

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 6 January 2026 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 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

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Robert Parkinson, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities

Also Present:

Councillor David Rogers, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor John Broad

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Andrew Crichton, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Les Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive
Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration
Stephen Hinds, Executive Director Resources
Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning
Heidi Radcliffe Hill, Interim Head of Chief Executive's Office
Tim Hughes, Head of Regulatory Services & Community Safety
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

81 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Dr Thornhill, who, as proposer of the motion, would be speaking in respect of item 7, Response to Motion: Supporting Young Women's Community Action for Safe Public Spaces; Councillor Rogers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Deputy Leader of the Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance; Councillor Crichton, Deputy Leader of the Labour Group; Councillor Sibley, Leader of the Independent Group; and Councillor Broad.

83 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

84 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

85 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

In response to a question from Councillor Rogers regarding the letter from the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness to Leaders of councils with elections in May 2026 where proposals for reorganisation have been submitted and decisions not yet taken inviting views on the postponement of the elections, the Chair (Leader of the Council) advised that the letter set out certain criteria which, subject to further discussion with Group Leaders and other Members, he did not consider the council met and would therefore not be requesting a postponement.

86 **Response to Motion: Supporting Young Women's Community Action for Safe Public Spaces**

The Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report to respond to the motion raised at full council in October 2025 requesting

Executive to consider supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces.

Councillor Dr Thornhill, proposer of the motion, thanked Executive for the response both at this meeting and the October Council meeting as which the motion was presented. The motion was designed to foster collaboration and problem solving across all kinds of political backgrounds and the response reflected this. Councillor Dr Thornhill also thanked officers involved in producing the report and the action that had been taken by the Community Safety Team. Whilst it was acknowledged that Cherwell was generally safe, crime statistics were only a small part and not all crimes were reported or didn't meet the crime reporting threshold, it was important to have these initiatives and hoped that it would move forward with a strong sense of commitment.

In response to Councillor Dr Thornhill's comments, the Chair advised that Executive took the content of the motion seriously as it was a very important issue and invited Councillor Dr Thornhill to put forward any further comments to ensure benefit from her expertise.

Resolved

- (1) That the principles identified in the motion be supported.
- (2) That it be agreed to continue to support the initiatives identified in the motion through the Community Safety Team, through partnerships such as the Cherwell Community Safety Partnership and the area oversight groups, through engagement with organisers of community initiatives, specifically those referenced in the motion, and by using our communication channels to promote and support these initiatives.

Reasons

To respond to the motion raised at full council in October 2025 requesting Executive to consider supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces.

The council recognises the value and importance of community led initiatives in this space and will provide advice and networking opportunities for groups to benefit from as needed. Contact will be made with the organisers of the initiatives referred to in the motion to see how support might be provided. The promotion of the work already underway to make it more visible and easier to connect with for voluntary schemes or businesses will highlight the depth and consistency of the work already delivered by the Community Safety Team.

Alternative options

No alternative options have been identified.

The Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report regarding mental health provision for young people in the district.

Following a motion agreed at Council in July 2024 to look at increasing spending in mental health initiatives from policy contingency budget for young people, it was subsequently agreed at the November 2024 Executive that the next step was for an increase in mental health provision within the Youth Activator team along with a research paper to be carried out by external provider to assess the needs of young people in Cherwell around mental wellbeing. The report outlined the key findings from the research paper *“Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children”* that was delivered by MIND and sought Executive agreement of the next steps to address findings.

Resolved

- (1) That the research paper *“Unmet Mental Health & Wellbeing Need in Primary School - Aged Children”* in Cherwell be endorsed.
- (2) That the key findings in the research paper be noted and it be agreed agree to deliver a pilot movement and psychological support programme for a year for 8 – 11 year-olds in fifteen targeted schools through £50,000 Public Health funding and Wellbeing Team staff time to coordinate.

Reasons

Option 3 (access and deliver the £55,000 of Public Health funding to deliver a year-long pilot (April 2026–March 2027) across 15 Cherwell schools. The intervention will combine movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, coordinated by a current member of the Wellbeing Team, utilising existing hours to provide 18.5 hours per week for implementation in the targeted schools) is the most cost-effective approach, as it fully utilises the £55,000 Public Health funding without requiring additional internal budget. By reallocating existing Wellbeing Team hours to provide 18.5 hours per week for coordination, this option avoids extra staffing costs while still ensuring dedicated support for delivery.

The intervention combines movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, directly improving pupil wellbeing and resilience. Targeting 15 as a pilot in Cherwell schools and communities means that pupils can benefit first from provision along with measuring impact, and a scalable model for future expansion into more schools and communities.

Alternative options

Option 1: Do not access and deliver the £55,000 funded intervention from Public Health targeting 15 schools piloted first in Cherwell for a year April 2026-March 2027 combining movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies alongside not providing a wellbeing worker for 18.5

hours a week to coordinate the work in the targeted schools. Has been rejected due to it would mean not taking up the £55,000 Public Health-funded intervention, resulting in no pilot across 15 Cherwell schools, no integration of movement activities with psychological strategies along with coordination.

Option 2: Access and deliver the £55,000 of Public Health funding to deliver a year-long pilot (April 2026–March 2027) across 15 Cherwell schools. The intervention will combine movement activities with evidence-based psychological strategies, coordinated by a Wellbeing Worker employed for 18.5 hours per week, funded from the policy contingency budget, to ensure effective implementation and support in the targeted schools and communities settings. Rejected because, although it secures £55,000 of Public Health funding for a year-long pilot across 15 Cherwell schools, it requires additional funding from the policy contingency budget to cover the Wellbeing Worker's 18.5 hours per week.

88

Simpler Recycling

The Assistant Director Environmental Services submitted a report which set out the possible options and the proposed recommendation for the waste collection service, following new requirements driven by The Environment Act.

Resolved

- (1) That the completion of a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment covering paper & cardboard until the implications of DRS on the kerbside recycling service is fully understood be approved.
- (2) That a review of the frequency of residual waste collection be supported.
- (3) That it be approved that any changes in the waste collection service should involve consultation with our Waste & Environmental Services Project (WESP) partners.

Reasons

The decision to introduce glass recycling from the kerbside in January 2026 was made by Executive in November 2025. To fully comply with Simpler Recycling by 31 March 2026 either paper & cardboard needs to be collected separately at the kerbside or a TEEP (Technically, Environmentally & Economically Practical) assessment carried out. It is recommended a TEEP assessment is carried out and the decision to move to collect Paper & cardboard separately is delayed until the financial implications are fully understood when DRS operations become clear.

Plastic film needs to be introduced into kerbside collections before 31 March 2027. The decision on when to commence collections cannot be made until our processing recycling contractor indicates what plastic film is acceptable

and what is unacceptable. This information is likely to be forthcoming before the summer of 2026.

Alternative options

Option 1: Implement separate collection of paper & cardboard as soon as possible. This has been dismissed due to the uncertain financial impact – investing capital of £1.5 million plus and a great uncertainty about the impact on revenue costs

Option 2: Implement collection of plastic film as soon as possible. This has been rejected because our recycling processor, N&P, have yet to set out their specification regarding plastic film.

89

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030

The Assistant Director Planning submitted a report to consider and endorse the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030.

In considering the report, Executive members welcomed the Plan and commented on the need for greater protection of the rural landscape. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management endorsed a request from Executive members for officers to consider working with officers at the Cotswold National Landscape to discuss ideas around potentially extending the protected landscape extending the national landscape around the north and eastern parts of the district.

Resolved

- (1) That the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 be endorsed.

Reasons

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030 is a key mechanism for achieving the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL and increasing the understanding and enjoyment of the CNL's special qualities. It is a legal requirement for a National Landscape to have a management plan under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and Conservation Boards are required to review their Management Plan before the end of a period of no more than five years. Officers consider that it will assist in conserving and enhancing that small part of the National Landscape within the district and recommend its endorsement.

Alternative options

Option 1: Not to endorse the Management Plan. This is not recommended as the Management Plan will assist in meeting the statutory purpose of the National Landscape; it has been prepared with the benefit of the Council's representation; and it will be helpful guidance to the Council.

Climate Action Update

The Climate Change Programme Manager submitted a report to update Executive on progress made across Council and District Climate Programmes, including delivery against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets.

In considering the report, Executive members commented that there had been significant action towards achieving a net zero Cherwell by 2030 and this was a priority for the administration.

In response to comments from Councillor Broad who highlighted the positive work of the former Climate Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group which was referenced in the report, but considered that more action could have been taken by this stage although acknowledged some actions were being picked up in the new Local Plan, the Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities explained that the administration was doing as much as it could within its power to be able to move forward the climate change agenda but there were many things which were outside of the administration's control.

Resolved

- (1) That the progress achieved against the Climate Action Plan (CAP), Performance KPIs, and Annual Development Plan (ADP) targets between April 2024 and September 2025 be noted and it be further noted that as a part of periodic updates, the Climate Team will submit an annual update to Executive.

Reasons

The Executive is recommended to acknowledge the progress outlined in this report and accept the update as part of ongoing climate programme governance.

Alternative options

Option1: Do not note the report. This option is not applicable as this is an update report.

Option 2: Delay consideration of report. This option is not applicable as this is an update report.

Council Tax Base 2026/2027

The Assistant Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) submitted a report to provide the Council tax Base for 2026/27.

Resolved

- (1) That the report of the Assistant Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for 2026/27 be approved.
- (2) That it be agreed that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Cherwell District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 shall be **60,654.5**.
- (3) That it be agreed for the parishes which form part of its area shown in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book), the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 in respect of special items shall be as indicated in the column titled Tax Base 2026/27.
- (4) That it be agree for the Flood Defence Areas which form part of its area, the amount calculated as the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 for the purposes of levies on Oxfordshire County Council by River Authorities, shall be:
 - Thames Flood Defence Area: 58,217.8
 - Anglian (Great Ouse) Flood Defence Area: 1,965.2
 - Severn Regional Flood Defence Area: 471.5
 - Total: 60,654.5

Reasons

The Council must legally set a tax base for the following year by 31 January. This will allow the Council to notify its preceptors of the taxbase in order for them (and the Council) to set their budgets for 2026/27.

Alternative options

There are no alternative options. The Council has to set a tax base in order to set its council tax for 2026/27.

Finance Monitoring Report November 2025

The Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report which updated the Executive on the council's forecast year-end financial position as at the end of November 2025.

Resolved

- (1) That the council's financial management report as at the end of November 2025 be noted.
- (2) That the release of £0.060m from Policy Contingency for development resource required for property projects, associated planning advisors,

consultancy and initial ground condition reports, as well as information on flooding be approved.

(3) That the proposed write offs be approved.

Reasons

The report updates Executive 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.

93 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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

94 Finance Monitoring Report November 2025 - Exempt Appendix

There being no specific questions on the exempt appendix, it was considered and agreed as set out under Minute 92.

The meeting ended at 7.34 pm

Chair:

Date: