

# Annual Performance Report June 2016

Looking back on 2015-16



*Cherwell: a great place to live*

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**Cherwell**

DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

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## Key Achievements at a glance

### Local Plan was adopted in July 2015

**200 hectares of new employment land and 22,800 houses**

**Improved rail connections between Bicester, Oxford and London**

**Growing economy**

**Low levels of unemployment**

**1,083 jobs created or safeguarded**

**Extension of Begbroke Science Park**

**New Technology Studio School in Bicester**

**Employable Banbury workshop**

**'building bridges' between businesses, educators and organisations**

**Bicester designated as a Garden Town and an NHS England Healthy Town**

**The UK's largest self-build programme**

**322 affordable homes**

# Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Report which provides an overview of the council's performance and highlights our key achievements in 2015/16.

During the year the council has continued to deliver high quality services, new projects and innovations, whilst ensuring our customer satisfaction levels remained high.

We have continued proactive working with our partner South Northamptonshire Council in developing further shared working to provide resilience and to make savings so that the council is prepared for the future and any further government reduction in grants and revenues.

We have promoted economic growth; helping local companies to expand, securing high quality and high value jobs, with increased opportunities for all, and supporting more affordable homes for local people so that Cherwell District is a place where people want to live and work. We also work with partners to help deliver the right services and new projects for the District.

Our effective financial management has ensured we have balanced our budget and delivered no increase on the council element of Council Tax for 2016/17.

Although this is an opportunity to look back on our achievements we are not standing still and are looking forward to this year 2016/17 with a refreshed annual business plan in place to take us on our journey. The 2016/17 business plan can be found here [www.cherwell.gov.uk/yourcouncil](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/yourcouncil)



**Councillor Barry Wood**

Leader of Cherwell District Council



**Sue Smith**

Joint Chief Executive, Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils



In 2015/16 Cherwell District Council continued to work with the four strategic priorities.

<b>Cherwell: a district of opportunity</b>	Supporting economic development, employment, conservation, regeneration and development of the District.
<b>Cherwell: safe, green, clean</b>	Working to ensure the District has high standards of environmental cleanliness, great recycling and waste management, tackling crime and supporting energy efficiency.
<b>Cherwell: a thriving community</b>	Providing affordable housing, leisure and sports facilities and activities. Working with partners to improve access to health services. Providing arts, cultural and community services.
<b>Cherwell: sound budgets and customer focused council</b>	Ensuring the council is run as efficiently as possible, consulting with local people, helping vulnerable people to access our services, and the provision of council tax and housing benefits.

Each year, from the key objectives and actions under our strategic priorities, several are highlighted as performance pledges. These pledges reflect local priorities and demonstrate our commitment to the delivery of important local services and new projects to help make Cherwell a great place to live.

One year on, it's time to reflect on our progress in delivering the 2015-16 Business Plan. The next few pages highlight some of the achievements that the council, working with its partners has achieved.

## Key achievements

The **Local Plan was adopted in July 2015** and the Development Framework for the District is in place concentrating growth on Bicester, Banbury and Upper Heyford. All the sites are coming forward to deliver **200 hectares of new employment land and 22,800 houses**.

The East West Rail line **improved connections between Bicester, Oxford and London** for commuters and business links.

The **economy is growing** and we are recording historical **low levels of unemployment** and through the Job Fairs the Economic Growth Team have seen large increases in local employment and company support.

The Banbury Gateway opened with the 9th largest Marks and Spencer in the country with **staff recruited through the Job Fairs**. Considerable assistance has been provided to businesses recruiting local people. Tailored events provided to business needs through the job club and job fair services enabled the recruitment of over 1,000 staff: this supported a wide range of businesses across the district that required help to fill vacancies in manufacturing, logistics, retail, care, research and development and leisure. The full year saw **1,083 jobs created or safeguarded**.

The new **extension of Begbroke Science Park** is under construction and is a major extension of Oxford University presence in Cherwell District.

Throughout the year, partnership plans have progressed well towards establishing a **new Technology Studio School in Bicester**, due to open in September 2016. As part of the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme, skills issues have also been considered alongside matters relating to health, families and housing culminating on 18 March with the Council leading an **Employable Banbury workshop**, held at Banbury College and including Victoria Prentis MP. Particular emphasis was placed upon **'building bridges' between businesses, educators and organisations**. Two apprentices from a local engineering company provided an impressive insight to the opportunities that are already available to young people.

Bicester/Graven Hill - We are **proud of Bicester as a place, as a designated Garden Town, and as an NHS England Healthy Town**, and we want a full range of housing choices. The easiest way to genuinely speed up delivery is to be in charge of it. There is an unmet demand for self build and custom build in this country, so the opportunity to purchase a brown field site from MoD was too good to miss. "Do it Yourself" has become our motto in every respect.

Build - From tackling run down empty properties in Banbury to **the UKs largest self-build programme**, over the last 5 years Cherwell has transformed its approach to affordable housing, development and building new communities by creating an innovative, sustainable and scalable housing model. During 2015/16 **322 affordable homes** were delivered in the District with 95 of these being self build housing projects.



# Awards

## Green Apple Environment award MRW Team of the Year award Champion of the Year Primary Authority of the Year Best Town/ City award

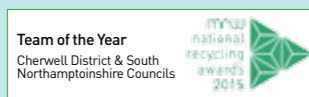
Cherwell District Council's EcoBicester team, sustainability charity Bioregional and developers A2Dominion were jointly awarded the **Green Apple Environment award** for the Built Environment category. The Green Apple Environment awards have been taking place since 1994 to promote, recognise and reward schemes which promote environmental best practice across the world. The award recognised the organisations' One Shared Vision initiative to extend the sustainability concept for 6,000 true zero carbon homes at NW Bicester across the rest of the town.

Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils jointly scooped the **Team of the Year award** at the national MRW Recycling Awards in July 2015 for a joint campaign using social media to raise residents awareness of recycling.

At the 2015 national Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) awards the Joint Recycling Officer was named **Champion of the Year** for his portfolio of successful recycling initiatives.

Cherwell District Council, along with partner Sainsbury's, was nominated in the **Primary Authority of the Year** awards and received a 'highly commended' accolade after having been among the shortlisted finalists. "Primary Authority" is a scheme that aims to reduce burdens on business and encourage economic growth.

Cherwell District Council and sustainability charity Bioregional collectively took the **Best Town/City award** at the P. E. A. (People. Environment. Achievement) Awards which recognise efforts by individuals and organisations to support a green agenda. To take the accolade, Cherwell and Bioregional had to demonstrate measures which had been implemented to reduce the carbon footprint of the town. Bicester had been shortlisted for the award alongside other towns/cities including Bristol and Brighton but took the title for the work which had taken place to embed sustainable development throughout the entire town with designs that could be easily replicated by all local authorities.



# Our performance pledges for 2015/16 – a review

Cherwell: a district of opportunity

Supporting economic development, employment, conservation, regeneration and development of the District.

### Make progress onsite for the initial housing development at North West Bicester.

- The first phase of development at NW Bicester, known as Elmsbrook, is nearing completion and is due for first occupations in late spring 2016. The phase includes a mix of housing including flats, terrace, semi detached and detached houses. The houses are a mix of tenures with affordable rented properties, shared ownership and market sale properties. In addition to housing, the first primary school is under construction and planning permission has been resolved to be granted for the local centre to serve the development. The development is achieving true zero carbon and very high standards of sustainability as required by the Local Plan policy Bic 1.

### Make progress on site for the initial infrastructure at Graven Hill and promotion of the self-build plots.

- A new Managing Director was appointed in January 2016 as we now push towards the implementation phase. Infrastructure works have commenced on the demonstrator project and the first self builders are due on site in June 2016 with phase 1A plots due for release in Summer 2016.

### Commission and complete a commercial appraisal for Banbury town centre, and subsequently bring forward appropriate redevelopment proposals for urgent consideration.

- Business Improvement District bid: The tender to undertake the BID study, the essential first stage to creating a BID has been let and responses are awaited. The option of a BID has been discussed with the Chamber of Commerce and is referred to in the draft Banbury Masterplan.

- Banbury Vision and Masterplan progress: The draft Masterplan has been published and completed a four week consultation. Responses are being compiled and assessed, with a view to considering what changes may be required to the draft Masterplan. The final Supplementary Planning Document is to be considered at Executive in July and adopted.
- Hella Site: A viability assessment has been commissioned and completed. Officers have considered the report and have asked that the Canalside site phasing plan is completed to enable the Hella report to be considered in relation to how it might assist the relocation of companies from Canalside and so enable development land to become available at Canalside in a phased way.

### Complete and implement the Masterplan for Kidlington, helping to develop a strong village centre.

- Consultation is underway on the Kidlington Masterplan.





**Our performance pledges for 2015/16 – a review**

**Cherwell: safe, green, clean**

Working to ensure the District has high standards of environmental cleanliness, great recycling and waste management, tackling crime and supporting energy efficiency.

**Maintain the District's high recycling rate.**

- The target has been missed and the provisional figures show 55.78% v target of 57%. Composting is down this year which affects the tonnage collected. However overall the amount sent to landfill is less than last year and most of the waste that cannot be recycled is sent to the Energy Recovery Facility. 1,557 blue bins have been delivered to customers this year encouraging more recycling.

**Improve local residents' satisfaction with street and environmental cleanliness continuing our successful programme of neighbourhood litter blitzes.**

- All six of the planned Neighbourhood Blitz events have been completed. They all proved to be very popular with members of the public and Councillors alike. We also supported Banbury Town Council in the Clean for the Queen initiatives, which involved staff, members of the public, and local Councillors. The satisfaction survey in 2015 showed 69% of respondents were satisfied with the level of street cleanliness, a slight increase on the previous year and 75% were satisfied with the care of parks and open spaces.



**Work with the local police and licence holders to ensure our town centres remain safe and vibrant in the evenings.**

- There has been no appreciable increase in night time violence in the towns and the numbers of exclusions from the towns have fallen. This indicates that generally licensees are managing responsibly and co-operating with the police.

**Our performance pledges for 2015/16 – a review**

**Cherwell: a thriving community**

Providing affordable housing, leisure and sports facilities and activities, working with partners to improve access to health services, providing arts, cultural and community services.

**Continue working with our partners to provide support to the most vulnerable individuals and families in the district, building on the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme.**

- The second workshop for the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme involved a successful 'employability' workshop in March 2016 which brought secondary and higher education together with local employers. A range of actions and initiatives were developed from this, which are now being considered.

**Deliver 150 units of affordable homes in the District and support opportunities for self-build and developing self-build skills.**

- The year overall has been positive with new opportunities identified as well as established sites progressed to a position which will enable new affordable housing to be delivered in the district under the Council's Build! banner. A total of 322 affordable homes were delivered within the District during the year, significantly exceeding target.

**Continue to support skills development, apprenticeships and job clubs in order to help support local employment and reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.**

- In March 2016, the Council led an Employable Banbury workshop as part of the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme, held at Banbury College and including Victoria Prentis MP. Particular emphasis was placed upon 'building bridges' between businesses, educators and organisations. Two apprentices from a local engineering company provided an impressive insight to the opportunities that are already available to young people. Discussions enabled further links to be established

between businesses, for instance in the promotion of the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. An action plan is being developed and further workshops are being planned to address related issues such as housing affordability.

- March also featured the National Apprenticeship week, with specialist events held at North Oxfordshire Academy and other venues across Cherwell. Day-to-day liaison with businesses by the Economic Growth team also provided referrals into the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Services.
- The Brighter Futures in Banbury programme is also providing a grant of £10,000 to Ethnic Minority Business Service to allow the continuation of guidance for long-term unemployed people.
- Job clubs and job fairs were provided in Banbury and Bicester, with over 2,000 visits made during the year. This included six job fairs being held (Banbury & Bicester) in addition to weekly job clubs. All age groups are helped as well as assisting people that were already in employment to change careers. The Job Club partnership links have also promoted apprenticeships and traineeships to businesses as a practical means of engaging young people and supporting them in their career paths.



Our performance pledges for 2015/16 – a review

**Cherwell: sound budgets and customer focused council** Ensuring the council is run as efficiently as possible, consulting with local people, helping vulnerable people to access our services, and the provision of council tax and housing benefits.

Continue to improve our website, and implement additional online services for customers and maintain the SOCITM rating of 3/4 stars.

- The website has been maintained on an on-going basis, although development has been staid as there are plans to move to a new single platform. Work on this was placed 'on hold' whilst discussions were on-going about the future working with Stratford. This will be addressed in 2016/17.

Extend the Joint Working Programme to include new methods of service delivery and more services delivered in partnership.

- Significant progress has been made over the year with Business Cases agreed for Economic Growth, Communications, Environmental Health & Public Protection and Customer Service, Revenues and Benefits (subject to consultation) Leisure and Community (subject to consultation). Options are under development for Housing and Planning. The joint programme is designed to provide resilience and savings to the council.



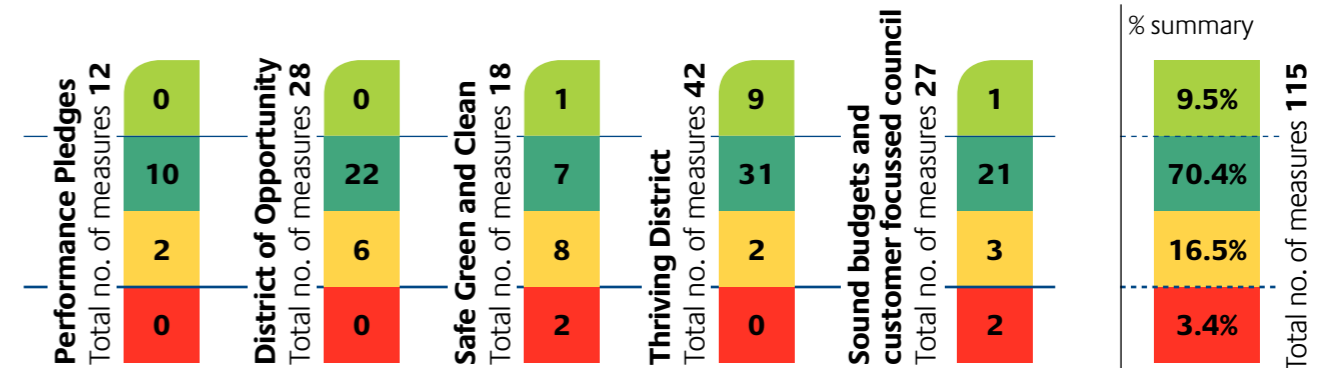
# A summary of our performance:

## Summary of our performance

The table below summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, task and projects outlined in our business plan under each of the four strategic priorities.

We use a 'RAGG\*' (red, amber, green, green\*) system where green\* refers to a target that has been over achieved, green to a target wholly met, amber to a target narrowly missed and red to a target missed by 10%.

### End of year 2015/16 summary outturn



Please see the accompanying Appendices for full details on the progress in 2015/16

## Community Engagement

A Connecting Community Event “Have Faith in Community” was held during Inter Faith Week (15 – 21 November 2015) providing information regarding the community services offered by the District, the County and the voluntary groups in and around Banbury. The ambitious event linked the Faith Forum and Connecting Communities with over 70 people attending. The Give or Take and Radio Horton really helped to bring people forward and it was a joint effort to encourage participation.



**Customer Contact and Feedback**

Every year since 2006 Cherwell District Council has undertaken a customer satisfaction survey. In 2015 the survey was carried out between May and July revealing that 79% of residents are satisfied with the council's performance; the highest level of satisfaction since the survey began and the fourth year running that satisfaction has increased.

**As a place to live Cherwell is at its highest satisfaction level at 88%.**

**Street cleaning services scored 69%, the best ever.**

**Perceptions of value for money offered by the council reached 55%, highest score to date.**

Full details of the satisfaction survey can be found at [www.cherwell.gov.uk/satisfactionsurvey](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/satisfactionsurvey).



**This is the highest rating of satisfaction recorded since the survey began.**

**Complaints Summary**

No of complaints received	No of valid complaints	No of complaints escalated to Stage 2	Percentage acknowledged in 3 working days	Percentage responded to in 10 working days
261	129	43	90.04%	79.31%

The figures regarding the 10 working day response time do not include the number of complaints that received agreed extension dates as per the policy. During 2016/2017 new reporting functions will enable reporting on the number of complaints to receive extension requests which will provide a more accurate figure for the adherence to the policy.

**Ombudsman summary**

No of Ombudsman Complaints received	No of valid complaints	No of complaints escalated to Stage 2	Percentage acknowledged in 3 working days	Percentage responded to in 10 working days
tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc

**Freedom of information requests**

Number of requests received during 2015/16:

Apr – June	July – Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan – March	Year Total
136	111	109	138	<b>494</b>

## Getting in touch

Throughout the year the council provides opportunities for local people to have their say. Whether this be through customer satisfaction surveys, budget consultation, consultation on new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback via our link-points or web site we are keen to listen to what you like and what needs to be improved. Our consultations are published on our one-stop consultation portal which can be found at:

<http://consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal/>

However, if you would like to feedback about any other matter you can do so using the contact details on this page.

**Email:** [consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

**To find and email your ward councillor:**  
<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/mgFindCouncillor.aspx>

**Call the Performance and Insight Team:**  
01295 221605

**Customer Services:** 01295 227001

**Write:**

The Performance and Insight Team  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA

For general enquiries visit [www.cherwell.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk)  
or contact the customer service team  
01295 227001.

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# Business Plan 2016-17



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# Business Plan 2016-17




Cherwell:  
a district of  
opportunity

Cherwell:  
safe, green,  
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