



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Council Minute Book

Monday 20 October 2025

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 1 July 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillor Tom Beckett, Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management

Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services

Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

Present virtually (no voting rights):

Councillor David Hingley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership

Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities

Also Present:

Councillor Lynne Parsons, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor John Broad

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Amanda Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers:

Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer

David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning & Development

Christina Cherry, Planning Policy, Conservation & Design Manager

Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services

Maria Dopazo, Principal Planning Policy Officer

Holly Jones, Planning Policy Officer

Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing
Richard Smith, Head of Housing

12 **Declarations of Interest**

12. The Granting of a New Lease at 36/37 Bridge Street, Banbury.
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Other Registerable Interest, as a trustee of Banbury Charities and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

13 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

14 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reminded Members that a Special Executive meeting had been scheduled for 6.30pm on Tuesday 22 July.

16 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

17 **Submission of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042**

The Assistant Director Planning and Development submitted a report to present the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 for approval and subsequent presentation to Council as a draft 'Submission' Local Plan. Subject to approval by Council the Proposed Submission Local Plan would be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination. This report also sought approval of an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS). An up-to-date LDS must support submission of the Plan.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management thanks officers for their hard work bringing the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042

The adopted Local Plan was the main part of the statutory Development Plan, the starting point for considering development proposals. The review of the Cherwell Local Plan had commenced in 2020 with three public consultations

were undertaken prior to the publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan in December 2024. Following Executive approval in December 2024, consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan commenced on 19 December 2024 and closed on 25 February 2025.

The 345 consultation responses had been considered by officers in reviewing whether the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (the 'Plan') was 'sound' and legally compliant, the tests of the independent examination of the Plan started when the Proposed Submission Local Plan was submitted.

The view of officers was that the Plan was sound but that a number of 'proposed changes' and 'minor modifications' should be suggested to the examining inspector(s) in the interests of its improvement, clarification and updating and to address minor presentational, grammatical and typographical issues.

In response to Executive Member comments, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management confirmed that the Plan was sound, and evidence based and worthy of submission for independent examination.

The Leader, having apologised for being unable to attend the meeting in person due to being at the LGA Conference in Liverpool, highlighted that the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 was one of the most important documents for the district and added thanks to officers for their hard work. The Leader also thanked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management, and other political Groups for their engagement in the process through the Member Advisory Group. Thanks was also extended to parishes, residents and parties who had engaged in the process.

The Labour Group Leader commended officers and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management and confirmed the Labour Group supported the Proposed Submission Local Plan, the sooner it was adopted, the better for the Cherwell district.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed submission Regulation 19 draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 (December 2024) be recommended to Council.
- (2) That Council be recommended to approve the submission of the draft (the "Proposed Submission Local Plan") to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination with all necessary prescribed and supporting documents.
- (3) That the responses to the consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 summarised in the Statement of Consultation be noted.
- (4) That the supporting documents relevant to the preparation of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 be noted.

- (5) That the Schedule of Proposed Changes and Minor Modifications to the Proposed Submission Local Plan draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review be approved.
- (6) That the Local Development Scheme (July 2025) be approved.
- (7) That the use of £300,000 from the Council's reserve for the costs of the examination be approved.
- (8) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Planning and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management and Corporate Director Communities:-
 - a) to make any necessary presentational changes to the Submission draft of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 and to necessary prescribed and supporting documents before submission to full Council.
 - b) to propose changes and corrections to the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042 and supporting documents, including policy updates, editorial changes, and correction of typographical and grammatical errors during the examination.
 - c) to invite the examining inspector(s), post submission, to recommend any modifications they consider to be necessary in accordance with section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Reasons

The Cherwell Local Plan Review has been prepared in the interest of having up to date planning policies which respond positively and effectively in meeting development needs and the planning issues that the district and our local communities face. An up-to-date Local Plan is important for a plan-led approach to decision making and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Preparation of the Proposed Submission Local Plan has been informed by three formal public consultations (Regulation 18), continuous engagement and cooperation and evidence gathering.

Consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan commenced on 19 December 2024 and closed on 25 February 2025. A total of 345 representations were received in response to the consultation. They have been considered by officers in reviewing whether the Proposed Submission Local Plan is 'sound' and legally compliant – the tests of the independent examination of the Plan that commences on the Proposed Submission Local Plan's submission.

The view of officers is that the Proposed Submission Local Plan is sound but that a number of proposed changes and 'minor modifications' should be made

to it in the interests of its improvement, clarification and updating, and to address minor presentational, grammatical and typographical issues.

An updated Local Development Scheme has also been prepared and this is presented for the Executive's approval.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to approve the Proposed Submission Local Plan for Submission
Not approving the Proposed Submission Local Plan would mean that the Proposed Submission Local Plan would potentially require significant amendments. These amendments and the need to consult on them prior to Submission would result in the Proposed Submission Plan failing to meet the transitional arrangements set out in NPPF paragraph 234(a). The Council would then be obliged to prepare a revised Local Plan in accordance with the December 2024 NPPF. In addition to creating considerable delay, the revised Local Plan would have to meet the full objectively assessed housing need based on the December 2024 Standard Method figure for Cherwell.

Option 2: To approve the Proposed Submission Local Plan and seek significant changes.

Approving the Proposed Submission Local Plan with significant changes would mean that we would need to reconsult on these changes as an addendum to the Regulation 19 Local Plan. This would result in the Proposed Submission Local Plan failing to meet the transitional arrangements set out in NPPF paragraph 234(a). The Council would then be obliged to prepare a revised Plan in accordance with the December 2024 NPPF. In addition to creating considerable delay, the revised Plan would have to meet the full objectively assessed housing need based on the December 2024 Standard Method figure for Cherwell.

Option 3: Seek further proposed changes in response to specific issues raised in consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan draft.

Officers are mindful that the Council must consider the Proposed Submission Local Plan to be submitted to be a 'sound' and legally compliant Plan. Officers have proposed changes that do not affect the soundness of the Plan. Officers advise that any additional proposed changes and the reasons for them are given consideration by officers before they are presented to Council.

18

Temporary Accommodation Policy

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for a new Temporary Accommodation Policy.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Housing explained that the Council had a duty to provide temporary accommodation for certain households who approach the Council for assistance and who are in housing crisis. The policy outlined the Council's approach, including how placements were made and managed providing clarity for those requiring assistance and a framework for officers in deploying resources.

Resolved

- (1) That the new Temporary Accommodation Policy be approved.

Reasons

It is important that the Council has up to date policies and procedures for its statutory and key service areas and it is important that they are legislatively and operationally sound.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to bring forward a Temporary Accommodation Policy. There is no statutory need to have a Temporary Accommodation Policy, so this is an option that could be considered. It is however considered good practice for Council's to have a Temporary Accommodation Policy in the Council's conversations with its homelessness advisors from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and also is an approach that is and has been replicated by other Council's across the Country. This is therefore rejected.

19

Finance Monitoring Report May 2025

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to report to Executive the council's forecast yearend financial position as at the end of the May 2025.

There being no questions on the exempt appendix to the report, it was not necessary to exclude the press and public during this item.

Resolved

- (1) That the council's financial management report as at the end of May 2025 be noted.
- (2) That the Use of Reserve and Grant Funding Requests (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That the proposed write offs be approved.

Reasons

The report updates the Committee on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2025/26. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast revenue financial position up to the end of March 2026, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

20 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

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

21 **Finance Monitoring Report May 2025 - Exempt Appendix**

There being no questions on the exempt appendix, this item had been agreed as set out under Minute 19.

22 **The Granting of a New Lease at 36/37 Bridge Street, Banbury**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the granting of a new lease at 36/37 Bridge Street, Banbury.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

(2) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

23 **Relocation of Greggs PLC from Unit 30 to Unit 6&7 Castle Quay**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in respect of the relocation of Greggs PLC from Unit 30 to Unit 6&7 Castle Quay.

Resolved

(1) As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

Alternative options

As set out in the exempt Minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.41 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 2 September 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor David Hingley (Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership) (Chair)
Councillor Lesley McLean (Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration) (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Councillor Ian Middleton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities
Councillor Rob Pattenden, Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management
Councillor Nick Cotter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Also Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor David Rogers, Deputy Group Leader, Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance
Councillor John Broad

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Les Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group
Councillor Donna Ford

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Julia Harrington, Head of Regeneration and Growth
Tom Gubbins, Wellbeing Manager
Charlene Greenaway, Transformation Consultant
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

Officers Attending Virtually:

Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources and Transformation

Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Richard Smith, Head of Housing
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader

24 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

25 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Rogers, Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance, who would be speaking in respect of item 10, Response to Motion: Government Review of Local Authority Funding; and Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group and Bicester West ward member, Councillor Broad, Bicester West ward member, and Councillor Ford, Bicester East ward member, who would each speak on item 9, Bicester Market Square Project.

26 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

27 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

28 **HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) Fuel**

The Assistant Director Environmental Services and Corporate Director Communities submitted a report which looked at the issues of cutting vehicle fleet emissions by the adoption of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel to replace standard diesel fuel. The report considered the reduction in emissions and the potential increase in revenue costs from moving to HVO.

Resolved

- (1) That the change from standard diesel to HVO diesel commencing from Autumn 2025 leading to a substantial reduction in emissions during 2025/26 & 2026/26 be supported.
- (2) That the small increase in fuel costs as a result of moving to HVO, which can be contained within the existing fuel budget, be noted.

Reasons

To move to HVO fuel with the implementation plan commencing from Autumn 2025 will reduce fleet emissions in 2025/26 with the full year effect in 2026/27.

Alternative options

Option 1: Continuing using diesel until either Battery Electric Vehicles or Hydrogen Vehicles are available at an affordable price. Fleet emissions will remain very high until the current Large Goods Vehicles are replaced. This may take a considerable number of years

29

Domestic Abuse Policy

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report to seek approval for a new Domestic Abuse Policy.

Resolved

(1) That the new Domestic Abuse Policy be approved.

Reasons

The new Domestic Abuse Policy outlines the Council's role and responsibilities and how residents receive advice and support.

It provides an overview of what residents can expect from the Council when they approach the Council for support with domestic abuse and how the Council will ensure that their circumstances are handled confidentially, sensitively and non-judgmentally.

It provides an overview of the housing support that is provided by the Council, particularly through the housing options team, housing register and through the Sanctuary Scheme, which provides additional security measures to properties.

It outlines the multi-agency role and multi-agency arrangements that the Council is part of and that are in place within Oxfordshire to coordinate responses, provide support and monitor perpetrators.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to bring forward a Domestic Abuse Policy. The Council has statutory duties in delivering housing services and participating in multi-agency arrangements regarding victim and perpetrator management, however, there are no statutory duties to have a domestic abuse policy. The Council is aiming to achieve an accreditation in recognition of its practice and focus on this area, and a policy is an important part of achieving this. This option is therefore rejected.

Made in Banbury

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing submitted a report which presented a new cultural strategy for Banbury and an exploration of the economic impact of investment in the cultural sector offer a perspective on the importance of cultural organisations for the district. This report highlighted the connection between the council's wellbeing strategy, the Banbury Area Priority Plan and the development of coordinated investment.

Resolved

- (1) That Made in Banbury, a cultural strategy for the Town, be endorsed.
- (2) That the impact investment in arts and culture can have on the local economy be acknowledged.
- (3) That the Banbury Quays Consortium be supported in their coordination of marketing cultural offers to audiences under a shared 'Made in Banbury' approach across the district with a grant of £3000 from existing funding allocations for each of the next two years.
- (4) That the implementation and delivery of the action plan be monitored.
- (5) That, given the independent nature of the cultural strategy, the area oversight groups be asked to consider culture in their placemaking plans, ensuring the arts organisations of the district contribute to the cultural development of the district overall.

Reasons

Culture has an important role to play in the delivery of successful placemaking strategies and in the economic health of our Towns. In endorsing the work of the sector through these plans and providing an enabling and supportive policy context for the development of place, activity and employment, Cherwell District Council can effect change. The quality of life local residents enjoy is positively impacted by a vibrant cultural sector and the range of recommendations will help support the sectors efforts to provide a range of opportunities for audiences and residents wanting to pursue a career in the creative industries.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not endorse Made in Banbury and the consequent actions
This has been rejected as the strategy and action plan support the published policies of the Council and the small financial contribution can be achieved from existing funding over the next two years.

Bicester Market Square Project

The Corporate Director of Communities submitted a report to provide an update to the Executive on the progress of the Market Square, Bicester

regeneration and public realm improvement project and to seek approval to continue to the next stage of the project, and ultimately on to complete the project, subject to all of the required procurement processes being undertaken successfully. This report details the next steps of the design work required to the concept plan, seeking the required planning permissions, approval of the draft programme and budget approvals based on the estimated cost plans undertaken as part of stage 1 of the project.

Executive members commented that the project was positive for Bicester acknowledging it was a work in progress and compromises were necessary.

Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group and Bicester West ward member, Councillor Broad, Bicester West ward member, and Councillor Ford, Bicester East ward member, who would each speak on item 9, Bicester Market Square Project.

In addressing Executive, Councillor Broad commented on the importance of car parking, noted that bike racks were included but no motorcycle parking and expressed his support for opposition to traffic calming.

In response to Councillor Ford's comments regarding the public engagement, how the proposed concept design was chosen and the importance of the project being right, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration explained that there had been a high number of responses from the survey and it was considered the concept design was a true representation of the outcome of the public engagement. The comments regarding the public engagement exercise were noted and consideration would be given to using the Bicester Town Council publication, Garthe Gazette, on the future.

In response to Councillor Sibley's comments regarding the impact of the closure of London Road, the Chair confirmed a solution for the London Road crossing was being sought and he would provide an update when he could.

In response to Councillor Sibley's comments that the Market Square shouldn't be treated in isolation from the town centre, that retail outlets on the Bicester outskirts were booming due to free parking and he hoped for two-hour free parking in the centre of Bicester and that feedback as the project moved forward would be appreciated, the Chair confirmed that he was committed to keeping Members informed. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property & Regeneration explained that whilst this was a standalone project, an holistic approach was being taken with regard to the impact on other parts of Bicester town centre.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress of the project to date, including the public engagement process and how the proposed concept design was developed, be noted.
- (2) That the concept design presented for development to the next stage be approved.

- (3) That it be approved that the £881,000 from Oxfordshire County Council town centre s106 funds be added to the currently approved £4.25m capital programme budget for this project to give a maximum total project budget of £5,131,000 to complete this project in full.
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Communities, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration and the Assistant Director of Finance, to agree the tranches of budget for each stage of the project as required, into the capital programme to enable completion of this project.
- (5) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Communities, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration and Assistant Director of Law and Governance, to approve the appointment of the preferred Consultant & Contractor and to work with the Councils project team to deliver this project following the required Council procurement processes.
- (6) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Communities, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration in conjunction with the and the Assistant Director of Law and Governance the decision on the specific contract options & construction route to deliver the project in full (which is currently proposed as a two-stage contract process) (NEC 4E x22) following the Councils required procurement processes.
- (7) That the current draft programme of works and estimated timescales of each stage of work, as provided by WSP, as part of their Stage 1 feasibility work be noted.
- (8) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Communities, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration to confirm approval to submit the planning application of the detailed design.

Reasons

The Bicester Market Square improvement project has been in the public domain for many years. A report to the Executive was presented on 4 September 2023: Bicester Garden Town Programme - Market Square Project Business Need & Next Stages.

This report follows the stages of the project over the last two years to date; specifically following an internal review in summer 2024 with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration in conjunction with the Corporate Director Communities, the project has progressed with a full public engagement process completing, as well as confirming project “why” and project priorities.

The outcome of the public engagement process has been a preferred concept design, together with a draft programme which outlines next steps, together

with estimated cost plans depending on choice of materials to deliver this project.

The cost plans are estimating the preferred plan can be delivered within a total maximum project budget of £5,131,000, (dependent on material choices) with £180,000 spent to date.

This report therefore sets out recommendations to take forward the next steps of this project onto successful delivery and completion.

Alternative options

Option one: To approve a previously available design from the one presented which does pedestrianise the Market Square. This is not an option for the local businesses and community of Bicester; during engagement this was a very clear message along with the request to retain some parking and if possible, at the current level.

Option two: To approve one of the other presented designs. This would not be the preferred design from the public and business engagement, but it is possible to deliver one of the other concept designs at this stage.

Option three: To pause or stop this project now and not continue to the next stage. This would save the project budget to be spent on other projects or Council priorities; however, this project has been discussed within the community for over 20 years and during the last year the team have been working very closely with our Portfolio Holder who has been supporting this project.

32 Response to Motion: Government Review of Local Authority Funding

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to respond to the motion raised at the Council meeting of 21 July 2025 by Councillor Edward Reeves in relation to Government Review of Local Authority Funding.

Councillor Rogers, seconder of the motion at the 21 July Council meeting, addressed Executive. Councillor Rogers thanked officers for their ongoing hard work, with the business rates reset always being included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and expressed hope that the MPs representing the Cherwell district would help lobbying.

Councillor Watkins, Leader of the Labour Group, addressed Executive and echoed thanks to officers for their hard work in long term planning for the business rates reset. Councillor Watkins advised that Sean Woodcock, MP for Banbury had confirmed his support for Cherwell and that he had spoken with the Deputy Prime Minister and asked that she look at Cherwell's situation.

The Chair thanked Councillor Watkins for the positive update on the support of Sean Woodcock MP and confirmed that Calum Miller MP for Bicester and Woodstock was also supporting Cherwell.

Resolved

- (1) That the Executive's response to the motion be noted.

Reasons

The Leader and officers have taken opportunities to maximise the amount of influence on the Government to ensure that it is aware of the financial challenges that Cherwell would face if anticipated changes were implemented without any financial safeguards being put in place.

Alternative options

No alternative options have been identified.

33 Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2025 - 2026

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) and Assistant Director Customer Focus submitted a report to report to Executive the council's forecast year-end financial, performance and risk position as of the end of Quarter 1 2025, further detail can be found in the report and its appendices.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the council's finance, performance and risk management report as at Quarter 1 2025/2026 be noted.
- (2) That the reprofiling of projects in the capital programme be approved.
- (3) That the release of £40k from Policy Contingency for pump priming The Hill be approved.

Reasons

The report updates Executive on the projected year-end financial position of the council for 2025/26, Quarter 1 performance position and updated Leadership Risk Register. Regular reporting is key to good governance and demonstrates that the council is actively managing its financial resources sustainably.

Alternative options

Option 1: This report summarises the council's forecast financial position up to the end of End of Year 2026, and a snapshot of our Performance and Risk positions for Quarter 1 2025-26, therefore there are no alternative options to consider.

34 Budget Process 2026/2027

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to inform the Executive of the proposed approach to the 2026/27 Budget Process and provides context and background information on the existing Medium-Term Financial Strategy and information on latest government announcements relevant to the Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Budget Process for 2026/27 be approved.
- (2) That the base assumptions to be used for the 2026/27 budget be approved.
- (3) That a five-year period for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2030/31 and five-year period for the Capital Programme to 2030/31 be approved.

Reasons

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and ensure it maintains a suitable level of reserves each year. The process laid out in this report will allow CDC to develop budget proposals that will allow it to meet these legal obligations.

Alternative options

The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget and evaluate its level of reserves to ensure they are held at a suitable level. Therefore, there are no alternative options other than to carry out a budget process that reviews the levels of reserves and identifies a budget proposal that can be delivered within the overall level of resources available to the Council.

