

Annual Performance Report

Looking back on 2016/2017



Cherwell: a great place to live

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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

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Foreword

Welcome to Cherwell District Council’s annual report, providing an overview of our performance in delivering our objectives and highlighting our key achievements in 2016/2017.

During the year we have continued to build on previous high levels of delivering quality services by undertaking new projects, seeking improvements and innovations in our existing services and ensuring our customer satisfaction levels remain high.

We have continued to strengthen our relationship with our partner, South Northamptonshire Council, in the further sharing of services. This enables us to provide efficiencies so there is no loss of frontline services in light of the reduced funding we receive from Government. It also gives us the opportunity to improve service delivery by sharing best practice so that services are protected and consistently delivered.

Highlights for the year include promotion and delivery of our economic growth objectives through 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 is a place where people want to live and work. For example, 297 new affordable houses were constructed and the Build! team provided eight houses for shared ownership or rent.

We have delivered safe, green and clean communities and our recycling rate is one of the highest we have achieved; we are currently ahead of plan for the year with 56 per cent of our waste recycled.

We have continued the work with our partners to provide support to the most vulnerable individuals and families in the district by building on the Brighter Futures in Banbury programme.

Finally, our robust financial management has ensured we have balanced our budget for the year and maintained a freeze on the Cherwell element of council tax going into 2017/2018.

Although this report is an opportunity to look back on our achievements in the last year, we are not standing still and have already detailed ambitious plans to further improve our services and deliver on our objectives in 2017/2018.

A refreshed annual business plan is in place to ensure we maximise the quality of services being delivered to get the best outcomes for the residents and businesses of Cherwell. The 2017/2018 business plan can be found on our website.

I hope you enjoy reading about our achievements.



Councillor Barry Wood

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Wood'.

Leader of Cherwell District Council

Our strategic priorities and key achievements

In 2016/2017 Cherwell District Council continued to work with the four strategic priorities.

| | |
|---|--|
| Cherwell: a district of opportunity | Supporting economic development, employment, conservation, regeneration and development of the district. |
| 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. |
| 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. |
| 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. |

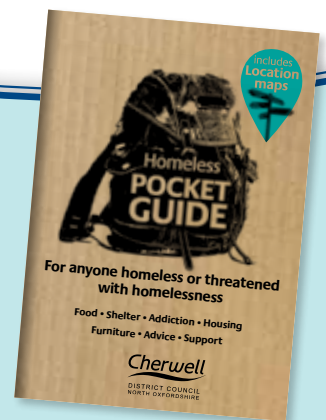
Each year, from the key objectives and actions under our strategic priorities, several are highlighted as performance pledges. These pledges reflect local priorities and demonstrate our commitment to the delivery of important local services and new projects to help make Cherwell a great place to live.

One year on, it's time to reflect on our progress in delivering the 2016/ 2017 business plan. The next few pages highlight some of the achievements that the council - working with its partners, employees and communities - has achieved.

Key achievements at a glance

The Homeless Pocket Guide to housing services – as highlighted by Victoria Prentis MP in the House of Commons -

was created to ensure that multi-agency partners are aware of partnerships that are in place to prevent rough sleeping in Cherwell. Whilst the national trend in rough sleeping rises (16 per cent according to the Department for Communities and Local Government), joint working has resulted in a significant reduction (-19 per cent) in rough sleeping in the district.



The first occupants are settling into the UK's first eco town at North West Bicester.

Grant budgets in excess of £1 million delivered to help more than 500 vulnerable and disabled residents.

Debt and money advice services for the next two years awarded to Citizens Advice,

ensuring all residents have access to impartial advice on money matters. This will be key in light of welfare reform and the impending roll out of Universal Credit during 2017/2018.

Sports England funding secured to rebuild The Hill Community Centre, Banbury.

Free Play Days enjoyed by over 9,000 children.



Holiday Hub programme; a multi-sport school holiday programme offering affordable activities for children aged between five and 15 years old, used by 3,826 children.



The Build! team provided eight houses for shared ownership or rent and 122 homes are being built for completion by the end of December 2017.

Banbury Town Centre House provided homes for rent for at least 40 people, as well as training and support to find a job in partnership with the Job Centre and Banbury Young Homelessness Project.

'Have your say day' for 80 school children from seven schools who presented new ideas for various community safety issues.

The Bicester Healthy New Town initiative is part of a national innovation programme which is taking a partnership approach to improving the health and wellbeing of residents.



Castle Quay 2, a major redevelopment project in the centre of Banbury was granted planning permission.

Completion of £1.5 million Woodgreen Leisure Centre improvements.

Our performance pledges for 2016/2017 – review

Cherwell: a district of opportunity

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

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.

- Now in their eighth year, Cherwell Job Clubs and Fairs have proven to be extremely popular with job seekers and employers. During the 2016/2017 year, 1,089 residents attended the events alongside approximately 100 potential employers and their agents.
- The Banbury Job Fair in March 2017 attracted 165 people seeking work or a change of career and received excellent feedback.
- For the first time, Cherwell had a stand at the Milton Keynes Job Fair, drawing interest for Cherwell's employers from 202 jobseekers over the weekend event in January.



North West Bicester: continue to facilitate the planning applications for the site

- The site saw the first occupations into the true zero carbon development that is a national exemplar of sustainable development. There are now 5,200 homes with resolution to grant planning permission which will be forthcoming once the final legal agreements are in place in 2017.

Banbury and Kidlington Masterplans: adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents

- These were completed in the year 2016/2017

Graven Hill: deliver the demonstration project on the Graven Hill site



- Graven Hill is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cherwell District Council. It is an ambitious project that will see a former MOD site in Bicester turn into the UK's largest self and custom-build development with up to 1,900 homes over the next decade.
- Work at the site is well under way with infrastructure and landscaping work continuing. Plots of land to accommodate various house sizes and styles, known as Golden Bricks, are continuing to sell and recently a range of new Tailored Finish products - which allow purchasers to customise the internal layout of their home - have also been launched.
- Ten early adopters of the self-build process have also been selected to appear on a Channel 4 series, fronted by Kevin McCloud. All ten pioneers have now exchanged contracts and are at various stages of their journey as they build their dream homes side-by-side.
- The Graven Hill team has also moved into its new home at the Plot Shop in Pioneer Square in Bicester.



Key achievements

- Throughout 2016/2017 the results of the 'development pipeline' actively supported by the council were seen to have created hundreds of jobs on business parks, notably in Banbury.

The council's Banbury Town Centre Vitality programme completed a third year contributing to a reduction in the number of vacant retail units from 54 to 35.

In Bicester, 15 small retail businesses received expert mentoring and training over six months to develop their products and services with advice also being provided to establish an independent traders' association.

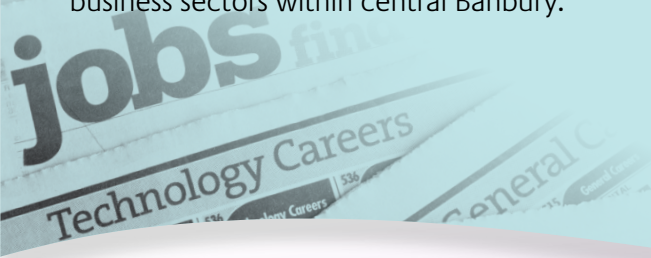
- Following a request from businesses, the economic growth team commissioned a study to examine the feasibility of creating a Business Improvement District (BID) in central Banbury and 74 per cent of businesses supported this.

Subsequently, in February 2017 the council commissioned the preparation of a business plan to be consulted upon during spring/summer 2017, which will lead to a ballot in October.

There are more than 250 BIDs already operating across the UK, with the majority focusing on town centres. The activities of the BID would be designed to benefit the entire range of business sectors within central Banbury.

- The tourism or visitor economy sector in Cherwell is worth over £378 million per annum and supports over 6,700 jobs. We have become an ambassador member of Experience Oxfordshire to ensure that local businesses have access to expert advice and opportunities to develop their businesses.

Investment has been made in the visitor information centres in Banbury and Bicester with the aim of spreading the benefits of tourism in the district.



Our performance pledges for 2016/2017 – 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 provisional figures show that 56 per cent of our waste is recycled meaning the overall amount sent to landfill is less than last year and most of the waste that cannot be recycled is sent to our Energy Recovery Facility.



Undertake six neighbourhood blitzes with community involvement

- These events took place in Banbury and Bicester town centres, Calthorpe, Easington, Langford Village and Hardwick. They have been supported by the town councils and the public. A roadshow also took place to promote recycling initiatives and bulky item collection requests increased.



Work with the local police and licence holders to ensure our town centres remain clean, safe and vibrant at all times

- We developed a partnership Night Time Economy plan with Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue to ensure those enjoying the vibrant night time economy in Banbury could do so safely and most importantly, get home safely.
- Over the festive season there was a multi-agency 'Departure Zone' in which several agencies combined to promote the National 'Consent is Everything' campaign. Advice was given out on what actually constitutes consent to protect all parties involved in a sexual relationship and all organisations worked to ensure people of all ages and sexes ended their night as safely as possible.

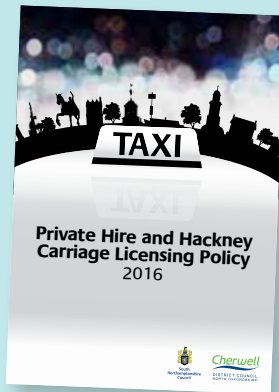


Neighbourhood blitz and recycling events



Key achievements

- A new taxi policy has been launched this year and is the first in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire to include mandatory safeguarding training for all drivers. It empowers drivers to be aware and safeguard the public, especially vulnerable members of our community. The courses are well subscribed and feedback has been excellent.



- An Air Quality Action Plan is in place and can be found on our website.
- A total of 580 food hygiene inspections were undertaken during the course of the year.



Our performance pledges for 2016/2017 – 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.

- Workshops have been held during the year to address child poverty and educational attainment. A report from Oxfordshire Health Inequalities Commission supports the approach being taken by the Brighter Futures Programme which is encouraging multi-agency support to improve educational standards for local schools.

Deliver at least 190 units of affordable housing.



- In total 297 new affordable houses were constructed and the Build! team provided eight houses for shared ownership or rent.

Key achievements

- Successfully secured Sports England funding to rebuild The Hill Community Centre in Banbury. Chosen by the Arts Council to begin a Local Cultural Education Partnership for Banbury and Bicester.
- New public art is now on show at Banbury Gateway, Karcher HQ and Wesley Square in Bicester.
- Over 70 people attended the November 2016 Parish Liaison Meeting. Parish representatives had a choice of 13 'drop-in surgeries' to attend, with topics ranging from community banking to playing fields. Presentations included an update on the Cherwell Local Plan and an introduction to the work of the Guideposts Trust which encourages community based support for people with dementia.
- Cherwell Young People, Play and Wellbeing Partnership. The emphasis of this group is a multi-agency approach to tackle youth and play issues together and develop a strategic action plan for each year.

- Two Play Day events were held in July and August 2016 to showcase what great opportunities are available in the district for young people to engage in.

The events act as a networking tool for groups as well as to share good practice and develop partnerships to support each other in the future. The events were both very successful with over 4,500 attendees and 52 stallholders in Banbury and 3,000 attendees and 38 stallholders in Bicester. Both events will be running again in 2017.



- The Youth Activator programme, which offers eight to 16 year olds informal sporting and physical activity opportunities, continues to grow. Over 4,500 children participated in informal sports and physical activities in a variety of settings such as parks, youth clubs and schools between April 2016 and March 2017. Within that number 1,680 attendees were part of the Activate Banbury Youth programme, specifically targeting areas of Banbury linked to Sanctuary Housing.



- The Sportivate programme (targeting 11–18 year olds) secured £14,828 of external Sport England funding in partnership with OXSPA and NOSSP to deliver sports and physical activity in gym, boxing, pilates, canoeing and specific sessions linked to special schools. Over the year 1,890 young people participated in the programme with incentives that included one month's free membership into Cherwell's sport centres for 16 to 18 year olds who attended six or more sessions in a two month period.
- Three local forums were held across the district in Banbury, Kidlington and Bicester to bring together older people groups and those organisations working with them. The forum looked at themes and issues facing older people in the district and developed an agenda for the Cherwell Seniors Forum, which is held annually at Bodicote House.

- A notably successful project has been Town Centre House in Banbury which has provided rented homes for at least 40 people with support to help them find work and training, working in partnership with the Job Centre and BYHP (Banbury Young Homelessness Project).
- We have worked with Oxfordshire partners to deliver a health referral pilot project called Better Housing, Better Health. This delivered improvements to the homes of 67 people with particular health problems in Oxfordshire, 17 of whom came from Cherwell.
- A grant budget in excess of £1 million was used to help more than 500 vulnerable and disabled residents, including new work for Oxfordshire County Council through our Home Improvement Agency, amounting to £150,000 for 312 residents.



- The health walks programme is now combined with South Northamptonshire Council and offers 41 walks across 25 locations. The programme has 106 volunteer walk leaders and 917 registered walkers, 214 of whom have registered since April 2016.

Our performance pledges for 2016/2017 – 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.

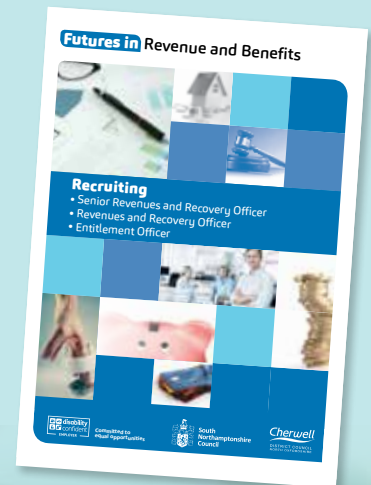
Reduce the cost of providing our services through partnerships, joint working and other service delivery models.

- The annual billing of council tax was completed ahead of schedule and both council tax and business rate collection rate targets were exceeded.



Key achievements

- Establishing a new joint revenues and benefits team in a newly-formed council-owned company
- Establishing an ICT harmonisation project in July 2016 to streamline internal processes
- Developing a suite of online forms to make access to council services more efficient and easier for residents
- Maintained a freeze on the Cherwell District Council element of council tax whilst continuing to provide a high standard of frontline services.



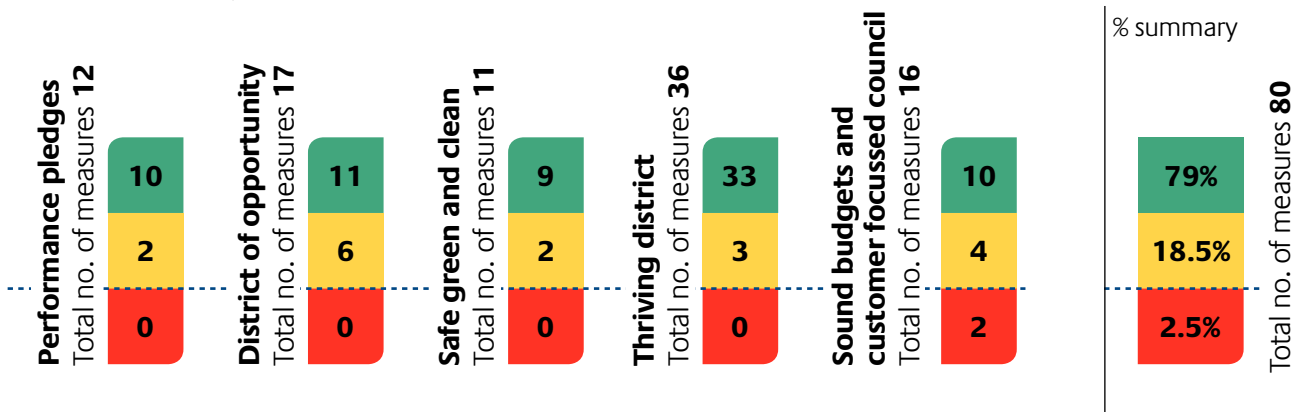
A summary of our performance:

Summary of our performance

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

We use a 'RAG' (red, amber, green) system, where green refers to a target wholly met, amber to a target narrowly missed and red to a target missed by 10 per cent or more.

End of year 2016/17 summary outturn



Community engagement

The community services team delivered eight connecting community events across the district in 2016/2017 working with voluntary organisations and key stakeholders to engage with residents and provide information regarding services offered in the district.

The events proved to be very successful with over 400 people attending to be linked to services and new opportunities locally.

In November a 'Have Faith in your community' event was held in Bicester to celebrate inter faith week, working with local faith groups and voluntary organisations to bring residents together and strengthen communities.

The success of this type of events and the feedback from the community on how useful they are will help with planning more events in 2017/2018, including the possibility of taking connecting community events to isolated neighbourhoods across the district.



Customer contact and feedback

In June 2016 the annual customer satisfaction survey was undertaken and revealed that 69 per cent of residents were satisfied with the council’s performance and 80 per cent were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.



Full details of the satisfaction survey can be found online



Complaints summary

| No of complaints received | Number of complaints not upheld | Number of upheld complaints: | Number of complaints escalated to stage 2 | Percentage acknowledged within SLA |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 214 (100 per cent resolved) | 117 | 97 | 34 | 91 per cent |

Ombudsman summary

| No of complaints received | Number leading to a decision | Number upheld |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 37* | 23 | 4 |

* This number does not relate to the yearly number of stage 2 as customers can wait between six and nine months to put forward a complaint to LGO.

Freedom of Information requests

Number of requests received during 2016/2017:

| April – June | July – September | October – December | January – March | Year total |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 141 | 130 | 132 | 161 | 564 |

Getting in touch

Throughout the year the council provides opportunities for local people to have their say.

Whether it is through customer satisfaction surveys, budget consultation, consultation on new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback via our Link Points or website, 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:

www.cherwell.gov.uk/consultations

If you have any additional feedback, please contact us using any of the means below:

Email: consultation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

To find and email your ward councillor:

<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/mgFindCouncillor.aspx>

Call:

The strategic intelligence and insight team:

01295 221605

Customer services: 01295 227094

Write:

The strategic intelligence and insight team

Bodicote House

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Banbury

Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA

For general enquiries visit www.cherwell.gov.uk
or contact the customer service team
01295 227001.

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