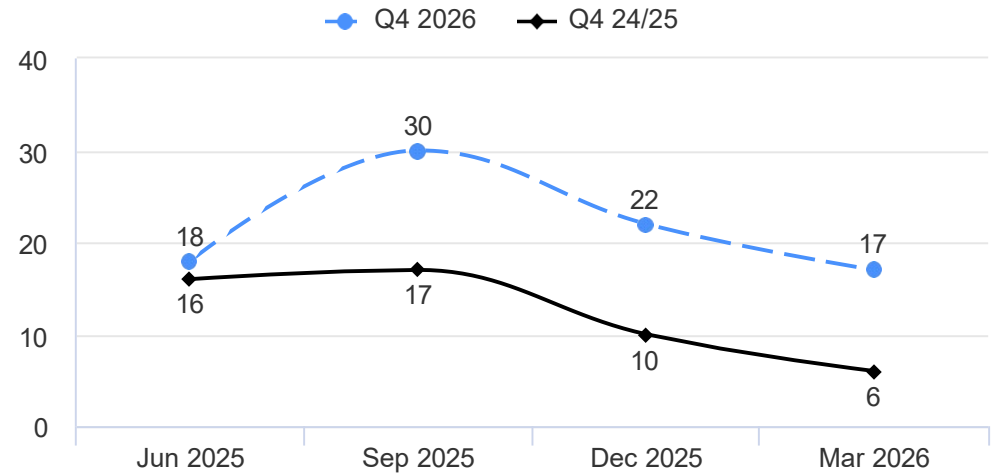
Year End Commentary



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

Although 2025/26 saw an increase in the number of upheld complaints the number has been consistently going down during the year, we expect this trend to continue in the new financial year. Complaints are being closely monitored to feedback lessons learnt and identify improvement opportunities.



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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	Quarter RAG	Comments	End of year RAG
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	Peter Sharp Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Agree delivery timescales for Market Square, Bicester. Agree action plans and priorities for Kidlington, Bicester and Banbury	Green	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).	Green
						Q2	Agree the plan for the 2025/26 Economic Forum Hold annual Business Awards (Sept)	Green	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	Yellow	Commissioning a report on the Future of Cherwell's High Streets has been initiated and will be undertaken as part of the Council's developing Economic Strategy. Due to sickness lateness in appointing external support. New Head of Service is focusing on this activity. The 2024 Experience Oxfordshire Economic Impact of tourism report was received in September 2025 and will inform the action plan to be developed as part of the Economic Strategy.	
						Q4	Hold the 2025/26 Economic Forum in order to explore investment opportunities and barriers/challenges to future investment	Green	Successful Economic Forum held in February, over 70 attendees including businesses, and stakeholders. Looked at what LGR asks from businesses and wider business needs	
		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 Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Launch a campaign to attract a diverse range of tenants at commercial sites	Green	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	Green	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	Green	One letting complete and tenant open and trading. Second letting due to open Mar 26. Legal instructed on letting at 36-37 Bridge Street (part of ex M&S unit)	
						Q4	No milestone	Green		
	Maximise the impact of Council-owned and other assets to further enable the regeneration of our Economic Centres		Mona Walsh Peter Sharp 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.	Yellow	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	Green	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	Yellow	Options appraisal considered by CLT. Asset disposal list reviewed and discussed with Cllr McLean.		
					Q4	Complete an options appraisal for extending PV and wind energy on council assets in support of climate priority.	Yellow	Options appraisal for two assets underway at Thorpe Place and Castle Quay. Other assets require further engagement with Climate and Biodiversity Team to ensure aligned with detail of the recently approved Climate ADP.		
	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	Peter Sharp Ian Boll	Cllr L McLean	Q1	Agree and Launch the 2025/26 UKSPF programme. Produce report on the outcomes achieved for 2024/25	Green	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).	Green
						Q2	Identify implications for Cherwell of Oxfordshire Flood Task Force priorities	Green	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	Green	Consultants appointed for Bicester area, and work is well underway and linked in with key developers. Final Reports will take time to develop.	
						Q4	Produce a report on the outcomes of the final year of the UKSPF programme.	Yellow	Shared Prosperity programme extended to September nationally, allowing CDC to continue to fund projects into 26/27. Intend to review outputs/outcomes in Q2/Q3 26/27.	
Support the Marmot Place Partnership for Oxfordshire.			Nicola Riley Kristian Aspinall	Cllr R Pattenden	Q1	Activity for this Action starts in Quarter 2	Green	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	Yellow	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	Yellow	Household Support Fund 7 (£128,000) started to be delivered in December to benefit residents that need additional support. Evaluation of the programme will take place in March in line with Cost of Living provision. Rural Marmot inequalities work started on 1st December		
					Q4	No milestone	Green			

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 Kristian Aspinall	Cllr R Pattenden	Q1	No milestone	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.	Survey went live 18th December and will run until 16th January (4 weeks). Survey seeks to get views and opinions from relevant stakeholders on the effectiveness of the partnership and suggestions on how it might be improved. Survey also seeks to gather insight on what are the key community issues that stakeholders think the partnership look to focus on. Relaunch will take place in Q4.				
			Q4	No milestone					
			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	The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy was produced in 2022 and forms part of the evidence submitted alongside the Local Plan that is currently under examination.				
			Q4	Review and implement actions as appropriate from the Oxfordshire Adaptation Route map	A new Biodiversity and Climate Change Service has been established which will help manage local flooding issues in support of the Lead Local Flood Authority (OCC) and ensure alignment with climate resilience objectives. It will also manage the Council's Land Drainage Authority powers. A local flooding toolkit is in preparation following the workshop in Q2.				
			Q1	No milestone					
			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							
	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.	Strengthening community cohesion	Tim Hughes Kristian Aspinall	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	No milestone for Q3			
				Q4	Establish baseline metrics for measuring progress towards Community Safety Plan	Activities and actions to support the broader aims and objectives of CSP Plan have been established and these are being tracked and reported on periodically.			
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								
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	Michael Suddens 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	The draft Climate Change Strategy is anticipated to be ready in early Q4. In the meantime, consultation is actively underway with PfH (Portfolio Holders), SRO (Senior Responsible Owner), members of the Climate Change Programme Board, and all Assistant Directors and Heads of Service to shape the vision and the Target Operating Model for the Climate Programme and Strategy.		
					Q4	Agree new climate change strategy in light of costed pathway findings	In quarter 3, the Climate Change Strategy was de-prioritised, and in preparation for the new financial year the Climate Team was asked to focus on producing a Climate Action Plan (CAP) for 2026-2027. The CAP 2026-2027 was completed and approved by the Executive on 7 April 2026.		

Environmental Stewardship	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.	Progress decarbonisation of our fleet, including electrifying smaller vehicles and implementation of HVO fuel	Ed Potter Kristian Aspinall	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		Prices for HVO have greatly increased. A procurement exercise has taken place for a HVO fuel supply through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation prices appear high			
			Q4	No milestone					
			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		Kerbside glass launches 01 January 26. Paper on other Simpler Recycling matters at Executive Jan26			
			Q4	Implement new service		The new service has been implemented with great success, residents are very complimentary regarding the new service and we have collected 392 tonnes more of dry recycling compared to the same 3 month period last year with the vast majority of this being glass. We have also removed the glass bring banks under budget and on time.			
			Q1	No milestone		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.		Development plans are held currently. A revised business case will be developed in collaboration with the Waste and Environmental Services Partnership (WESP) to reflect the depot needs in the north of the county. Task & Finish Depot group meets weekly to oversee development of the requirements and business case for the future depot. Planning permission for Gravenhill site to go to Planning Committee in June. Current technical spec being drawn up by AD Environmental Services for end of June.			
			Q4	No milestone					
			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		Partnership has been formalised and meetings and newsletters have been held and circulated.			
			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					
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		The Local Plan Examination commenced on 31 July. First hearings sessions confirmed for the week commencing 16 February 2026. Second set of hearings expected July 2026.						
Q4	No milestone		The Inspectors' letter is awaited following the initial hearings in February.						
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		A public consultation event for the review of the Grimsbury Conservation Area Appraisal took place on 9 December. Work on the Hanwell CAA review is progressing.						
Q4	Complete year 1 of Conversation Area programme		Bloxham – Updated and published. Grimsbury – Completed and going through approval process. Hanwell - Public consultation complete. Consultation responses being considered in completing the appraisal.						
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		An Annual Monitoring Report was approved by the Executive on 2 December. However, land supply is reported as 3.1 years						
Q4	Review the progress of the Housing Delivery Action Plan		Updating of the Housing Delivery Action Plan is in progress and will be informed by housing completions for 2025/26 which will be verified in Summer 2026.						

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.	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		The availability of resource has delayed implementation of the action plan for managing strategic applications. Additional temporary staff are now to be recruited and it is anticipated that project management support will be available in the new year.
						Q4	Review the progress of the Major Applications Action Plan		Additional resource is now in place and supporting budget approved in February. Full implementation is to be overseen as part of the Council's Transformation Programme.
			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		Incremental implementation is ongoing with the resource available.
						Q4	Review the progress of the s106 improvement action plan		Progressed by the Head of Development Management at regular liaison meetings with legal services. Now to be part of the Council's Transformation Programme.
			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					Planning Advisory Service report published. Recommendations are due to be presented to the Executive in the new year		
	Q4	Implement improvements & review progress					Reports on implementation of the PAS recommendations were presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 24 March and to the Executive on 7 April 2026. Significant changes have been made in response to the recommendations of PAS and work is continuing alongside corporate transformation and service improvement. The Transformation Programme will ensure a consolidated approach including Digital Planning Improvement.		
	Establish and progress with Partners the Area Oversight Groups for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington	Tom Dobrashian 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 Kristian Aspinall	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		Temporary accommodation was a topic at overview and scrutiny in March and the review of the housing strategy actions has been completed.
Host a registered providers forum to improve tenant outcomes			Nicola Riley Kristian Aspinall	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		New monitoring system developed and live. Data is slowly building as more providers are being inspected by the regulator. The system measures overall satisfaction from tenants, consumer standard rating, governance rating and viability rating. RP Forum on track.	
					Q4	Hold registered providers forum to discuss challenges in meeting obligations		The next RP forum is planned for 15th April 2026	
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							



*Cherwell*

DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

# Performance Annual Report 2025/2026

A modern  
council  
inspiring and  
enabling  
positive, lasting





**Foreword by Cllr McLean and Gordon Stewart**

We are pleased to present Cherwell District Council’s Annual Performance Report for 2025/26. This past year has both challenged and strengthened us. Against a demanding national and financial backdrop, the council has remained steadfast in its focus: delivering for its residents, protecting those most in need, and investing in the long-term future of our district. The progress set out in this report reflects not only what we have achieved, but also the collaboration, determination and shared sense of purpose that have made it possible

Across our four strategic priorities, we have continued to make meaningful progress. From supporting economic growth and helping local businesses adapt and thrive, to improving access to housing, strengthening community wellbeing and advancing our environmental ambitions, we have sought to turn ambition into tangible outcomes that residents can see and feel in their everyday lives.

We are particularly proud of the way in which our services, staff and partners have responded to ongoing pressure. Whether through delivering efficient, high-quality frontline services, supporting households with the cost of living, or driving forward our climate commitments, the council has remained focused on making a difference where it matters most.

This report also reflects a balanced and honest assessment of our performance. While most of our objectives have been met or are close to being met, we recognise that there remain areas requiring continued focus and improvement. We are committed to learning from this, strengthening delivery, and ensuring that we continue to provide value for money and high-quality services for our residents.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and professionalism of our staff, the commitment of our councillors, and the invaluable contribution of our partners and community organisations. Together, we have made real progress for Cherwell.

Our district has a bright future, which we can embrace with confidence. The foundations laid out over the past year place us in a strong position to respond to future challenges, embrace new opportunities and continue building a district where our communities can thrive.



**Councillor Lesley McLean**  
Leader  
Cherwell District Council



**Gordon Stuart**  
Chief Executive,  
Cherwell District Council



## Our Priorities 2025/2026

Cherwell District Council is dedicated to inspiring and enabling positive, lasting change for our residents and communities. Our vision is to be a modern, forward-thinking council that embraces opportunities and addresses challenges with innovation and collaboration.

Our strategy focuses on what we aim to achieve for our residents and communities, driving continued progress through four vital priorities:



### Economic prosperity

Create vibrant economic centres and thriving rural villages

Build an inclusive and green economy



### Community leadership

Strengthen community collaboration and resilience

Promote health and wellbeing with a focus on inequality



### Environmental stewardship

Safeguard the environment and promote biodiversity

Promote the circular economy of reduce, reuse and recycle to minimise waste



### Quality housing and place making

Deliver sustainable and strategic development that meets Cherwell's needs now, and in the future

Achieve more high quality, secure, and affordable housing that caters for the diverse needs of our residents



## Economic Prosperity

We want to foster vibrant economic centres alongside thriving rural villages across Cherwell, creating places that are active, welcoming and full of opportunity. By backing local businesses and encouraging innovation, we can build a strong and resilient economy that works for everyone. This future economy will be inclusive and green, offering opportunities for all residents while reducing environmental impact, and balancing growth with eco-friendly practices and green infrastructure to deliver lasting benefits for our communities.

Below some of our achievements around this priority:

**Accelerating Local Development** – Our proactive approach to funding has seen almost £1 million invested through a combination of council reserves and government grants to accelerate priority housing and regeneration projects, with the potential to unlock around 8,000 new homes. By strengthening collaboration with developers and local community partners, including through our Area Oversight Groups, we are addressing long-standing infrastructure constraints and supporting vital regeneration across our town centres. This work demonstrates the council’s clear commitment to delivering much-needed homes and enabling high quality, sustainable growth across the district.

**Supporting Small Businesses to Go Digital** – During 2025/26 we delivered a comprehensive support programme to help eligible small and medium-sized businesses embrace digital ways of working. Running from April 2025 to March 2026, the scheme provided expert-led training to strengthen workforce skills, match-funded grants for new digital equipment and software, and tailored leadership development. Together, this support helped local manufacturers modernise their operations, improve productivity, reduce costs and compete more effectively in today’s economy.

**Cherwell Economic Forum** – Held in February 2025 at Bicester Motion, our flagship business event brought together over 50 business leaders, policymakers, and community figures, hosting a collaborative platform, we facilitated networking and knowledge-sharing across diverse industries to foster long-term successful partnerships. Whilst keeping the council directly connected to the opportunities and challenges facing our local business landscape, helping us shape a more prosperous future for all.

**Connecting Residents with Jobs and Skills** – During 2025/26, a total of 484 residents were supported through programmes funded by national and regional growth funding. This included participation in employability support sessions delivered through the No Limits programme, as well as attendance at the Banbury Job Fair held at Castle Quay on 18 March 2026. Together, these activities helped residents improve their skills, access advice and connect with employment opportunities across the district.





## Community Leadership

We want to build strong, united communities that are confident, resilient and well prepared to meet challenges and succeed. By working in partnership with residents, community groups and service providers, we will shape inclusive environments and practical solutions that work for everyone. At the same time, we are committed to improving health and wellbeing across Cherwell, with a particular focus on tackling inequality. Through close collaboration with healthcare and community partners, we will prioritise prevention, deliver targeted support where it is most needed, strengthen social connections and help ensure Cherwell is a healthier place in which all our residents can thrive.

Below some of our achievements around this priority:

**Supporting Our Elders** - Our targeted and proactive campaigns this year delivered a real boost for older residents, helping pension-aged households claim more than £400,000 in additional financial support. Through smart use of data and strong partnerships, including work with Age UK, we supported 116 residents to access pension credit and cost-of-living help, significantly increasing household incomes and wellbeing. The success of these campaigns highlights our efforts to ensure residents receive the support they are entitled to and can enjoy greater financial security.

**Helping Young Minds Thrive** - We started a pilot programme, funded with £55,000 from Oxfordshire County Council's public health team and delivered by Cherwell, aiming to help younger children feel happier and more confident at school. Running for a year in 15 local primary schools, the initiative focuses on pupils aged eight to 11 and offers fun, practical sessions to help them understand their feelings, manage stress and build resilience. With extra one-to-one help where needed and useful training for school staff, the programme is all about giving children the right support early on so they can enjoy school, feel supported and thrive both emotionally and academically.

**Empowering Local Grassroots** – Our latest round of the Household Support Fund, launched in November 2025, provided £55,000 in vital grants to local charities and community groups. By offering funding of up to £3,000 for resident-focused projects, we empowered these organisations to address the unique cost-of-living challenges within their own neighbourhoods. This initiative ensures that support is delivered by the people who know our communities best, fostering local resilience and collective wellbeing during difficult times.

**Supporting School and Community Hubs** – We extended our cost-of-living support in December 2025 by offering grants of up to £2,000 specifically for schools and community organisations in need of funding. Following a highly successful previous round where 14 out of 15 applicants were supported, this continued investment helps essential local hubs maintain their services and broaden their impact. Our commitment to these organisations ensures that vital resources remain accessible to our communities, strengthening the social fabric of the district.



## Environmental Stewardship

We will protect our environment and strengthen biodiversity by implementing sustainable policies that preserve Cherwell's natural landscapes and wildlife, ensuring our ecosystems continue to thrive for future generations. Alongside this, we will champion a circular economy by promoting the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle, encouraging responsible consumption, minimising waste and extending the life of materials and products. Together, these actions will foster a strong culture of sustainability that supports both our communities and the natural environment upon which they depend.

Below some of our achievements around this priority:

**Lowering our emissions** – In 2025/26, we increased our electric-vehicle fleet to 15%, collecting 8.5 million containers while using 2% less fuel, and launching new services like coffee pod recycling, with 1.05 million pods collected this year. Contributing to cleaner streets, reduced emissions, and more efficient use of resources, helping to create a greener and healthier district.

**New Climate Action plan** – In 2025/26 a new Climate Action Plan was developed and presented to the Executive at the beginning of April 2026, reinforcing our commitment to reaching net zero by 2030. Building on the progress made since declaring the climate emergency in 2019. The plan sets out further actions to cut emissions from council buildings and vehicles through cleaner fuels, low-carbon heating and solar investment, while supporting district-wide action on energy efficiency, active travel, electric vehicles and biodiversity.

**Improving Air Quality** – This year we marked a noticeable improvement in air quality in a busy part of Bicester, Kings End and Queens Avenue, which has led to the agreement to remove its special monitoring designation after pollution levels have remained within national limits for several years. This progress reflects our sustained efforts such as better walking and cycling routes, green infrastructure planting and changes in traffic movement, alongside cleaner vehicles. While the area will continue to be closely monitored due to heavy traffic, the decision marks a positive step for residents' health and the local environment.

**Biodiversity Duty Report** – Our commitment to nature recovery was reinforced this year with the approval of our first Biodiversity Duty Report in March 2026; from community orchards to school farm visits and habitat protection for protected species, we are taking proactive steps to reverse nature depletion across the district in collaboration with a variety of partners. This initiative ensures that biodiversity is woven into all our decisions, helping to create more resilient green spaces that support both local wildlife and the mental wellbeing of our residents.



## Quality Housing and Place Making

We are committed to delivering sustainable, well-planned development that meets Cherwell's needs now and, in the future, ensuring new homes are supported by essential services, strong transport links and community facilities. We will also increase the supply of high-quality, genuinely affordable housing across a range of tenures, helping residents from all walks of life find a secure place to call home. Below some of our achievements around this priority:

**Housing Benefits Efficiency** – Over the year, we consistently met our speed of processing targets, with new claims brought into payment within an average of 12 days against a target of 18 days, 9 days less than the average for Southeast England. This strong performance has been supported by ongoing digital transformation, with over 40% of change of circumstance processes now fully or partially automated. Alongside system-led workflow improvements that streamline processes from start to finish, these changes have strengthened the service's resilience and responsiveness, helping to ensure smooth and reliable delivery even during periods of higher demand.

**Improving Transitions from Temporary Housing** – Our continued focus and proactive approach have delivered strong and encouraging results, with a sustained reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation, particularly in hotel placements, which have fallen by over 50%, from approximately 50 households at the start of the financial year to fewer than 25. Despite consistent demand for support, the service has successfully reduced overall numbers through effective policy improvements, a growing supply of high-quality self-contained accommodation, and a clear commitment to helping households move more quickly into settled homes. In the context of increasing national demand for temporary accommodation, Cherwell's positive downward trend represents a significant achievement and reflects the Council's dedication to delivering effective and responsive housing support for residents.

**Supporting Our Most Vulnerable Residents** – Our dedicated housing team was nationally recognised in May 2025 for its swift delivery of home adaptations, becoming one of the most responsive in the country. By significantly reducing the time it takes to implement vital changes like wet rooms and stairlifts, we have helped residents with disabilities maintain their independence and improve their quality of life. This high-performing service, active through 2025/26, exemplifies our commitment to ensuring that every resident has access to safe and suitable housing that meets their specific health and mobility needs.

**Local Plan Submission** – Our vision for sustainable growth achieved a major milestone this year as the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 was submitted for independent government examination. By meticulous planning for approximately 26,000 homes balanced with the protection of Cherwell's heritage and green spaces, we are providing a secure framework for future development. This rigorous process throughout 2025/26 ensures that we can meet our long-term housing needs while maintaining the unique character and biodiversity of our villages and towns.



## More Than Movement: Changing Lives Together

This year our programmes have continued to support people across the area to be more active, improve wellbeing and feel more connected, delivering meaningful outcomes for families, young people and residents living with long-term health conditions.

### **Making a Real Difference for Families**

You Move continues to show strong and meaningful outcomes, 52% of adult participants and 48% of children have increased their physical activity levels, with children moving an average of 153 additional minutes each week. Alongside this, 60% of families' reports improved mental wellbeing, demonstrating the programme's wider impact on everyday life.

For many families, You Move has removed barriers that previously prevented participation. One parent shared:

*"My daughter has a disability that is improved by regular exercise, and she would not have been able to access sport in the way she has without You Move. It has completely changed her access to physical activity."*

The value of this work is reflected in a social return on investment of £3.50 for every £1 spent, underlining both its human and economic benefit.

### **Supporting Young People Where They Learn and Live**

The Youth Activators programme has created welcoming, positive spaces for young people, reaching 1,862 children and young people across 32 schools and 14 community settings. Delivered with Mind, this work has strengthened emotional wellbeing support and will see 15 Cherwell schools' pilot mental health provision and training from September 2026.

### **Helping People Stay Active, Independent and Connected**

The Move Together programme continues to support residents living with long-term health conditions to become more active and feel better in themselves. During this period, 194 new participants joined the programme, with 58% increasing their activity levels and a reassuring 72% reporting improved mental wellbeing. This positive progress is also reducing pressure on local health services, with a 43% fall in GP appointments and a social return on investment of £418,000.

One participant reflected on the support they received:

*"I'm incredibly grateful to Alison and the team for supporting me through a very difficult time after my husband passed away. Your steady encouragement during my hip recovery helped me regain my independence, and I will always value the support you've given me."*

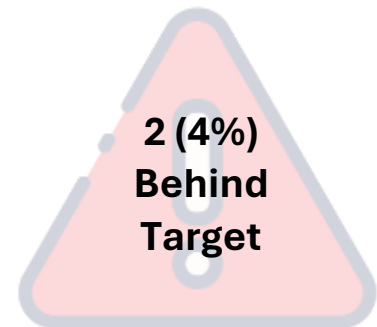
### **Looking Ahead**

Across all programmes, the message is consistent: when delivered with care, understanding and a genuine commitment to inclusion, physical activity can transform lives. Whether supporting families, empowering young people, or helping residents maintain independence and wellbeing, this work shows that movement is about far more than exercise — it is about dignity, belonging and giving people the chance to thrive.



## Performance Summary

The below summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, tasks and projects outlined in our vision and strategy under each of the four priorities. We use a Red – Amber – Green system, where green refers to a target wholly met, amber to a target narrowly missed and red to a target missed. For more information click [here](#).



Please note at the time of doing this report the data for the measure “Net Additional Housing Completions to meet Cherwell needs” is not available yet. An update will be provided within the Quarter 1 2026-27 report. The calculations above do not include that indicator; the missing measure represents 2% of the results.

### In summary

Our performance at the end of 2025/26 presents a mixed but broadly stable picture, with the Council delivering the majority of its agreed objectives while a small number of areas continue to require attention. Most corporate and directorate key performance indicators were achieved or reported within tolerance, and nearly half of Annual Delivery Plan actions were fully delivered, with several others slightly behind target rather than significantly off-track. There were some notable service improvements during the year, including reductions in the use of hotel-based temporary accommodation, consistently strong Housing Benefit processing times, and an increased number of affordable homes delivered. A limited number of performance exceptions, particularly within planning-related measures, reflect historic pressures and external influences, though improvement activity is underway and early progress is evident. Overall, the year-end position indicates steady performance, sensible management of risk, and a clear understanding of where further focus will be required going into 2026/27.





## How we spend your money?

The Council monitors its ongoing budget position monthly and the performance of the organisation on a quarterly basis to enable the Executive to make timely decisions on any changes that are required. Demonstrating with this robust process the Council it is fiscally responsible, making the most of every pound and providing value for money to our residents.

Here is where we spent our 2025/2026 funding and what services each directorate covers:

**£0.935m - Place and Regeneration** - The directorate oversees key place-shaping services, including Planning and Development Management, Regeneration and Economy, Biodiversity and Climate Resilience, and Property. Together, these services support sustainable growth, environmental stewardship and the effective management of land and assets to meet local priorities.

**£9.791m - Resources** - The directorate delivers core corporate services, including Finance, Customer Services, Digital and Innovation, Human Resources, Law and Governance, and Transformation, enabling efficient, well-governed and resident-focused operations across the organisation.

**£9.265m - Neighbourhood Services** - The directorate brings together Environmental Services, Regulatory Services and Community Safety, and Wellbeing and Housing to promote clean, safe and healthy neighbourhoods, support vulnerable residents, and ensure effective regulation and protection across the district.

**£1.943m – Chief Executive Office** - The directorate provides strategic coordination at the heart of the organisation, bringing together Communications and Marketing, Performance and Insight, the Executive Support Team and Policy Development, supporting effective leadership, clear communication, robust insight, effective performance monitoring and well-informed policy making across the council.

**£3.811 – Executive Matters -**

### Where did our funding come from?

**£0.512m** came from government grants

**£9.893m** from council tax

**£14.405m** from business rates

**£0.935m** from New Homes Bonus

This adds up to **£25.745m** - our funding for 2025/2026



## Engaging to Our Customers

### Our Contact Centre figures

From April 2025 to March 2026, our friendly team stood shoulder to shoulder with our community through the current cost of living crisis, offering reassurance, understanding and practical support, through:

**77,228** Phone calls

**58,577** Emails processed

**1008** Customer appointments

**91%** Customer satisfaction with overall experience

**97%** Customer Satisfaction-With Advisor

**66%** Of queries were resolved first time

### Listening and Learning

Throughout the year, we delivered 23 consultations, providing valuable opportunities for residents to share their views and help shape our services. We remain committed to this approach and will continue to invite feedback on key matters, including budgets, new projects and service developments. Whether through formal consultations, engagement with local business organisations, or feedback submitted via our website, we are keen to understand what works well and where we can improve.

To participate in live consultations and sign up to notifications of future consultations, access <https://cherwell.citizenspace.com/> or email [consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)



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## Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2026-27

(Updated: 9 June 2026)

<b>Items allocated to specific meeting dates</b>		
<b>18 June 2026</b>		
<b>Year end Performance Monitoring 2025/26</b>	<p>Performance Monitoring To consider the year end performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive. <b>Annual item</b></p>	<p>Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b></p>
<b>Work Programme Planning for 2026-2027</b>	<p>The Chair, Assistant Director – Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer and the Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead will facilitate a discussion on work programme planning for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year. <b>Annual item</b></p>	<p>Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law &amp; Governance/Monitoring Officer, Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead</p>
<b>28 July 2026</b>		
<b>Graven Hill</b>	<p>Holding Executive to Account/External Scrutiny Review of previous year's performance and monitoring of Phase 2 implementation. <b>Annual item</b> <i>To be scheduled for July OSC, after year end information been through Shareholder Committee</i></p>	<p>Stephen Hinds, Shareholder Representative <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b></p>
<b>Tracking of Recommendations to Executive</b>	<p>Holding Executive to Account Following Executive's response to four sets of recommendations from the Committee during 2025-26, an update on implementation of recommendations to be submitted for information</p>	<p>Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead</p>



	<i>Agreed by the 25/26 Committee at 27 January meeting</i>	
<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered. <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>8 September 2026</b>		
<b>Quarter One (April to June) Performance Monitoring Report</b>	Performance Monitoring To consider the Quarter one performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive. <b>Regular item – quarterly</b>	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b>
<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered. <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>13 October</b>		
<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>17 November</b>		
<b>Quarter Two (July to September) Performance Monitoring Report</b>	Performance Monitoring To consider the Quarter two performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive. <b>Regular item – quarterly</b>	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b>



<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered. <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>15 December</b>		
<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered. <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>26 January 2027</b>		
<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered. <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>23 March</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report</b>	To consider the draft annual report of the Committee, prior to submission to full Council. <b>Annual Item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>Quarter Three (October to December) Performance Monitoring Report</b>	Performance Monitoring To consider the Quarter three performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive. <b>Regular item – quarterly</b>	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive’s Office <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b>

<b>Corporate Performance and Insight Strategy</b>	To consider and make comments / recommendations to Executive on the draft strategy for 2027-2028 prior to Executive adoption. <b>Annual item.</b>	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b>
<b>Review of Work Programme for 26-27</b>	Review of work programme, update on topics suggested for consideration, update on items previously considered. <b>Standing item</b>	Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
<b>Items to be discussed/allocated to specific dates</b>		
<b>Area Oversight Groups</b>	Executive authorised the establishment of non-decision making Area Oversight Groups (AOGs) in November 2024. This item would be an overview of their work to date. More information on AOGs can be found in the original <a href="#">report to Executive</a> from November 2024. <b>Item suggested by Corporate Leadership Team</b>	Ian Boll, Executive Director Place and Regeneration
<b>Local Government Reform update</b>	External Scrutiny Update to Committee on progress of LGR proposals <b>Item suggested by Corporate Leadership Team</b>	Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
<b>Lessons Learnt from Kidlington Illegal Landfill</b>	External Scrutiny To review lessons learnt from the recent illegal landfill at Kidlington, with the Environment Agency invited to attend <b>Item suggested by 25/26 Committee</b>	Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services <b>Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Alisa Russell</b>
<b>Cherwell Futures Programme</b> (may feed into Local Government Reorganisation and Budget Planning)	Holding the Executive to account. To consider regular updates on the Cherwell Futures Programme <b>Annual item.</b>	Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources Ann Slavin, Director – Cherwell Futures

		<b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b>
<b>Action Plans stemming from Planning and Development</b> <b>To include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAS Review</li> <li>• Merton College PR9 Site Appeal</li> <li>• Housing Delivery Action Plan (as discussed at 3.6.25 Committee)</li> </ul>	Holding the Executive to account Multiple items across the year; Scrutinising implementation of the various action plans. <b>Full detailed report on each action plan.</b>  <b>Item suggested by 25/26 Committee</b>	David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Paul Seckington, Head of Development Management <b>Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Brant</b>
<b>Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable Thames Valley Police Attendance</b>	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. <b>Annual item</b>	Kristian Aspinall, Executive Director Neighbourhood Services <b>Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, Councillor Nicola Borkmann</b>
<b>Year end Performance Monitoring 2026/27</b>	Performance Monitoring To consider the year end performance report, with a focus on amber / red indicators, and provide comments to the Executive. <b>Annual item</b>	Kaimi Ithia, Head of Chief Executive's Office <b>Leader - Strategic Leadership and Regeneration, Councillor Lesley McLean</b>
<b>Performance of S106 delivery – Infrastructure focus</b>	Many housing developments across the district, particularly in Banbury, are having houses built but	David Peckford, Assistant Director – Planning

	<p>then developers appear to not be completing additional infrastructure such as play parks.  <i>The primary care element of this query was covered at Committee on 24.3.26</i>  <b>Item suggested by 25/26 Committee</b></p>	<p><b>Deputy Leader - Planning and Enforcement, Councillor Chris Brant</b></p>
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**Meeting dates 2025-26 (All Tuesday 6:30pm unless indicated)**

18 June; 28 July; 8 September; 13 October; 17 November; 15 December; 26 January; 23 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](#).



## **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 Chair and Vice-Chair**

- 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 Chair and Vice Chair 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 Chair and Vice Chair, so long as those persons accept the nomination.
- 3.2. Prior to the meeting, those wishing to stand for Chair/Vice Chair 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 Chair and Vice Chair.
- 3.3. The Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair will then take the Chair, and preside over the appointment of the Vice Chair, which will follow the same process. Once the Vice Chair has been appointed, the meeting will be brought to a close if there are no further items of business on the agenda.
- 3.8. *Note – those wishing to stand as Chair/Vice Chair 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 Chair and Vice Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair, Vice Chair 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 Chair (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 Chair 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 information<sup>1</sup>
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Chair 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 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 Chair of the OSC relevant Scrutiny Working Group will be permitted, at the discretion of the Chair 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 Chair and Vice Chair, 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](#)<sup>2</sup> and the [Statutory Scrutiny Guidance](#)<sup>3</sup> issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.*

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<sup>2</sup> The Cherwell District Council Constitution

<https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=531&MId=3982&Ver=4&Info=1>

(Accessed 11 February 2025).

<sup>3</sup> 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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[www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)