

Cherwell District Council

Budget Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 10 March 2026 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves (Chair)
Councillor Dom Vaitkus (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Robert Parkinson
Councillor Les Sibley

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Barry Wood

Also Present:

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

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer
Leanne Lock, Strategic Business Partner - Business Partnering & Controls
Jacey Scott, Head of Revenues and Benefits
Matt Swinford, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Mona Walsh, Assistant Director - Property

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

42 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements.

44 **Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no requests to address the meeting.

45 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

46 **December Monthly Performance Report 2025-2026**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to the committee to report the financial position at the end of the financial year 2025/2026.

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property advised the committee that the year-end forecast position for 2025/26 was projected to be an overspend of £3.024m against an £18.893m budget. Services with the largest pressures reported were within Property, Environmental Services and Wellbeing and Housing.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property advised that the forecast overspend was partially offset but corporate underspends in the areas of Executive Matters and Policy Contingency.

Resolved

(1) That the report be noted.

47 **Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief Policy and response to motion from Council Supporting our high street**

The Assistant Director of Finance (S151 Officer) submitted a report to inform Budget Planning Committee of the reviewed Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief policy and the response to the motion from Council on supporting our high streets. This was submitted to the 3 March Executive for decision and was submitted to Budget Planning Committee for information.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property advised the Committee that the provision of Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief allowed the council to offer targeted financial support where the national framework did not provide relief or where additional local discretion was justified.

In response to a question from the Committee asking if the Leader had written to the Secretary of State and copied the relevant Members of Parliament, which was included in the motion to Council motion, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Regeneration and Property confirmed that the Leader had written to the Secretary of State and copied the relevant Members of Parliament but no response had yet been received.

Resolved

- (1) That the reviewed policy for Non-Domestic Rate Discretionary Rate Relief be noted.
- (2) That the response to the motion to Council, subsequently referred to and agreed by Executive, be noted.

48 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

In considering the Committee Work Plan, the Assistant Director of Finance advised that the inclusion on "Business Rates Reset Consultation" for the 30 June 2026 was an error and would not be heard at the forthcoming meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

49 **Exclusion of 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 item 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.

50 **Car Park Revenue**

The Assistant Director Property submitted an exempt report in response to the request from Budget Planning Committee for information about parking

revenue, expenditure and if free parking had any impact on footfall in town centres.

Resolved

- (1) That the exempt report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.19 pm

Chair:

Date: