



DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**Overview and Scrutiny  
Annual Report  
2011/12**

**June 2012**

## Foreword

This annual report for overview and scrutiny at Cherwell District Council outlines the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Resources and Performance Board and individual Task & Finish Groups over the last year.

We have continued to build on the work that has been done over the last few years and we have sought to minimise the turnover of committee membership establish in order to develop an experienced group of councillors who are building up a strong skill base and understanding of the principles of good scrutiny and at the same time a knowledge of scrutiny case history.

This year, overview and scrutiny work has attempted to be as much about policy development as it has been about reviewing what has already taken place. In the main this has been successful with many recommendations being made to the Executive that have subsequently been acted upon.

Over the coming year both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board will continue their work to ensure that relevant topics will be reviewed and challenged thus providing checks and balances as well as helping the Executive to make decisions.

We firmly believe that overview and scrutiny continues to make a valuable contribution to make to the continuing success of this Council.

**Councillor Kieron Mallon**  
**Chairman,**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**2011/12**

**Councillor Nick Mawer**  
**Chairman,**  
**Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board**  
**2011/12**

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Membership

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Ch)	Councillor Lynn Pratt (V Ch)
Councillor Ann Bonner	Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath	Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Neil Prestidge	Councillor Daniel Sames
Councillor Les Sibley	Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Lawrie Stratford	Councillor Rose Stratford

### Private Sector Housing Strategy

In July 2011 the Committee discussed the progress made by the Council against the targets set by the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 -14. The Committee focused on four main areas: the inspection programme for licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); the different enforcement powers at the Council's disposal and their relative cost and success rates; the reduction in the number of private sector landlords following changes to the national benefits system; and the increase in the number of complaints which was believed to be a reflection of the financial and social pressures caused by the current economic climate as there were no other underlying themes or trends in the type of complaint. The Committee noted that the Housing Services team were actively pursuing options for dealing with non-compliance and to improve the level of enforcement as part of the Private Sector Housing Development Project.

### Empty Homes Policy

The Committee considered this topic as part of their policy development remit to learn more about the steps being taken by the Council to bring empty homes into use and to consider proposals for the strategic approach to empty homes; and in particular to provide guidance on how far the Council might go in adopting the more stringent enforcement powers available to tackle empty properties and homelessness. The Committee noted the significant success of the Housing Services staff in reducing the levels of homelessness and improving housing standards in the district over the last few years was at risk of being eroded due to a recent increase in the numbers on the homeless register and that a further rise was anticipated in 2012-13 as the government's changes to the benefit system took effect.

The Committee endorsed the following four principles, which it was proposed, would underpin the Council's approach to empty homes in the future:

1. The Council wants empty homes to be used.
2. The Council will encourage and facilitate their re-use (e.g. by providing advice, grants and loans).
3. The Council will take action to resolve specific issues caused by empty homes (where powers permit).
4. The Council will take action to secure re-use of empty homes where a business case exists.

The Committee confirmed their support for these four principles as an excellent, pragmatic and low risk approach to tackling one of the housing issues in the district. They agreed that it was important to prioritise the cases and use the measures to address properties which had been empty for some time or which posed other economic and social issues and were identified as suitable to address a particular housing need. In addition the Committee recommended that the Council should seek to complement its work on tackling homelessness and empty properties by pressing for stronger powers to ensure the faster delivery of new homes by developers. Finally the Committee urged the Lead Member and officers to ensure that the work was publicised to residents.

### **Equality Framework for Local Government ‘Achieving’ Self Assessment**

In the autumn of 2011 the Committee reviewed the Council’s work on equalities in the context of the Self Assessment and the evolution of the Council’s approach from an original focus on legal compliance and “box-ticking” to the current ethos of ensuring that business processes, performance management and service delivery were appropriate for the needs of all residents and flexible in response to people’s requirements. The Committee noted that equalities work is embedded in teams across the Council supported to a limited extent by the Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager and the Equalities and Diversity Officer; that although still complex the legislation is now consolidated in the single 2010 act which is better suited to the Cherwell approach (i.e. focusing on a holistic and locally appropriate approach to equalities rather than a limited set of characteristics); and that the focus is on using customer feedback and service testing to produce practical results. In conclusion the Committee resolved that the Council’s Self Assessment against the Achieving Standard under the Equality Framework for Local Government should be referred to the Executive for approval.

### **A Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service**

In December 2012 the Committee considered the financial, legal and staffing implications of a business case for a shared ICT for Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). The Committee noted that the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board had looked at the budgetary implications for CDC if the shared IS/IT service was not implemented and had concluded that implementation of the shared IS/IT service should be supported as it would reduce the pressure on Cherwell District Council’s capital budget. The Committee noted that the future harmonisation of specific service related software across the two councils was not included in this business case, but that as an area of potential savings it would be explored as part of a future work strand. In conclusion the Committee agreed that the implementation of a shared IS/IT service for both sovereign authorities should be supported.

## Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

### Membership

Councillor Nick Mawer (Ch)  
Councillor Alyas Ahmed  
Councillor Patrick Cartledge  
Councillor Andrew Fulljames  
Councillor Lawrie Stratford  
Councillor Doug Webb

Councillor Douglas Webb (V Ch)  
Councillor Maurice Billington  
Councillor Margaret Cullip  
Councillor Melanie Magee<sup>1</sup>  
Councillor Pat Tompson  
Councillor Martin Weir

### 2012/13 Budget scrutiny



The budget scrutiny process began in September 2011 when the Board received a briefing from the Corporate Systems Accountant, Technical Accountant and the Community and Corporate Planning Manager gave a brief presentation on the context and background to the 2012/13 budget, including budget pressures, future funding, Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions, 2012/13 building blocks, budget guidelines and the draft 2012/13 budget.

The budget scrutiny process for 2012/13 involved a review of the current budget for 2011/12 of £15.8m with a detailed review of discretionary areas of spend, a review of staff savings suggestions and the capital bids received as part of the 2012/13 process.

The Board met formally on 22 November 2011 to reflect on the areas considered as part of the budget scrutiny process and the draft recommendations, conclusions and comments based on the outcomes of the budget scrutiny working group meetings. At this meeting the Board made 7 recommendations and 15 conclusions/comments. There were a number of areas where the Board had deferred making recommendations and had instead requested further information. These areas were considered at the 10 January 2012 meeting of Board during which a further 4 recommendations were made.

Capital Programme 2011/12: Of the seventeen capital bids, Members were satisfied with the evidence for nine and agreed that these should be recommended for inclusion of the Capital Programme 2011/12. Members recommended that one bid should not be included and that consideration of five bids relating to ICT should be deferred pending the ICT Insource and Shared Service Business Case.

Discretionary Spend: The Board noted that discretionary spend for Cherwell District Council in 2011/12 totalled a net expenditure of £3.1m (27% of the Council's net budget). During the budget scrutiny working group meetings, which had involved relevant Lead Members and officers, the Board had considered in detail the following areas: Street wardens; communications;

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<sup>1</sup> Councillor Melanie Magee was appointed to the Board on 26 July 2011. Councillor Carol Steward was a Board member between May and July 2011.

community transport; economic development; Woodgreen Leisure; Spiceball Sports Centre; Banbury Museum; Council's Administration Function; Tourist Information Centre/Courtyard; Support Cost Trends; Communications – Controllable/Uncontrollable Costs; and, Distribution of Cherwell Link with Electoral Registration forms / Council Tax Bills (linked to communications). In terms of discretionary spend greater than £200,000, the Board made three recommendations to the Executive and a further seven comments/conclusions.

Staff Savings Suggestions: During the summer 2011, staff had submitted a list of 44 money saving suggestions which had been considered during the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meetings. Members recognised the value of the suggestions and concluded that whilst some had already been implemented or were being addressed through other forums, there were nine suggestions they considered in detail: Reduce Stationery Spend; Cease Distributing Free Dog Waste Bags; Councillors Blackberry Provision; Cease Webcasting; Staff Holiday / Pay Freeze / Change in Working Week; Fast Tracking Licensing Applications; Fast Tracking Planning Applications; Remove Street Warden Service; Review CCTV Operation and Costs; Review Opening Hours of Link Point. In terms of staff savings suggestions, the Board made two recommendations to Executive and a further seven comments/conclusions.

As part of the budget scrutiny process, the Board also considered the council tax figures for Cherwell District Council and compared them to West Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and South Northamptonshire Council. The comparative data included a breakdown of the cost of services and the split between statutory services and discretionary services. The Board had noted that each Local Authority structured their accounts and cost centres differently. Members agreed that the comparative figures with other authorities was very important and useful information.

The Board thanked the Finance Team for their hard work in providing all information requested and Lead Members and officers for attending the budget scrutiny working group meetings.

All of the Board's recommendations and observations were welcomed and accepted by the Executive and Council as part of the 2011/12 Budget.

### **Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)**

The Board had undertaken a review of the Council's partnership with Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership and met with the Chairman of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP), the Cherwell Local Police Area (LPA) Commander, the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Urban and Rural, the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services and the Community and Corporate Planning Manager in September 2010. The Board had noted there was a strong working relationship between the Council and the CSCP which supported the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and strategies, which was underpinned by a formal structure to manage and

measure the effectiveness of the partnership and as a result, the partnership was delivering practical benefits to residents in the district. The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services attended the June 2011 meeting to update Members on the CSCP.

The Board learnt that due to budget cuts the CSCP had reviewed its priorities at the end of 2010 and agreed five priorities for the District: Anti-Social Behaviour; Reducing serious acquisitive crime; Young people; Domestic abuse; and, Violence against the person. The prioritisation had been agreed at the March 2011 CSCP meeting and the final budget allocations would be submitted to the June 2011 CSCP meeting. There was ongoing uncertainty within the Partnership as the funding for 2012/13 remained unclear.

Members of the Board noted the importance of the CSCP in bringing agencies together. The performance of the CSCP is monitored through the Performance Management Framework and Members noted in March 2012 that performance remained green.

### **Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)**

The Board had undertaken a review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council in 2009/10. The six recommendations arising from the review had been accepted by the Executive in April 2010. The Board had received an update on progress against the recommendations in September 2010 and requested a further update in summer 2011. The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services and Councillor Atack, the Council's appointed outside body representative, attended the June 2011 meeting to provide this update.

The Board noted that the Council's relationship with ORCC had been strengthened through the signing of a Service Level Agreement which contained five key objectives, each with various measures which were monitored regularly: 1. Encourage community led planning; 2. Retaining and improving rural retail services; 3. Improving village halls; 4. Rural transport option – ORCC to promote and support five volunteer schemes; and, 5. Innovating rural development. The Board commended the progress in signing the Service Level Agreement and noted that the objectives broadly covered the vast range of work undertaken by ORCC.

The Board noted that proposals regarding the future funding of ORCC to deliver services better and in a more financially viable way were currently under consideration. These proposals were subject to a detailed review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee through a Task and Finish Group (see page 13).

Members noted that CDC had a small Urban and Rural Services team and as a consequence relied on ORCC to deliver a number of services on behalf on the Council. In conclusion, the Board was satisfied with the progress that had been made since their review of the partnership.

### **Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)**

The Board had agreed that the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) be added as a potential topic for scrutiny in light of its inclusion on the Council's 2011/12 risk register. The Head of Environmental Services and the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Coordinator attended the Board's July meeting to brief Members on the council's partnership with OWP.

Members noted that the OWP included all of the Oxfordshire district councils and Oxfordshire County Council, OCC, (one member per partner authority) and had been established under a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 and formed as a Statutory Joint Committee in April 2007. The vision of the OWP was to work in partnership to reduce waste and to maximise reuse, recycling and composting. In January 2007 the partnership agreed a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy which set out plans for dealing with Oxfordshire's municipal waste through to 2030. In terms of performance monitoring, a three year rolling action plan was established to deliver against the objectives of the Strategy.

The Board considered the financial arrangements and noted that each partner contributed to the OWP. It was noted that OCC was legally required to pay recycling credits to the District Councils as the collection authorities. However, as OCC had to make substantial budget savings and had indicated that a saving could be to reduce the landfill reduction credits it pays, which could mean a potential loss of significant income for CDC. The Board noted that the overall Joint Municipal Waste Strategy was due for review in 2011/12 and that the opportunity would also be taken to review the financial arrangements.

The Board concluded that there were three key areas that remained uncertain in the council's partnership with the OWP: budget/financial implications; environmental impact of any future changes; and, the need for new targets for the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy. It was agreed that the Board should receive an update in due course.

### **Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council**

In March 2011 the Board had considered the cost and use of external consultants by Cherwell District Council. In light of the discussion, Members agreed that the item should be added to their work programme. At their September 2011 meeting the Corporate Systems Accountant and Corporate and Community Planning Manager gave a presentation which covered the following areas: why consultants may be used; different types of consultancy; how the Council procures consultancy; how consultants are managed; which services use consultants; consultancy spend 2011/12 to date; and, private contractors and consultants spend 2011/12 to date.

The Board noted that the Council's spend on consultants had reduced in 2011/12 but acknowledged that in certain circumstances the use of consultants was the best approach. Members stressed the importance of the process for procuring consultants being robust and noted that whilst the council did not have a single policy for procuring consultants as usage and



costs were so diverse, the council did have a Procurement Strategy which must be complied with.

The Board agreed that the Council's expenditure on consultants should continue to be monitored by the Finance Scrutiny Working Group.

### **Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team**

In December 2012 the Committee considered the financial, legal and staffing implications of a business case for a shared Finance and Procurement Team for Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC).

The Board noted that a number of options had been considered in relation to finance and procurement functions at both Councils. The joining of services and locations was pursued as the preferred option that would best support the Joint Management Team in a timely manner, deliver the required savings and permit further review once the impact of the Local Government Resources Review, welfare reform and Localism Act 2011 became clear. As part of the extensive consultation process the business case had also been considered by the SNC Community and Resources Review and Development Committee. A final version of the business case would be considered at CDC Executive and SNC Cabinet in April 2012.

In conclusion the Board unanimously agreed that the business case should be supported and they commended the work of the officers across both authorities for their hard work in bringing the case forward.

## **Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board ~ Working Groups**

The members of the Board have divided into two informal working groups that each meet about four times per year to undertake more detailed assessments of the Board's areas of responsibility, in particular, review of the management of resources and scrutiny of the financial management, treasury management, property and asset acquisition and disposal, capital programme and monitoring of year-on-year performance indicators.

### **Finance Scrutiny Working Group**

Membership: Councillor Mawer (Chairman), Councillor Webb, Councillor Ahmed, Councillor Cartledge, Councillor Stratford, Councillor Tompson and Councillor Weir.

The Group's role is to carry out detailed consideration of the Council's finances and budgets. At every meeting the Group reviews the Council's performance against a range of financial indicators covering income, debt, investment, creditors and risk. In 2011/12 there were no meetings of the Finance Scrutiny Working Group as the time was used for budget scrutiny. The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board considered the relevant finance monitoring reports at full Board meetings.

### **Performance Scrutiny Working Group**

Membership: Councillor Mawer (Chairman), Councillor Webb, Councillor Billington, Councillor Cullip, Councillor Fulljames, Councillor Magee<sup>2</sup> and Councillor Williamson

The Group carries out detailed scrutiny of corporate and service performance, considers performance where targets are not being met or over performance, considers targets, their relevance and future targets considers performance based on what it means to the public. At every meeting the Group reviews the Council's performance, using the Performance Management Framework data as its baseline evidence. In 2011/12 there were no meetings of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group as the time was used for budget scrutiny meetings. The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board considered the relevant performance monitoring reports at full Board meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> Appointed in February 2012. Councillor Carol Steward was a member of the Group from May – July 2011.

## **Task and Finish Groups**

### **Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services**

Membership: Councillors Mallon, Emptage, Pratt, Stevens, L Stratford and R Stratford

This Task & Finish Group was convened in June 2011 in response to a suggestion by the Executive to review the Council's intention to move from grant aid to the commissioning of voluntary sector services, in particular for Advice, Volunteering and Voluntary Car Transport Schemes. Members of the Task and Finish Group met with officers on three occasions to consider each area in detail before presenting their findings to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Committee endorsed the views of the Task and Finish Group and identified three clear issues for the Executive: (i) that the project was about commissioning not cost cutting; (ii) that the commissioning project would offer improvements to service delivery; (iii) that funds needed to be channelled to relevant services. The Committee confirmed their support for the commissioning project and agreed that it was important that it progressed according to the set timetable to ensure that no residents were disadvantaged in April 2012 because contracts and suppliers were not in place. The Executive accepted the Committee's conclusions in September 2012.

## **Joint Meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board**

### **Car Parking Provisions and Charges**

Cherwell District Council introduced new car parking provisions and charges in April 2011 which had led to a high volume of complaints from members of the public and extensive local press and media coverage. The proposed introduction of these charges had been previously considered by the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in the autumn of 2010 as part of the 2011/12 Budget preparation; as the subject of a Call-in held in January 2011; and by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 14 June 2011.

At this joint meeting members of the Committee reviewed the Council's budget position and noted the continuing pressure to find savings and/or raise income as a consequence of the significant reduction in Government grant. They also reviewed and discussed a number of alternative options for parking policy and charging.

Following a lengthy discussion the Committee agreed 11 draft recommendations for the Executive which could be accommodated within the budget and which would have no impact on any other service area:

- (1) That there is a need to make some adjustments to the new car parking charges and policies in recognition of concerns raised by Councillors and the public.
- (2) That any adjustments must try to balance real benefit to car park users and town traders with the accepted effects on the Council's limited and reducing finances.
- (3) That the current charges for evening parking be changed to charging to 1900hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter.
- (4) That there should be free parking for blue badge holders in designated disabled spaces but blue badge holders should be charged in all general parking spaces.
- (5) That there should be a 10 minute maximum period of grace for parking period expiry and non purchase of tickets.
- (6) That the discount for early payment of excess charge notices within 14 days be increased to 50% for all contraventions.
- (7) To note the withdrawal of the current £16 administration charge for appeals which are upheld but where the ECN was issued correctly.
- (8) That the effects of the redevelopment of Bicester Town Centre warrant an adjustment to the current charging regime until the new development is complete (anticipated summer 2013) by reducing the current charges by 10p per hour.
- (9) That officers determine the earliest implementation of the changes agreed by the Executive according to the appropriate legal processes.

- (10) That a detailed communications plan be compiled to signify these changes which takes into account the lessons learnt from the April changes.
- (11) That the Executive consider funding the loss of income of 4 and 6 above (estimated to be £93,000 per annum) from the additional income and lower cost arising from the transfer of some treasury management functions in house; and the fixed term Bicester loss of income from 8 above (estimated to be £80,000 per annum over two years) from the additional interest secured from the later £10m investment of the Council's contribution to the Bicester Town Centre Redevelopment Scheme due to the delay in its start.

The recommendations were considered at a special meeting of the Executive on 26 July 2011 and were all accepted without amendment. In addition the Executive also recommended that Sunday and Bank Holiday parking be charged at £1 for all day and that parking on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day remain free.

## Call-in

The right to Call-in a decision of the Executive was not used during the municipal year 2011/12.

## Training and Development

There were no specific scrutiny related training events for members in 2011/12, however a number of other Member development events supported the role of councillors on the scrutiny committees:

- 6 councillors attended the Treasury Management training on 2 June 2011, which relates to the work of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in undertaking budget scrutiny.
- 5 councillors attended the Meeting Procedures and Chairing Skills training on 21 June 2011, which supports all Members on procedures and processes at meetings.
- 12 councillors attended the Local Government Finance training on 28 October 2011, which relates to the work of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in undertaking budget scrutiny.

## Statistics

Statistic	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of scrutiny committee meetings	25	20	20	17	17	16
% attendance at scrutiny committee meetings	76%	78%	82%	76%	71%	72%
Total Number of completed reviews	7	6	6	5	9 + Joint case = 10	6 + 1 Joint 2
Number of committee reviews undertaken	1	1	4	6		
Number of Task & Finish Groups established	12	2	2	1	1	1
Number of Call-ins	0	1	0	0	1	0
% scrutiny recommendations accepted by Executive or other body	-	90%	97%	100%	100%	100%

## Corporate priorities checklist

How does the overview and scrutiny function contribute to the Council's corporate priorities?

	Private Sector Housing Strategy	Empty Homes Policy	Equality Framework for Local Government 'Achieving' Self Assessment	Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service	Car Parking Provisions and Charges	2012/13 Budget scrutiny	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)	Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)	Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council	Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team	Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services
<b>Break the Cycle of Deprivation and address inequalities across the District</b>			✓									✓
<b>Work to support the development of the Northwest Bicester Eco-Town, using the Eco-Town as an opportunity to develop a centre of excellence in terms of sustainable living</b>												
<b>A district of opportunity</b>												
1. Balance employment and housing growth by developing businesses and homes that meet local need within an overall robust planning policy framework.												
2. Provide business land and premises opportunities to support local economic development.												
3. Support business success by fostering innovation and helping businesses to recruit and retain skilled employees												
4. Help and support Cherwell's residents through uncertain times	✓	✓				✓						✓
5. Make it easier for you to get where you need to go												✓
6. Secure housing growth that meets Government targets and the needs of the District through an appropriate mix of market and affordable housing.												

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7. Give you advice and support to find a home if you are without one.	✓	✓										✓
8. Improve the standard of housing particularly for vulnerable people.	✓	✓										
9. Develop safe and pleasant urban centre which provide you with good facilities												
10. Improve local services and opportunities in rural areas.								✓				
<b>A safe and healthy Cherwell</b>												
11. Help you feel safe in your home and community, working to reduce further our very low level of crime							✓					
12. Involve you in making your community stronger through Neighbourhood Management												
13. Help to deliver improved healthcare for Bicester and Banbury.												
14. Make it easy for you to lead a healthy and active life through our countryside, leisure facilities and tourist attractions												
15. Make big improvements to our sports centres												
16. Provide community facilities and activities to meet local need								✓				✓



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<b>A cleaner, greener Cherwell</b>												
17. Keep streets and open spaces clean and free from litter, graffiti and abandoned vehicles and well maintained							✓					
18. Help you recycle so we can reduce the amount of landfill waste.									✓			
19. Protect our environment, wildlife habitats and the country side, by working with others.												
20. Maximise energy efficiency and minimise carbon emissions in our own buildings, and developments.												
21. Keep you informed about climate change and what we can all do to help.												
22. Significantly improve green spaces and public places so that you really notice the difference where you live and work.												
<b>An accessible, value for money Council</b>												
23. Be easy to contact, approachable and responsive.			✓									
24. Always treat everyone with dignity and respect and meet the specific needs of young people, older people, disabled people and ethnic minorities.			✓									✓
25. Put things right quickly if they go wrong.					✓							

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26. Deliver value for money by achieving the optimum balance between cost, quality and customer satisfaction for all services.				✓		✓				✓	✓	✓
27. Reduce financial burden to local taxpayers.						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28. Explain how your council tax is spent and why.						✓						
29. Work with others to provide you with local services and access to information about them.						✓		✓	✓			✓
30. Demonstrate that we can be trusted to act properly for you						✓						
31. Improve the way we communicate with the public, partners and other stakeholders in order to explain what the Council is doing and why.					✓	✓						✓
32. Listen to your views and comments, however you want to make them					✓	✓						