



Summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of Council held on 24 February 2025

Agenda Item No.	Agenda Item	Decision
6	<p>Members' Allowance Scheme 2025/2026</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>Council resolves:</p> <p>1.1 To consider the levels of allowances to be included in the 2025/2026 Members' Allowances Scheme, and whether the Panel's recommendations (as set out at paragraph 3.1 of this report and section 2) should be adopted or modified in any way.</p> <p>1.2 To authorise the Assistant Director Law and Governance to prepare an amended Members' Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the decisions of Council for implementation with effect from 1 April 2025.</p> <p>1.3 To authorise the Assistant Director of Law and Governance to take all necessary action to revoke the current (2024/2025) Scheme and to publicise the revised Scheme pursuant to The Local Authorities (Member's Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That, having given due consideration, the following levels of allowance be included in the 2025/2026 Members' Allowances Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the Basic Allowance be increased in in line with the 2025/2026 staff pay award (3.5%), rounded up to give 12 equal payments from 1 April 2025.• That all Special Responsibility Allowances be increased in in line with the 2025/2026 staff pay award (3.5%), rounded up to give 12 equal payments from 1 April 2025.• That the co-optees allowance be increased in in line with the 2025/2026 staff pay award (3.5%), rounded up to give 12 equal payments from 1 April 2025.• That the Independent Persons allowance be increased in in line with the 2025/2026 staff pay award (3.5%), rounded up to give 12 equal payments from 1 April 2025.• That Dependents' Carers' and Childcare Allowances remain at the current level, are paid on the basis of the actual costs incurred up to the maximum hourly rate set out below and to a maximum cap of 40 hours

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	<p>1.4 To thank the Independent Remuneration Panel for its report and set a fee of £300 for each Panel Member for the work carried out on this review and propose the same level of fee for any reviews carried out in 2025/2026 capped at a maximum of £1200 per person, which can be funded from existing budgets.</p>	<p>per month, subject to production of receipts and cannot be paid to a member of the claimant's household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Childcare: £10 per hour ○ Dependent Relative care - £20 per hour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That mileage remain at the current level in line with HMRC approved mileage rates, and if any adjustments are implemented by HMRC then the revised rates should be applied to Members' travel allowances effective from the date of implementation by HMRC. ● That, having regard to the detailed review of staff subsistence, the rates for subsistence allowance be aligned with the revised maximum staff subsistence levels, with claims permitted on approved duties of over 5 hours outside the district* subject to the submission of receipts (*subsistence allowances cannot be claimed for any duties within the district as the basic allowance is deemed to cover all within district expenses). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakfast: £7.50 ○ Lunch: £10.50 ○ Tea / coffee: £4.00 ○ Evening Meal: £12.50 ● That Democratic Services continue to book overnight accommodation if required. ● That there be no change to the list of approved duties for which claims may be made. ● That Non-Executive Director allowances be

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		<p>increased in in line with the 2025/2026 staff pay award (3.5%), rounded up to give 12 equal payments from 1 April 2025 and costs recharged to the relevant company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That an in-depth “root and branches” review of the Members’ Allowance Scheme be undertaken with implementation to be determined when further information on local government reorganisation, devolution and the Cherwell boundary review is known. <p>(2) That the Assistant Director Law and Governance be authorised to prepare an amended Members’ Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the decisions of Council for implementation with effect from 1 April 2025.</p> <p>(3) That the Assistant Director of Law and Governance be authorised to take all necessary action to revoke the current (2024/2025) Scheme and to publicise the revised Scheme pursuant to The Local Authorities (Member’s Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).</p> <p>(4) That the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for its report and a fee of £300 be set for each Panel Member for the work carried out on this review and it be agreed the level of fee be applied for any reviews carried out in 2025/2026 capped at a maximum of £1200 per person, which can be funded from</p>

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		existing budgets.
7	<p>Budget 2025/2026 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)</p> <p>Report of Assistant Director of Finance</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Council resolves to:</p> <p>1.1 Have regard to the statutory report of the Chief Finance Officer (Section 25 report) at Appendix 3 in approving recommendations 1.2 – 1.9.</p> <p>1.2 Approve the proposed Fees and Charges schedule for 2025/26 (Appendix 7) and statutory notices be placed where required.</p> <p>1.3 Consider and note the Equality Impact Assessments of the Budget (Appendix 8)</p> <p>1.4 In relation to the Corporate Plan (Section 4.1) to:</p> <p>1.4.1 Approve the Corporate Plan set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>1.4.2 Note the Internal Perspectives set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p>1.5 In relation to the Revenue Budget Strategy (Section 4.2) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Section 4.5) to approve:</p> <p>1.5.1 The net revenue budget for the financial year commencing on 1 April 2025, as set out in Table 4.2.1, and further analysed in the Budget Book provided at</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>(1) That, having due regard, the statutory report of the Chief Finance Officer and the comments of the Chief Finance Officer in respect of the proposed amendments, be noted.</p> <p>(2) That, subject to the following amendment, with authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to update the budget papers to reflect the amendment, the proposed Fees and Charges schedule for 2025/26 be approved and it be noted that statutory notices would be placed where required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the proposed increase of £6 in garden waste charges in 2025/26 be delayed by one year and this increase be applied in 2026/27 as well as other planned changes and it be noted that this will reduce income in 2025/26 by £0.143m. <p>(3) That, having given due consideration, the Equality Impact Assessments of the Budget be noted.</p> <p>(4) That the Corporate Plan be approved and the Internal Perspectives be noted.</p> <p>(5) That, in relation to the Revenue Budget Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the following net directorate budgets, as amended, be agreed, with authority delegated to the Section 151</p>

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	<p data-bbox="571 235 762 271">Appendix 12.</p> <p data-bbox="477 309 927 600">1.5.2 The MTF5 and Revenue Budget 2025/26 (Sections 4.5 and 4.2 respectively), including the Savings Proposals and Investments included at Appendices 4 and 5, respectively.</p> <p data-bbox="379 638 879 712">1.6 In relation to Council Tax to approve:</p> <p data-bbox="477 750 922 1077">1.6.1 An increase in the Basic Amount of Council Tax for Cherwell District Council for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2025 of £5, resulting in a Band D charge of £158.50 per annum.</p> <p data-bbox="477 1115 916 1630">1.6.2 For long term empty properties, from 1 April 2025 an additional council tax premium will be charged of 100 per cent for properties empty for one year or more, replacing the current 100 per cent premium that begins after 2 years of a property being empty. All other empty property premiums will remain.</p> <p data-bbox="477 1668 927 1854">1.6.3 It be noted that the Council Tax Base 2025/26 was determined at the Executive meeting held on 6 January 2025:</p> <p data-bbox="523 1892 922 2078">a) for the whole Council area as 59,853.6 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance</p>	<p data-bbox="1054 235 1458 338">Officer to update the budget papers to reflect the amendments.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="963 383 1501 707"> <thead> <tr> <th>Directorate</th> <th>Net budget 2025/26 £m</th> <th>Proposal £m</th> <th>Revised Net Budget 2025/26 £m</th> <th>2026/27 £m</th> <th>2027/28 £m</th> <th>2028/29 £m</th> <th>2029/30 £m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Communities</td> <td>12.120</td> <td>0.339</td> <td>12.459</td> <td>(0.333)</td> <td>(0.079)</td> <td>(0.015)</td> <td>(0.015)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resources</td> <td>7.528</td> <td>0.00</td> <td>7.528</td> <td>(0.163)</td> <td>(0.026)</td> <td>(0.090)</td> <td>(0.100)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Service Sub-total</td> <td>19.650</td> <td>0.337</td> <td>19.985</td> <td>(0.496)</td> <td>(0.105)</td> <td>(0.105)</td> <td>(0.115)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corporate Costs</td> <td>3.926</td> <td>(0.189)</td> <td>3.737</td> <td>1.889</td> <td>1.163</td> <td>1.314</td> <td>0.324</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Policy Contingency</td> <td>2.620</td> <td>(0.150)</td> <td>2.470</td> <td>0.611</td> <td>0.799</td> <td>0.799</td> <td>0.799</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net Cost of Services</td> <td>26.194</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>26.194</td> <td>2.004</td> <td>1.857</td> <td>2.008</td> <td>1.008</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Funding</td> <td>(26.194)</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>(26.194)</td> <td>2.993</td> <td>3.305</td> <td>3.318</td> <td>(0.071)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Funding Gap / (Surplus)</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>4.997</td> <td>5.162</td> <td>5.326</td> <td>0.937</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="959 750 1506 2078">(6) That, subject to the following amendments with authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to amend the budget papers to reflect the amendments, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025/2026, including Savings Proposals and Investments be approved:</p> <ul data-bbox="1054 1122 1506 2078" style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce the following service investments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heating Hardship Fund of £0.100m to support pensioners who are struggling during the cost-of-living crisis Additional Homelessness Prevention Support of £0.065m. £0.051m to fund a Land Drainage Officer to provide additional flood support To delay service investment DPD2504 – Conservation Areas by one year, reducing costs in 2025/2026 only, by £0.020m. To remove the proposed investment in the Waste Collection Partnership Working Fund of £0.150m. 	Directorate	Net budget 2025/26 £m	Proposal £m	Revised Net Budget 2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Communities	12.120	0.339	12.459	(0.333)	(0.079)	(0.015)	(0.015)	Resources	7.528	0.00	7.528	(0.163)	(0.026)	(0.090)	(0.100)	Service Sub-total	19.650	0.337	19.985	(0.496)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.115)	Corporate Costs	3.926	(0.189)	3.737	1.889	1.163	1.314	0.324	Policy Contingency	2.620	(0.150)	2.470	0.611	0.799	0.799	0.799	Net Cost of Services	26.194	0.000	26.194	2.004	1.857	2.008	1.008	Funding	(26.194)	0.000	(26.194)	2.993	3.305	3.318	(0.071)	Funding Gap / (Surplus)	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.997	5.162	5.326	0.937
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	<p>Act 1992, as amended (“the 1992 Act”)]; and</p> <p>b) For dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates as in the attached Appendix 21.</p> <p>1.6.4 That the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) is £9,486,796.</p> <p>1.6.5 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the 1992 Act:</p> <p>a) £140,304,768 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the 1992 Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.</p> <p>b) £124,192,690 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the 1992 Act.</p> <p>c) £16,112,078 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the 1992 Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the 1992 Act).</p>	<p>(7) That an increase in the Basic Amount of Council Tax for Cherwell District Council for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2025 of £5, resulting in a Band D charge of £158.50 per annum, be agreed.</p> <p>(8) That it be agreed for long term empty properties, from 1 April 2025 an additional council tax premium will be charged of 100 per cent for properties empty for one year or more, replacing the current 100 per cent premium that begins after 2 years of a property being empty, and that all other empty property premiums will remain.</p> <p>(9) That it be noted that the Council Tax Base 2025/26 was determined at the Executive meeting held on 6 January 2025:</p> <p>c) for the whole Council area as 59,853.6 [item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (“the 1992 Act”)]; and</p> <p>d) For dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates, Appendix 21 to the report.</p> <p>(10) That it be agreed the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) is £9,486,796.</p> <p>(11) That, subject to delegation to the Section 151 Officer to update the budget papers to</p>

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	<p>d) £269.19 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the 1992 Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).</p> <p>e) £6,625,282 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the 1992 Act as per the attached Appendix 21.</p> <p>f) £158.50 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T(1(a) above), calculated by Cherwell District Council the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the 1992 Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates. 1.6.6 It be noted that for the year 2025/26 the Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the 1992 Act, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated on the report.</p> <p>1.6.7 The Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the 1992 Act, hereby sets the amounts shown in Appendix 22 as the amounts of Council Tax</p>	<p>reflect the agreed amendments to a) to reduce expenditure by £0.413m and b) to reduce income by £0.413m, the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the 1992 Act:</p> <p>g) £140,304,768 (subject to recalculation with a reduction of £0.413m) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the 1992 Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils and any additional special expenses.</p> <p>h) £124,192,690 (subject to recalculation with a reduction of £0.413m) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the 1992 Act.</p> <p>i) £16,112,078 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the 1992 Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the 1992 Act).</p> <p>j) £269.19 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the 1992</p>

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	<p>for the year 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.</p> <p>1.6.8 The Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the 1992 Act.</p> <p>1.7 In relation to the Capital Programme and related strategies (Section 4.3) to approve:</p> <p>1.7.1 The Capital Bid(s) and Capital Programme at Appendices 17 and 18 respectively.</p> <p>1.7.2 The Capital and Investment Strategy 2025/26 (Appendix 19), including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.</p> <p>1.7.3 The Treasury Management Strategy, including the Prudential Indicators, and Affordable Borrowing Limit for 2025/26 (Appendix 20).</p> <p>1.8 In relation to reserves (Section 4.4) to approve:</p> <p>1.8.1 A minimum level of General Balances of £7.8m as supported by Appendix 15.</p> <p>1.8.2 The Reserves Policy (Appendix 14).</p>	<p>Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).</p> <p>k) £6,625,282 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts and Special Expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the 1992 Act as set out in Appendix 21 of the report.</p> <p>l) £158.50 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T(1(a) above), calculated by Cherwell District Council the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the 1992 Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept or special item relates. 1.6.6 It be noted that for the year 2025/26 the Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley have issued precepts to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the 1992 Act, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="959 1736 1457 2049"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="967 1742 1090 1865">Valuation Band</th> <th data-bbox="1094 1742 1270 1865">Oxfordshire County Council</th> <th data-bbox="1275 1742 1450 1865">Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="967 1872 1090 1910"></td> <td data-bbox="1094 1872 1270 1910">£</td> <td data-bbox="1275 1872 1450 1910">£</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="967 1917 1090 1955">A</td> <td data-bbox="1094 1917 1270 1955">1,274.27</td> <td data-bbox="1275 1917 1450 1955">188.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="967 1962 1090 2000">B</td> <td data-bbox="1094 1962 1270 2000">1,486.64</td> <td data-bbox="1275 1962 1450 2000">220.33</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="967 2007 1090 2045">C</td> <td data-bbox="1094 2007 1270 2045">1,699.02</td> <td data-bbox="1275 2007 1450 2045">251.80</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Valuation Band	Oxfordshire County Council	Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley		£	£	A	1,274.27	188.85	B	1,486.64	220.33	C	1,699.02	251.80
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	£	£															
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	<p>1.8.3 The medium-term reserves plan described in Appendix 16.</p> <p>1.9 In relation to the Pay Policy Statement to approve:</p> <p>1.9.1 The Pay Policy Statement, as required by the Localism Act 2010, detailed in Appendix 9.</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="959 232 1457 454"> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>1,911.40</td> <td>283.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>2,336.16</td> <td>346.23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>2,760.91</td> <td>409.18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td>3,185.67</td> <td>472.13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>H</td> <td>3,822.80</td> <td>566.56</td> </tr> </table> <p>(12) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the 1992 Act, hereby sets the amounts shown in Appendix 22 to the report as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.</p> <p>(13) That the Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB of the 1992 Act.</p> <p>(14) That the Capital Bids and Capital Programme (Appendices 17 and 18 to the report) be approved.</p> <p>(15) That the Capital and Investment Strategy 2025/26 (Appendix 19 to the report), including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, be approved.</p> <p>(16) That the Treasury Management Strategy, including the Prudential Indicators, and Affordable Borrowing Limit for 2025/26 (Appendix 20 to the report) be approved.</p> <p>(17) That a minimum level of General Balances of £7.8m, as supported by Appendix 15 to the report, be approved.</p>	D	1,911.40	283.28	E	2,336.16	346.23	F	2,760.91	409.18	G	3,185.67	472.13	H	3,822.80	566.56
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		<p>(18) That the Reserves Policy (Appendix 14 to the report) be approved.</p> <p>(19) That, subject to the following amendment, with authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to update the budget papers to reflect the amendment, the Medium-Term Reserves Plan (Appendix 16 to the report) be approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the contribution to reserves by £0.189m <p>(20) That the Pay Policy Statement, as required by the Localism Act 2010, be approved.</p>