35 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.08 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Council

Record of Portfolio Holder Decisions for the period 12 July 2025 to 10 October 2025

Portfolio Holder	Decision Subject Matter	Decision Date
Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration	Heyford Park School Community Use Agreement	8 October 2025

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Cherwell District Council

Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 16 July 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Simon Lytton (Chair)
Councillor David Rogers (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Sarah Thompson, Independent Person

Substitute Members:

Councillor Gemma Coton (In place of Councillor Frank Ideh)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Ian Middleton

Also Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Connor Munro, Internal Audit, Veritau
Sarah Butler, Internal Audit, Veritau

Officers:

Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Sandra Ganpot, Benefits Services and Performance Manager
Alex Rycroft, Strategic Finance Business Partner
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Richard Smith, Head of Housing

18 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

19 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20 **Chair's Announcements**

- 1) The Chair advised the Committee that the process to recruit a new Independent Person was still ongoing with an open-ended deadline for applications.
- 2) Members of the Committee were reminded that Treasury Management training would take place after meeting.

21 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

22 **Internal Audit Progress Update**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update on the delivery of the internal audit work programme for 2025/26 and an update on the three audits from the 2024/25 work programme which were in the process of being concluded.

In introducing the report, Connor Munro, Assistant Director – Audit Assurances at Veritau advised the Committee that since the report had been drafted a further two audits had been completed: Risk management; and Performance Management. Veritau had reached a Reasonable Assurance opinion on both audits. Members were informed that the Committee's request for Follow Up actions to be documented in the report had been implemented

In response to a question regarding the actions rated as critical in the report, the Committee was advised that these reviews had been undertaken by the previous internal audit provider and Veritau were in the process of following them up.

In response to a question regarding the two actions that were marked as risk accepted, the Assistant Director – Audit Assurances advised that these related to the delay and frequency of reporting actions in the area of climate action. It was accepted that these issues were similar to other organisations in the sector and did not represent an undue risk to the Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress made in delivering the 2025/26 internal audit work programme, and the position with the remaining audits from the 2024/25 programme be noted.

23

Counter Fraud Progress Report

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report which presented an update on counter fraud work undertaken so far in 2025/26.

Resolved

- (1) That the counter fraud progress report be noted.

24

Risk Monitoring Report Year End 2024-2025

The Assistant Director Customer Focus submitted a report to update the Committee on how well the Council was managing its strategic risks.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services confirmed that there were no score changes in the Leadership Risk Register during the quarter. The Committee was advised that work was currently underway on a new risk management strategy that would help ensure that the Council was better prepared for external challenges such as the forthcoming business rates reset that the Government had proposed under the Fair Funding Review 2.0.

In response to a question regarding the impact of the proposed business rates reset on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services explained that the proposed new business rates distribution model would have a serious impact on the Council's funding with the Council projected to be the third worst affected council in England in terms of financial losses due to the changes. This was largely due to the successful strategies that the Council had implemented under the existing funding mechanism which had resulted in the receipt of high levels of funding. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services advised the Committee that work was being undertaken to mitigate the impact of the changes through schemes such as the transformation project.

Resolved

- (1) That the Risk Monitoring Report for Year End 2024-25 be noted.

25

Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit 2021/22

The Assistant Director of Finance submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update on the final position of the Housing Benefit subsidy claim audit for the financial year 2021/22.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that local authorities reclaim Housing Benefits that have been paid to claimants by submitting annual subsidy claims to the DWP. Each local authority's appointed external auditor is required to certify that the annual claim is fairly stated and to report any errors to the DWP in a covering letter that accompanies the claim. Where there are errors, the claim is qualified and the DWP will seek to reduce subsidy payments to the Council.

The Committee was advised that as a result of the audit by the council's external auditor, the pre-audit overpayments figure of £205,534 had been increased by an additional £92,653. This sum would be deducted from the ongoing monthly subsidy payments from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

In response to a question regarding the measures taken to reduce future errors, the Committee was advised that additional staff had been recruited and that more regular monitoring was now in place. It was anticipated that this would help to mitigate any future issues.

The Committee was informed that due to the ongoing backlog in auditing within the Local Authority sector, it was uncertain when the audits of Housing Benefit Subsidy for subsequent years would take place.

Resolved

- (1) That the update on the final position of the Housing Benefit subsidy claim audit for the financial year 2021/22 be noted.

26

Housing Management Performance

The Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing Services submitted the annual report relating to housing complaints performance, in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints handling Code. The Complaints Handling Code self-assessment, would be published on the Council's website and would form the basis of the Council's return to the Housing Ombudsman for 2024-25.

Resolved

- (1) That the Housing Management Performance Annual Report submitted in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code be noted.

- (2) That it be noted that Housing Management Performance Report and the Complaints Handling Code self-assessment, would be published on the Council's website and would form the basis of the Council's return to the Housing Ombudsman for 2024-25.

27

Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

The Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer submitted a report which set out the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the Council for 2024-25 for approval.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director Law and Governance explained that the AGS summarised the key governance issues for the Council and the actions required to address these. The AGS was required to be approved by those charged with governance, the Accounts Audit & Risk Committee, under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Resolved

- (1) That the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25 be approved.
- (2) That the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of Cherwell District Council.

28

Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to provide an opportunity for review of the draft 2024/25 Statement of Accounts which were published on the council's website on 27 June 2025.

In response to a question regarding the £11.5M increase in the deficit from 2023/24 to 2024/25 the Committee was advised that this was due to an audit balance relating to the value of property that would fluctuate over time.

In response to a question regarding the treatment of the Council's existing contractual obligations following Local Government Reorganisation, the Assistant Director Law and Governance explained that the normal expectation would be that such liabilities would be transferred to the successor authority.

Resolved

- (1) That the report and publication of the draft statement of accounts 2024/25 be noted.

29 **Treasury Management Q1 Report 2025/26**

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to provide information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2025-26 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The report demonstrated that all treasury management activities undertaken during the first quarter of 2025-26 complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised that as at the end of Quarter 1 2025-26, the Council had borrowings of £157M and investments of £18M, which resulted in a net borrowing of £139M.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Treasury Management Quarter 1 Performance report be noted.

30 **Review of Committee Work Programme**

The Head of Finance provided an update on the Committee's work programme.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme update be noted.

31 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.29 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 8 July 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chair)
Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Gemma Coton (In place of Councillor Robert Parkinson)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Robert Parkinson

Also Present:

Councillor Lesley McLean, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Matt Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner - Business Partnering & Controls

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 4 March 2025 and 21 May 2025 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

5 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

6 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

7 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

8 **Finance Monitoring Report**

The Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to advise of the Council's financial positions at the end of the financial year 2024-2025.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised the Committee that the Councils' capital outturn position for 2024/25 was a surplus of £162k after the proposed contributions made to reserves of £2.02million. The outturn position showed pressures of £730k which had been offset by an underspend of £2.733mil across policy contingency and executive matters.

Regarding reserves, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that, subject to Executive approval, there was a closing balance of £41mil revenue and £5mil capital. Under the delegated authority outlined in the reserves policy, the Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) had approved the contributions to and uses of capital reserves for 2024/25. This included the usage of £1.496m of capital receipts and £0.679m of capital grants unapplied which was used to support the overall funding of the capital programme. This usage reduced the Council's Capital Financing Requirement and therefore the associated ongoing Minimum Revenue Provision which was met from the revenue budget.

In response to a question by the Committee querying if the £2mil amount proposed to be moved to reserves was a one off or could become normal practice in future years, the Assistant Director of Finance advised that this was down to good treasury management by officers however the amount was not an amount expected in future years and in the long term.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted.

9 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report for Members to consider the proposed banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) for 2026/27.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised the Committee that the scheme was an update to the current scheme that was introduced in April. There were no proposed changes to the scheme and it was recommended that the current scheme, uprated for inflationary factors, continue.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration explained that there was a proposed change to the administration of the process to include Universal Credit customers as Council Tax Reduction (CTR) applicants by accepting the DWP information through the data sharing agreement. There was an anticipated nominal increase of £72k in the cost of the scheme, however this would be offset by the streamlined administration of onboarding new CTR claims at the point of the customer claiming Universal Credit.

Members of the Committee commented that it was an excellent scheme and the proposed change to the administration would make the scheme even better for those eligible. Members commended officers for the 98.02% Council Tax collection rate in Cherwell, which was reported as the highest rate for all authorities within Oxfordshire.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications for the Council be noted.
- (2) That, having given due consideration, Executive be recommended to agree that the current scheme is retained for 2026/27.

10 **Business Rates Reset Consultation**

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to update the Committee on the Business Rates Reset consultations; one of which took place in April and a follow up that was launched 20 June for responses in mid-

August. These consultations related directly to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 – 2030/31.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Regeneration advised the Committee that the Government had launched a consultation earlier in the year on the technical aspects that officers had responded to, however a second consultation was launched on 20 June with a closing date of 15 August. Officers would be drafting a response and comments from the Committee were invited.

At the Committee's request, the Assistant Director Finance explained, in layman's terms, the proposed business rates reset. The Assistant Director Finance advised that currently the Council was able to retain a proportion of business rates revenue collected with the remaining percentage going to central government. The central share was redistributed to local government through grants. Councils could keep the revenue generated from businesses in their area and the Cherwell district had good growth during the last 12 years. The Assistant Director Finance explained that the Government's proposed business rates reset was a full reset which would mean that the distribution of the rates would change and it was expected the impact of the changes would reduce the council's funding by 40%.

In answer to a question from a member of the Committee regarding the impact of the Business Rates Reset on the agreed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Assistant Director Finance advised that the approved MTFS made the broad assumption that there would be a full business rates reset and would be phased over three years which was the approach given by government in the consultation.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council's response to the Business Rates Reset consultation which was open between 8 April and 2 June be noted.
- (2) That the Fair Funding 2.0 consultation that was launched on 20 June with a closing date of 15 August be noted.

11

Review of Committee Work Plan

The Committee considered its work plan. In response to a Committee member query if the Committee was able to propose and consider an assessment from officers on the budgetary impacts of the proposed incoming legislation that required the council to collect glass at the kerbside instead of glass bottle banks, the Chair requested officers provide a written response to the query.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.17 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

General Licensing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 15 April 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Robert Parkinson (In place of Councillor Nick Cotter)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Lesley McLean
Councillor Ian Middleton (Chair)

Officers:

Jan Southgate, Health Protection, Compliance & Licensing Manager
Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Christine Pegler, Lead Licensing Enforcement Officer
Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services

1

Appointment of Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2024-25

This being the first meeting of the newly created General Licensing Committee, the Democratic and Elections Officer opened the meeting and called for nominations for the appointment of Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year 2024-25.

It was proposed by Councillor Parkinson and seconded by Councillor Coton that Councillor Middleton be elected Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2024-2025.

There were no further nominations.

The Democratic and Elections Officer advised the Councillor Middleton had confirmed he would accept the appointment if appointed in his absence.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Middleton be appointed Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25.

2 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the remainder of Municipal Year 2024-25**

It was proposed by Councillor Parkinson and seconded by Councillor Crichton that Councillor Biegel be elected Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2024-25.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Biegel be appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year 2024/25.

Having been appointed Vice-Chairman and in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman took the Chair.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 18 January 2023, 23 May 2023 and 22 May 2024 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

6 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

New Cherwell District Council Taxi Licensing Policy

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report which presented a draft Taxi Licensing Policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire for consultation and agreement with the public and trade.

In introducing the report the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that the current Taxi Licensing policy had been published in 2023 and the Council was committed to reviewing the policy at least every five years to ensure it reflected current legislation and guidance. The review of the current policy introduced changes to reflect the latest Department for Transport guidance which had been published in November 2023 and made improvements to safety, further encouraged the adoption of cleaner vehicles and accessibility for wheelchair access

In considering the report, Committee members sought clarification on a number of aspects of the policy. Regarding the wording that defined activities that would lead to the suspension or revocation of a license, the Committee was advised it was difficult to have an exhaustive list but officers had the tools to take enforcement action where appropriate.

It was confirmed that the definition of assistance dogs also included emotional support animals, the Committee was advised that under disability legislation this would be the case.

Regarding the possibility of providing a list of British Sign Language interpreters to taxi drivers, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager agreed to investigate this further.

In respect of the appeal process following the revocation of a taxi license, the Committee was advised that the process considered how the decision had been reached rather than the decision itself, any appeals would be heard at a Magistrates' Court.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding the mechanism for ensuring that taxi license applicants had made full disclosure, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that all drivers would have an enhanced DBS check at the time of application and a minimum of every six months during their licensed period. Although there was not a formal mechanism for obtaining information from the police, there were other channels of communication available where required.

In response to a query regarding the potential impact of the draft policies on the future level of supply of taxis and private hire vehicles in the Cherwell district and the effect this would have on pricing for customers, the Committee was advised that the trade in services was currently healthy and that officers had tried to take in to account the burden the new requirements would place on drivers' costs when creating the draft policy.

In response to a Committee request for the inclusion of first aid kits in vehicles, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager agreed to add this requirement to the draft policy.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to inclusion of the points of clarification raised, the new draft Cherwell District Council Taxi Licensing Policy be approved for consultation with the trade and members of the public.

The meeting ended at 7.18 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Licensing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4AA, on 22 May 2024 at 7.52 pm

Present:

Councillor Ian Middleton (Chairman)
Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Lesley McLean
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Barry Wood

1 Appointment of Chairman for the municipal year 2024/2025

It was proposed by Councillor Coton and seconded by Councillor Pruden that Councillor Middleton be elected Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Crichton and seconded by Councillor Clarke that Councillor Biegel be appointed Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

There being two nominations for Chairman of the Licensing Committee, it was put to the vote. There were six votes for Councillor Middleton, four votes for Councillor Biegel and two abstentions.

Resolved

That Councillor Ian Middleton be appointed Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the municipal year 2024/205.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2024/2025

It was proposed by Councillor Crichton and seconded by Councillor Clarke that Councillor Biegel be appointed Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

There were no further nominations.

Resolved

That Councillor Rebecca Biegel be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee for the municipal year 2024/205.

The meeting ended at 7.56 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Licensing Acts Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Acts Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 9 July 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Chair)
Councillor Fiaz Ahmed (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Lynne Parsons (In place of Councillor Andrew Crichton)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Lesley McLean
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor John Willett

Officers:

Jan Southgate, Health Protection, Compliance & Licensing Manager
Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services
Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead
Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Christine Pegler, Lead Licensing Enforcement Officer

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised the Committee that a meeting of the General Licensing Committee had been scheduled for the 22 October 2025 at 6.30pm. A meeting request would be sent out in due course.

7 **Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy 2025**

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report to consider the Council's updated Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 and to recommend its adoption at Full Council.

In introducing the report, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager advised the Committee that it was a requirement of the Gambling Act 2005 that each Licensing Authority reviewed its Gambling Act Statement of Policy every three years and that the Council had last reviewed its policy in 2022. During the latest required review changes had been made to the population figures in the policy.

The updated 2025 policy had been put out for trade and public consultation between 12 January and 14 February 2025. Representations received had been considered and some amendments made to the policy post consultation. The changes made to the policy do not amount to a change in approach by the Licensing department and do not place additional requirements or costs on applicants or license holders.

In response to a query regarding the revision log, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager confirmed this would be updated to reflect the adoption of the 2021 draft policy by Full Council on 28 February 2022.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 be approved and recommended for adoption at Full Council.

The meeting ended at 6.41 pm

Chair:

Date:

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 15 July 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lynne Parsons (Chair)

Councillor John Broad
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Grace Conway-Murray (In place of Councillor Frank Ideh)
Councillor David Rogers (In place of Councillor Zoe McLernon)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Zoe McLernon

Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Officers:

Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services
Emma Faulkner, Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

18 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

19 **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director Law & Governance on the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25.

The report provided a summary of the subjects covered by the Committee during the previous municipal year, highlighting key observations and outcomes of discussions. The report also provided a summary of work undertaken by four working groups during the course of the year.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the previous Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, the working groups as well as officers for their work the previous municipal year and the interim Principal Officer – Scrutiny and Democratic Lead Michael Carr, for his work compiling the Annual Report.

Members were asked to provide comment on the report prior to submission to full Council. Several amendments were suggested, in addition to those that had already been identified in the addendum paper published as a supplement to the agenda. It was proposed by Councillor John Broad and seconded by Councillor Harry Knight that the report be approved for submission to full Council, subject to the following agreed amendments:

- Paragraph 2.35 Final part of the final sentence '...and if achieved would then result in lower energy costs involved in heating said developments'

amended to read

'would then result in helping to reduce the cost of living'

- Paragraph 2.46 Second line '...to want extent...' amended to read '...to *what* extent...'
- Paragraph 3.14 Final sentence 'This included reducing the District Council's own greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reducing the area of the districts greenhouse gas emissions as a whole'

amended to read

'This included reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of both the Agenda Item No. Agenda Item Decision District Council, and the geographical district as a whole'

Resolved

(1) That subject to the following amendments, the annual report be approved for submission to full Council:

- Paragraph 2.35 Final part of the final sentence ‘...and if achieved would then result in lower energy costs involved in heating said developments’

amended to read

‘would then result in helping to reduce the cost of living’

- Paragraph 2.46 Second line ‘...to want extent...’ amended to read ‘...to *what* extent...’

- Paragraph 3.14 Final sentence ‘This included reducing the District Council’s own greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reducing the area of the districts greenhouse gas emissions as a whole’

amended to read

‘This included reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of both the Agenda Item No. Agenda Item Decision District Council, and the geographical district as a whole’

20

Work Programme Update

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2025-26.

The Chair explained that since the last meeting, she and the Vice-Chair had met with Corporate Leadership Team on 8 July, to discuss the indicative work programme and suggested timings and format for each item.

The Committee were asked to consider and provide feedback and suggestions on the indicative Work Programme 2025 – 2026 as presented in the supplement to the agenda.

In response to a question relating to the inclusion of Primary Care expansion as a result of Section 106 (s106) contributions within the Performance of s106 item of the work programme, the Chair confirmed that the request would be made to relevant officers.

In response to a question relating to changes in national business rate redistribution as a result of a change in government legislation and the potential impact on service levels within the district, the Committee were advised that this would be covered by the service levels item scheduled for the November meeting. An additional question was asked regarding a briefing for Members in advance of that item, on desired service levels and any

relevant national targets for all of the council services. It was agreed that the query would be raised with relevant officers and an update be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved

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

The meeting ended at 7.01 pm

Chair:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 17 September 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Amanda Watkins (Chair)
Councillor Gemma Coton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Besmira Brasha (In place of Councillor Lynne Parsons)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lynne Parsons

Officers:

Claire Cox, Assistant Director Human Resources
Martyn Surfleet, Democratic and Elections Officer

10 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests.

11 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

12 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

14 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

15 **Workforce Profile Statistics - Quarter 1 of 2025/26**

The Assistant Director Human Resources submitted a report to update the Committee on Cherwell District Council's (CDC) workforce as at the end of quarter 1 of 2025/26, including measuring staff well-being and highlighting the actions officers were taking to address any issues.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Brant, advised that there were no issues, risks or concerns to highlight.

In response to a question regarding potential barriers to recruitment due to ethnicity, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that the Councils recruitment process aimed to be as fair and transparent as possible, but that a review of the process was underway to ensure that any remaining barriers were removed or mitigated where practicable.

In response to a question regarding dismissals based on capability and the processes in place to prevent such dismissals, the Assistant Director Human Resources explained that such cases were rare. Should such a case arise, a review would be held to provide lessons learned to help prevent future occurrences.

Resolved

- (1) That the workforce profile statistics for quarter 1 of 2025/26 (financial year dates) be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.02 pm

Chair:

Date: